



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING WAYS TO FURTHER IMPROVE SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY	1
CALL FOR EARLY LOWERING OF QUALIFYING AGE FOR OLD AGE ALLOWANCE	3
SUPREME COURT TO BE VACATED	10
EXPANSION OF HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME TO BE CONSIDERED..	12
GOVERNMENT MONITORING PROPERTY AND LAND MARKET DEALINGS	13
SPECULATION ON INITIAL DEPOSITS ON FLATS	14
HONG KONG REPRESENTATIONS TO THE GATT ON TEXTILES ...	16
CONSULTANTS TO COMPILE REPORT ON TRAFFIC CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM	17
ILLEGAL STRUCTURES IN NEW BUILDINGS	18
WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT)(NO. 2) BILL PASSED	19
ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT)(NO. 2) BILL	21
DETENTION CENTRES (AMENDMENT) BILL	21
EMPLOYMENT OF EX-DRUG ADDICTS IN CIVIL SERVICE	22
DROP IN NUMBER OF DRUG ADDICTS EXPECTED	23
CALL FOR PROGRESSIVE INCREASES IN TAXES ON LUXURY CARS	24
GOVERNMENT LOOKING INTO PYRAMID SELLING	25
MIDNIGHT FLIGHT BAN	25

/AGREEMENT TERMS

AGREEMENT TERMS TO ATTRACT MORE LOCAL OFFICERS PROPOSED	26
TALKS ON NEW MACAU FERRY TERMINAL IN FINAL STAGE	26
QUERY ON HK-US DOLLARS EXCHANGE RATE IMPOSED BY IATA	27
WAYS TO STRENGTHEN LEGISLATION ON REGISTRATION OF MONEY LENDERS PROPOSED	27
ASSISTANCE TO SMALL-SCALE BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIES .	28
LEGCO APPROVES SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS	29
YOUNG OFFENDERS IN SHA TSUI DETENTION CENTRE	29
PAYMENT FOR ENTRIES IN TRADE DIRECTORIES	30
WAITING TIME FOR DISCIPLINARY INQUIRY OF CONVICTED SEAMEN	30
BILLS PASSED	30
TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN WAN CHAI AND KWUN TONG	31
WATER CUT	31

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978

- 1 -

GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING WAYS TO FURTHER
IMPROVE SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY

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THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING LOWERING THE QUALIFYING AGE FOR OLD AGE ALLOWANCE TO 70 FROM OCTOBER 1 THIS YEAR AND THE EARLY EXPANSION OF THE COMMUNITY NURSING SERVICE FOR THE ELDERLY.

THIS WAS ANNOUNCED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON. E.P. HO, IN REPLY TO POINTS RAISED BY THE UNOFFICIALS ~~DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GREEN PAPER ON SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.~~

MR. HO SAID IF THE PROPOSAL FOR LOWERING THE QUALIFYING AGE FROM OCTOBER 1 WAS APPROVED, THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT WOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO EFFECT PAYMENTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE FROM THAT DATE, BUT WHERE DELAYS COULD NOT BE AVOIDED SUCH CASES WOULD EVENTUALLY RECEIVE BACK PAYMENTS.

HE SAID THAT THE PROPOSAL FOR INTRODUCING THE IMPROVEMENT ON THE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE IN TWO STEPS, WAS PARTIALLY FINANCIAL, BUT MAINLY DUE TO THE SIZE OF THE POTENTIAL NEW CASE LOAD WHICH A SINGLE STEP COULD INVOLVE.

HE SAID: +THE 70-74 AGE GROUP IS NOW ESTIMATED TO BE 74,000 ON OCTOBER 1, 1978. EVEN IF THIS RESULTS IN AN INITIAL TAKE-UP RATE OF 50% OR 37,000 THIS WOULD STILL REPRESENT NEARLY A 60 PER CENT INCREASE ON THE PRESENT CLIENTELE OF 64,000.

+ACCORDINGLY, IF SUCH A LARGE NUMBER OF NEW APPLICATIONS DID COME FORWARD TOGETHER--AND IT IS ONLY REASONABLE TO ASSUME THIS -- SOME INITIAL DELAYS IN PROCESSING THEM WOULD BE INEVITABLE,+ HE ADDED.

ON COMMUNITY NURSING SERVICE FOR THE ELDERLY, MR. HO SAID THE MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT A RECENT MEETING HAS ALSO RECOMMENDED THE EARLY EXPANSION OF SUCH SERVICE AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE CONSIDERING IN THE COMING FEW MONTHS THE MOST PRACTICAL MEANS OF ACHIEVING OUR OBJECTIVE IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME.

+THE PLANNING TARGET OF 34 COMMUNITY NURSES FOR EACH 100,000 AGED 65 AND OVER IS A MODEST BUT REALISTIC START, AND WE SHALL BE REFINING THIS TARGET ON THE ADVICE OF THE MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN THE LIGHT OF EXPERIENCE GAINED,+ HE SAID.

ON THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE CARE AND ATTENTION FACILITIES FOR THE ELDERLY, MR. HO AGREED THAT THIS IS THE AREA WHERE FAIRLY RAPID EXPANSION IS REQUIRED AND A CAREFUL EXAMINATION IS BEING MADE OF THE RESPECTIVE ROLES OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND THE GOVERNMENT IN MEETING PLANNED TARGETS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE PLANNING RATIO OF 4 PLACES FOR EVERY 1,000 AGED 60 AND OVER IS A TENTATIVE ONE AND IF WE CAN EVEN REACH THIS TARGET WITHIN A FEW YEARS, WE WOULD NOT BE DOING TOO BADLY.

/REPLYING

REPLYING TO ANOTHER POINT RAISED BY THE UNOFFICIALS, MR. HO SAID EMPHASIS HAS BEEN PLACED ON THE VALUE OF EDUCATION, NOT ONLY OF THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE AS THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS THE ELDERLY, BUT ALSO OF THE ELDERLY THEMSELVES ON HEALTH MATTERS AND ON BRIDGING THE GENERATION GAP.

+DETERMINED AND SUSTAINED EFFORTS IN THIS AREA WILL BE MADE AND WE SHALL MOBILISE EVERY RESOURCE IN DOING SO,+ HE SAID.

ON DR. FANG'S REMARKS ON THE INCREASED CHARGES LEVIED BY INSTITUTIONS AS A RESULT OF THE INTRODUCTION OF AN OLD AGE SUPPLEMENT IN APRIL THIS YEAR, MR. HO SAID BOTH THIS SUPPLEMENT AND THE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE ARE TO ASSIST THE ELDERLY AND THEIR FAMILIES TO MEET ANY ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL NEEDS WHICH MAY ARISE OUT OF OLD AGE INCLUDING THE PURCHASE OF SERVICES IN WHATEVER FORM.

HE SAID IT IS NOT UNREASONABLE THAT AN OLD PERSON WHO REQUIRES TO ENTER AN OLD PEOPLE'S HOME SHOULD PAY TOWARDS THIS MAINTENANCE AS HE OR HIS FAMILY WOULD HAVE TO IN ORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE FAMILY HOME.

BUT HE STRESSED THAT IT IS NOT THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION THAT ANY INCREASED ALLOWANCE SHOULD BE TAKEN AWAY ENTIRELY BY FEES CHARGED IN SUBVENTED INSTITUTIONS.

+SINCE APRIL 1978, OUR OPERATIONAL GUIDELINE IS THAT, IN GENERAL, GOVERNMENT AND SUBVENTED INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ALLOW THE ELDERLY SINGLETONS UNDER THEIR CARE TO RETAIN \$100 OF THEIR MONTHLY CASH ALLOWANCES TO SPEND AS THEY PLEASE IN PLACE OF THE PREVIOUS SUM OF \$36 ALLOWED TO THEM AS POCKET MONEY UNDER PUBLIC ASSISTANCE ARRANGEMENTS.+

AS REGARDS PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS, MR. HO SAID CHARGES AND PAYMENTS ARE A MATTER ENTIRELY BETWEEN THE INSTITUTION AND THE ELDERLY PERSON CONCERNED AND THERE IS NO QUESTION OF GOVERNMENT PENALISING SUCH PERSONS BY WITHHOLDING ANY ALLOWANCES THEY MAY BE ENTITLED TO.

HE ALSO ASSURED MR. PETER C. WONG THAT THE PROPOSED SURVEY ON CHAI-TONG IS NOT A PRELUDE TO DIRECT GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION.

HE SAID: **+SINCE THESE CHAI-TONG CATER FOR A SIZEABLE NUMBER OF ELDERLY PERSONS, THE GOVERNMENT IS ANXIOUS TO OBTAIN BETTER INFORMATION ON EXISTING SERVICES AND TO SEE IN WHAT WAYS WE COULD ASSIST THE ORGANISATIONS CONCERNED TO IMPROVE THEIR STANDARDS, IF SUCH IS INDICATED.**

+RELIGIOUS PRACTICES WILL NOT BE DISTURBED AND THE SURVEY WILL CERTAINLY BE CARRIED OUT IN CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH THE RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS CONCERNED.+

ON MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH'S SUGGESTION FOR THE EARLY EXPANSION OF HOME HELP SERVICE, MR. HO SAID RESPONSE FROM THE VOLUNTARY SERVICES HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGING SO FAR AND A GREATER NUMBER OF HOME HELPERS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE BY THE END OF THIS YEAR THAN THAT ENVISAGED IN THE GREEN PAPER.

HE ALSO ASSURED MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH AND MISS JOYCE M. BENNETT THAT THE GOVERNMENT IN DEVISING STANDARDS FOR THE EXPANDING RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONAL CARE FOR THE ELDERLY, WILL HAVE REGARD BOTH TO THE WELFARE OF ELDERLY AND TO A REALISTIC LEVEL OF SERVICE IN TERMS OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978

- 3 -

CALL FOR EARLY LOWERING OF QUALIFYING AGE
FOR OLD AGE ALLOWANCE TO 70
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THE UMELCO AD HOC GROUP FORMED TO STUDY THE GREEN PAPER ON SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY HAS ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO LOWER THE AGE OF ELIGIBILITY FOR THE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE TO 70 THIS OCTOBER INSTEAD OF APRIL NEXT YEAR.

MOVING THE DEBATE ON THE GREEN PAPER IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, CONVENER OF THE AD HOC GROUP, DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG ALSO CALLED ATTENTION TO TWO OTHER CASH ASSISTANCES WHICH NEED IMPROVEMENT.

ONE IS THE ALLOWANCE GIVEN TO THOSE ELDERLY PERSONS LIVING IN INSTITUTIONS. THE GOVERNMENT IS TAKING AWAY A MAJOR PART OF IT BY REDUCING SUBVENTIONS TO THE INSTITUTIONS CONCERNED, HE SAID.

IN REAL TERMS, THEREFORE, THE ELDERLY BENEFIT VERY LITTLE AND THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WHICH ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR RUNNING THESE INSTITUTIONS ARE DISCREDITED BECAUSE THEY ARE ASKED TO INCREASE THEIR CHARGES, HE ADDED.

THE OTHER CASH ASSISTANCE IS THE OLD AGE SUPPLEMENT FOR THE ELDERLY WHICH WAS ARBITRARILY FIXED AT HALF THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE ALLOWANCE RECEIVABLE BY A SINGLE PERSON.

TO MAKE THIS ALLOWANCE MORE REALISTIC, DR. FANG SUPPORTED THE PROPOSAL IN THE GREEN PAPER TO DRAW UP AN INDEX OF OLD AGE NEEDS, EMPHASISING SUCH FACTORS AS TRANSPORT, HOME HELP, EXPENSES ARISING OUT OF ILL HEALTH AND INFIRMITY, SPECIAL DIET, AND PERSONAL EXPENSES. HE HOPED THIS INDEX WOULD BE INTRODUCED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

FIVE OTHER UNOFFICIAL COUNCILLORS SPOKE ON THE GREEN PAPER DURING THE DEBATE.

THE REV. THE HON. JOYCE M. BENNETT AND THE HON. WONG LAM THOUGHT THE ADMINISTRATIVE REASON GIVEN FOR NOT LOWERING THE QUALIFYING AGE FOR THE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE THIS OCTOBER WAS UNCONVINCING. +CIVIL SERVANTS ARE THE SERVANTS OF THE PEOPLE,+ MISS BENNETT SAID. +THEREFORE IF WE BELIEVE IT IS RIGHT TO GIVE THE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE AT 70 WE SHOULD NOT POSTPONE THIS BENEFIT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE CONVENIENCE.+

THE HON. MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE LEVEL OF FEES CHARGED BY INSTITUTIONS WHERE THE ELDERLY RECEIVE WELFARE ALLOWANCES.

SHE HOPED IT WOULD NOT BE SUCH THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ACCUSED OF +GIVING WITH ONE HAND, AND TAKING BACK WITH THE OTHER.+ THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALSO ENSURE THAT NO ONE IS PREVENTED FROM USING THE SERVICES BECAUSE OF THE INCREASE IN FEES, SHE SAID.

/MISS BENNETT

MISS BENNETT MADE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS RECEIVING RECURRENT SUBSIDIES FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS. IN THE U.K., RESIDENTS IN PRIVATE NURSING HOMES STILL RECEIVE THE STATE PENSION. +IF A PERSON CHOOSES TO USE HIS OLD AGE ALLOWANCE TO ENABLE HIM TO RESIDE IN A PRIVATE OLD PEOPLE'S HOME OR NURSING HOME, HE SHOULD NOT BE PENALISED,+ SHE SAID.

COMMUNITY NURSING

THE UNOFFICIALS STRONGLY ADVOCATED ADOPTING AND EXTENDING THE COMMUNITY NURSING SERVICE.

DR. FANG SAID COMMUNITY NURSING WOULD GO A LONG WAY IN PROVIDING CARE FOR THE AGED WITHIN THEIR FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND WOULD RELEASE BEDS IN HOSPITALS FOR THOSE WHO REQUIRE MORE INTENSIVE MEDICAL CARE.

MISS BENNETT POINTED OUT THAT THE PLANNING RATIO FOR HONG KONG IS TO BE ONE COMMUNITY NURSE FOR 3,000 PEOPLE OVER THE AGE OF 65, WHILST IN ENGLAND, IT IS ONE FOR 1,400 AND THERE ARE FAR MORE DOCTORS WILLING AND ABLE TO MAKE HOME VISITS.

SHE ASKED IF IT IS POSSIBLE OR PRACTICABLE FOR THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO MAKE A SURVEY OF SUCH HOME VISITS BY DOCTORS IN HONG KONG.

REGARDLESS OF THE SURVEY, SHE ADDED, IT IS CLEAR THAT WE NEED MORE COMMUNITY NURSES AND THE RATIO OF NURSES TO THE ELDERLY POPULATION SHOULD BE INCREASED.

MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH SAID THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF THE SERVICE HAS BEEN CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED BY THE PILOT SCHEME CONDUCTED BY VOLUNTARY AGENCIES. SHE HOPED THAT ENCOURAGING RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD BE MADE BY THE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WHICH WILL SHORTLY REVIEW THE SCHEME.

SHE SUGGESTED THAT COMMUNITY NURSES CAN TRAIN VOLUNTEERS TO VISIT OLD PEOPLE AND TO CARRY OUT MINOR NURSING DUTIES, FOLLOWING THE EXPERIENCE OF THE ST. JOHN'S AMBULANCE.

THE SERVICES OF HEALTH VISITORS AND THE COMMUNITY NURSES CAN BE COMBINED TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE HEALTH EDUCATION IS BROUGHT TO THE NOTICE OF THE ELDERLY.

MISS BENNETT ALSO THOUGHT THAT COMMUNITY NURSES ARE IDEALLY PLACED TO EDUCATE THE FAMILY IN THE CARE OF THEIR ELDERLY MEMBERS.

SHE NOTED THAT THE AIM OF EXISTING GERIATRIC SERVICES IS TO RESTORE INDEPENDENCE FOR THE ELDERLY AND NOT TO PROVIDE LONG-TERM CARE. ONE OF THE MOST DISTRESSING ASPECTS OF THIS IS THE FREQUENT DESIRE OF THE OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS TO REFUSE THE ELDERLY TO RETURN HOME, SHE SAID.

THE COMMUNITY NURSES WOULD MEET WITH AND DISCUSS WITH THE FAMILY MEMBERS HOW THEY COULD CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THE POST-HOSPITAL CARE, AND PROVIDE THE REASSURANCE TO ENABLE THE ELDERLY TO REMAIN IN THE COMMUNITY.

THE HON. WONG LAM POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE TOO MANY PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS IN CALCULATING THE REQUIREMENT FOR COMMUNITY NURSES.

IF TIME SPENT ON TRANSPORT, WRITING REPORTS, AND DISCUSSING WITH DOCTORS ABOUT THE PATIENTS' CONDITION IS ALSO COUNTED, IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER ONE COMMUNITY NURSE CAN UNDERTAKE EIGHT VISITS TO THE ELDERLY PER DAY= AND AFTER DEDUCTING PUBLIC HOLIDAYS AND ANNUAL LEAVE, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR A COMMUNITY NURSE TO HAVE 50 WORKING WEEKS PER YEAR.

MR. WONG BELIEVED MANY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AS WELL AS SOCIAL WORKERS WOULD AGREE WITH HIM THAT THE COMMUNITY NURSING SCHEME IS THE BEST APPROACH, HAVING REGARD TO THE PRESENT SHORTFALL OF HOSPITAL BEDS.

OTHER HEALTH SERVICES

MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH SUGGESTED THAT GENERAL OUT-PATIENT CLINICS SHOULD SET ASIDE CERTAIN HOURS TO TREAT OLD PEOPLE ONLY.

SUCH HOURS WOULD HAVE TO BE CONVENIENT TO THE ELDERLY, AND MEDICAL STAFF ASSIGNED TO SERVE DURING THESE HOURS WOULD BE SPECIFICALLY TRAINED FOR GERIATRIC WORK.

SHE THOUGHT THE PROPOSED MEDICAL INSURANCE SCHEME WELL WORTH CONSIDERING BUT SUGGESTED THAT BEFORE IMPLEMENTING IT EXTENSIVELY, THERE SHOULD BE PILOT PROJECTS AND A STUDY ON THE EXPERIENCE GAINED BY THE UNITED CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL WHICH OPERATED SUCH A SCHEME.

SHE HOPED THAT DENTAL SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY COULD BE STRENGTHENED AND DENTAL SUBSIDIES FOR ELDERLY PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS REGULARLY REVIEWED AND ADJUSTED.

MR. WONG LAM ALSO STRESSED THAT IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE NEEDY ELDERLY PERSONS WITH ASSISTANCE TO OBTAIN DENTURES, INSTEAD OF REQUIRING THEM TO TURN TO CHARITABLE TRUST FUNDS FOR HELP.

CARE AND ATTENTION HOMES

THE UNOFFICIALS DREW ATTENTION TO THE URGENT NEED TO PROVIDE MORE CARE AND ATTENTION HOMES FOR THE ELDERLY. AN INCREASINGLY LARGE NUMBER OF ELDERLY PEOPLE, BECAUSE OF THEIR DETERIORATING HEALTH, REQUIRE PERSONAL AND NURSING CARE ALTHOUGH THEY MAY NOT REQUIRE MEDICAL CARE, DR. FANG SAID.

THESE HOMES WILL FILL A GAP IN OUR EXISTING SERVICES BECAUSE THESE ELDERLY PEOPLE SHOULD NOT OCCUPY GERIATRIC BEDS AND ARE UNABLE TO BE CARED FOR BY THEIR FAMILIES WITHOUT HELP. YET THEY ARE NOT SUITABLE FOR HOMES FOR THE AGED WHERE RESIDENTS CAN LOOK AFTER THEMSELVES.

THE UMELCO AD HOC GROUP FELT THAT THESE HOMES DO NOT IMPOSE A HEAVY DRAIN ON RESOURCES, EITHER FINANCIALLY OR IN TERMS OF MANPOWER.

THEY RECOMMENDED THAT GREATER PRIORITY SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE EARLY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GREEN PAPER PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PLACES.

MR. WONG LAM FURTHER THOUGHT IT SOME WHAT DISAPPOINTING TO HAVE A PLANNING RATIO OF FOUR PLACES PER 1,000 ELDERLY. THE GREEN PAPER ALSO REVEALED THAT THERE WOULD BE RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS IN ACHIEVING THIS TARGET IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

HE CONSIDERED THAT THERE IS URGENT NEED FOR THE SERVICE IN HONG KONG AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD GIVE IT GREATER PRIORITY OVER OTHER PRIORITY SERVICES.

BOTH MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH AND MISS BENNETT PROPOSED THAT SUITABLE STANDARDS BE DRAWN UP FOR THE CONTROL OF THESE INSTITUTIONS.

THESE STANDARDS SHOULD BE REALISTIC AND SUITABLE FOR THE LOCAL SITUATION BUT SHOULD, HOWEVER, INDICATE THE LEVEL OF QUALITY OF SERVICE WHICH SHOULD BE MAINTAINED.

MISS BENNETT SUGGESTED THAT WE DO NOT HAVE TO BE IDEALISTIC BUT CAN STATE A DECENT AVERAGE REGARDING SPACE, TOILET AND KITCHEN FACILITIES AND THE TRAINING OF STAFF.

MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT AN IMPROVEMENT IN QUALITY OF SERVICE WOULD NECESSARILY REQUIRE A GREATER FINANCIAL COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT, AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NUMBER, TYPE, AND KIND OF PERSONS TO BE TRAINED, APPROPRIATE TRAINING FACILITIES FOR THEM, AND A DETERMINATION OF THE LEVELS OF TRAINING REQUIRED.

SHE HOPED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD LOOK INTO THESE AREAS WHEN IT CONTEMPLATES AN EXPANSION OF INSTITUTIONAL CARE FOR THE AGED.

ACCOMMODATION IN CHAI-TONGS

THE HON. PETER C. WONG CONFINED HIS COMMENTS ON THE GREEN PAPER TO THE ROLE PLAYED BY 'CHAI-TONGS' (LITERALLY VEGETARIAN HALLS).

HE GENERALLY AGREED WITH THE VIEWS OF THE GREEN PAPER BUT POINTED OUT THAT IT HAD OMITTED TO MENTION THAT 'CHAI-TONGS' ARE MOSTLY RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS, EITHER BUDDHIST OR TAOIST.

AS SUCH, HE SAID, NORMAL STANDARDS OF SERVICES ARE NOT READILY APPLICABLE, AND DIRECT GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION WOULD BE UNDESIRABLE. ANY ATTEMPT TO DO SO WOULD VIOLATE THE PRINCIPLE OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION.

HE SUPPORTED THE PROPOSED STUDY ON THESE 'CHAI-TONGS' BUT SAID IT SHOULD PREFERABLY BE DONE, EITHER SEPARATELY OR JOINTLY, BY THE HONG KONG BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION AND THE TAOIST ASSOCIATION UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

ANY STEP THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN TO IMPROVE THEIR OPERATIONS SHOULD ALSO BE UNDERTAKEN THROUGH THESE TWO ASSOCIATIONS.

IN THIS WAY, THE AIMS OF THE GREEN PAPER WOULD BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE PRINCIPLE OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION.

ACCOMMODATION IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES

THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN THOUGHT THAT IT SHOULD BE PART OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S POLICY TO ALLOW FOR EXTRA SPACE OVER AND ABOVE THE STANDARD NORM FOR FAMILIES WHICH HAVE PERSONS AGED 60 AND OVER.

HE SAID THIS WOULD BE A FURTHER INCENTIVE TO FAMILIES TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR ELDERLY MEMBERS, IN THE SAME WAY AS THE DEPENDENT PARENTS' ALLOWANCE.

FOR THOSE OLD PEOPLE WHO HAVE NO FAMILY, SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION SHOULD BE PROVIDED FOR THEM IN HOSTELS IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES IF NO OTHER ACCOMMODATION IS AVAILABLE.

MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH REFERRED TO THE UNDER-UTILISED QUOTA FOR COMPASSIONATE REHOUSING IN THE PAST TWO YEARS AND ATTRIBUTED THIS TO A LACK OF PUBLICITY FOR THE SERVICE.

SHE SUGGESTED THAT THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES INVOLVED SHOULD BE INFORMED OF THE QUOTAS DETERMINED EACH YEAR. SHE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT MORE HOUSING UNITS, SPECIALLY SUITED TO THE NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY, SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE IN THE ESTATES.

MR. WONG LAM FURTHER URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE NEEDY ELDERLY PERSONS WHO MOVE INTO PUBLIC HOUSING WITH RENOVATION EXPENSES.

THE GREEN PAPER HAD STATED BROADLY THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSIDERING MAKING USE OF CHARITABLE TRUST FUNDS TO PROVIDE THESE EXPENSES AND SOME OTHER SERVICES.

MR. WONG BELIEVED THAT MANY WOULD FEEL SO UNEASY THAT THEY WOULD SIMPLY NOT BOTHER, THUS DEFEATING ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE GREEN PAPER.

FURTHERMORE, EVEN IGNORING THE FACT THAT MANY CHARITABLE TRUST FUNDS HAVE BEEN COMMITTED TO SPECIFIC USES, THEIR LIMITED INCOME MAY NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO MEET ALL REQUESTS, HE SAID.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

DR. FANG POINTED OUT THAT MANY OF THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES LISTED IN THE GREEN PAPER, SUCH AS HOME HELP AND VISITING SERVICE, COULD WELL BE PROVIDED BY YOUNG VOLUNTEERS. HE HOPED THE GOVERNMENT WOULD MOBILISE AVAILABLE RESOURCES TO HELP MEET ITS OBJECTIVES.

MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH THOUGHT THE TARGET OF 80 HOME HELPERS BY 1979/80 WAS TOO MODEST. SHE SAID THE SERVICE IS NOT AN EXPENSIVE ONE, AND MANY JOINING AS HOME HELPERS DO NOT DO IT PURELY FOR MONETARY REWARD.

/SHE SUGGESTED

SHE SUGGESTED THAT SOME VOLUNTARY AGENCIES SHOULD BE SUBVENTED SPECIFICALLY TO ORGANISE AND TRAIN VOLUNTEERS TO PROVIDE VISITING SERVICES.

MR. WONG LAM ALSO FELT THAT THERE IS A NEED TO TRAIN NON-PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS SO THAT THERE WILL BE PEOPLE WILLING TO PERFORM SERVICES WHICH DO NOT CALL FOR HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE.

LEISURE ACTIVITIES

MR. CHEONG-LEEN POINTED OUT THAT SOCIAL CLUBS AND CENTRES FOR THE ELDERLY ONLY CATER FOR LESS THAN 10 PER CENT OF THE ESTIMATED DEMAND AT PRESENT. THERE OUGHT TO BE A RAPID BUILD-UP OF THESE FACILITIES ON A DISTRICT BASIS, WITH ENCOURAGEMENT FOR MORE VOLUNTARY INITIATIVE.

MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH RECOMMENDED THAT MULTI-SERVICE CENTRES SHOULD BE PROVIDED, SOMEWHAT SIMILAR TO THE COMMUNITY CENTRES, IN EACH DISTRICT OR NEIGHBOURHOOD.

THESE CENTRES COULD ALSO PROVIDE HANDICRAFT WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ELDERLY, NOT NECESSARILY INCOME-ORIENTED, TO ENABLE THEM TO FEEL THEY ARE MAKING A WORTHWHILE CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.

TRAFFIC SAFETY

MR. CHEONG-LEEN HOPED THAT SPECIAL EFFORTS WOULD BE MADE TO CONDUCT A CONTINUOUS CAMPAIGN TO EDUCATE THE ELDERLY ON TRAFFIC SAFETY. HE POINTED OUT THAT IN 1976, ONE-THIRD OF ALL THE VICTIMS OF FATAL TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS WERE AGED 60 AND ABOVE.

ROLE OF THE ELDERLY

MR. CHEONG-LEEN EMPHASISED THAT OLD PEOPLE SHOULD BE ALLOWED OR EVEN ENCOURAGED TO BE ACTIVE WHILE THEY ARE PHYSICALLY ABLE TO DO SO.

HE SAID IN HONG KONG A HIGH PROPORTION OF PERSONS BETWEEN 55-65 ARE STILL EMPLOYED, AS COMPARED WITH OTHER CITIES IN INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES, AND THIS SHOULD NOT BE DISCOURAGED.

THEY WILL FEEL THEY ARE WANTED, ARE PART OF OUR SOCIETY AND WHAT IS MORE, THEY WILL STILL RETAIN THEIR SELF-RESPECT, HE SAID.

MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH SAID THAT ELDERLY PEOPLE MUST BE ALLOWED A ROLE IN SOCIETY SO THAT THEY DO NOT FEEL SEGREGATED.

SHE SAID WE MUST PREVENT OLD PEOPLE FROM LONELINESS AND ISOLATION WHICH ARE ALMOST INEVITABLE IN INDUSTRIALISED SOCIETIES.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN ALSO EMPHASISED THAT OLD PEOPLE ARE ENTITLED AS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT TO BE TAKEN CARE OF BY SOCIETY.

/HE NOTED

HE NOTED HOWEVER THAT SERVICES TO THE ELDERLY AS OUTLINED IN THE GREEN PAPER WILL ONLY BE MEANINGFUL IF THEY ARE PROVIDED IN SUFFICIENT QUANTITY AS WELL AS QUALITY TO TAKE CARE OF THE INCREASED NUMBER OF OLD PEOPLE PROJECTED FOR BY 1986. WITH INCREASED LIFE EXPECTANCY, THERE WILL BE 573,000 PERSONS OR 10.7 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL POPULATION WHO WILL BE AGED 60 AND OVER BY THAT TIME, HE SAID.

A CARING COMMUNITY

DR. FANG POINTED OUT THAT THE ATTITUDE OF THE COMMUNITY COULD BE A DECIDING FACTOR IN SUSTAINING THE ELDERLY PERSONS' SELF-RESPECT AND INTEGRATION IN THE COMMUNITY. HE HOPED THE GOVERNMENT WOULD EXPLORE EVERY POSSIBLE MEANS OF PROMOTING PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND CONSIDERATION OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE AGED.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN STRESSED THAT BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS WOULD HAVE TO PROMOTE THE CONCEPT OF THE +CARING COMMUNITY+ FOR OLD PEOPLE.

HE SAID BECAUSE OF THE CHINESE TRADITION OF CLOSE FAMILY TIES, MANY OLD PEOPLE STILL LIVE WITH THEIR CHILDREN AND THIS MAKES IT EASIER FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO EXPAND MORE RAPIDLY ITS SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT CHANGING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS, AND DIFFERENT ATTITUDES ON THE PART OF YOUNG PEOPLE WOULD NOT ERODE THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY COHESIVENESS.

THEREFORE, HE SAID, A BALANCE WOULD HAVE TO BE STRUCK IN PROVIDING SERVICES. ON THE ONE HAND, SUPPORT SERVICES OUGHT TO BE PROVIDED TO ENCOURAGE AND HELP FAMILIES LOOK AFTER THEIR ELDERLY MEMBERS. ON THE OTHER, OTHER SERVICES SUCH AS RESIDENTIAL CARE OR HOSPITAL CARE SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT BE CARED FOR WITHIN THE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT.

MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH SUGGESTED THAT DISCUSSIONS ON THE PROBLEMS OF OLD AGE SHOULD BE A PART OF THE CURRICULUM IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS. FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES SHOULD ALSO AIM AT HELPING THE PUBLIC UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY.

MR. WONG LAM POINTED OUT THAT THE DISSEMINATION OF HEALTH INFORMATION TO THE ELDERLY AND THE PROMOTION OF RESPECT FOR THE AGED ARE INADEQUATE AT PRESENT.

HE WELCOMED THE GREEN PAPER'S PROPOSAL TO REINFORCE GOVERNMENT EFFORTS IN THIS DIRECTION AND HOPED IT WOULD MAKE GREATER USE OF AND WORK CLOSELY WITH SUCH CIVIC BODIES AS MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES, KAIFONG ASSOCIATIONS AND CLANSMEN ASSOCIATIONS TO ACHIEVE MAXIMUM RESULTS.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978

- 10 -

SUPREME COURT TO BE VACATED
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TO SAFEGUARD THE SUPREME COURT BUILDING FROM FURTHER POSSIBLE DETERIORATION, MAJOR SHORING WORK IS TO BE CARRIED OUT OVER THE NEXT TWO MONTHS.

AS THE SCALE OF THE INTERNAL SHORING CONSIDERED NECESSARY WOULD MAKE NORMAL USE OF THE COURTS IMPRACTICAL, THE BUILDING IS TO BE VACATED.

THE SUPREME COURT IS OF TRADITIONAL STONE AND BRICK CONSTRUCTION WITH LOAD BEARING WALLS SUPPORTED ON CHINA FIR PILES. BEFORE MTR STATION EXCAVATION BEGAN ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE SUPREME COURT, THE NORTH FACADE WAS BRACED BY THE MTR CONTRACTOR TO ALLOW THE STRUCTURE TO SUBSIDE UNIFORMLY IF SETTLEMENT WERE EXPERIENCED AND SO REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF DAMAGE TO THE BUILDING.

AS EXCAVATION IN CHATER ROAD CONTINUED PROGRESSIVE SETTLEMENT WAS RECORDED AND EXTENSIVE SHORING WORK BECAME NECESSARY.

THE PORTION OF THE BUILDING TO THE SOUTH OF THE SOUTH CORRIDOR REMAINED STABLE WHILE THE REST OF THE BUILDING SETTLED CAUSING EXTENSIVE CRACKS ALONG THE LINE OF THE SOUTH CORRIDOR. MOVEMENT HAS ALSO BEEN FOUND IN THE STONE LANTERN OVER THE DOME, THE DOME ROOF AND THE NORTH CORRIDOR.

IN ADDITION TO THE TEMPORARY SUPPORT WORK ALREADY CARRIED OUT WITHIN THE BUILDING, ACTION TO MINIMISE SETTLEMENT HAS BEEN UNDERTAKEN BY THE MTR CONTRACTOR IN THE FORM OF RE-WATERING WELLS TO MAINTAIN THE LOCAL WATER TABLE.

BECAUSE DEEPER EXCAVATION IS PROGRAMMED FOR AUGUST IN THE ADJACENT SECTIONS OF CHATER ROAD FURTHER SHORING AND STRUTTING WILL BE CARRIED OUT.

TO ALLOW THE JUDICIARY TO CONTINUE ITS WORK, PWD HAS UNDERTAKEN FITTING OUT WORKS TO VARIOUS BUILDINGS.

/MEANWHILE,

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978

- 11 -

MEANWHILE, THE REGISTRAR OF SUPREME COURT, MR. SIMON MAYO, ANNOUNCED THE FOLLOWING ARRANGEMENTS.

- (A) WESTERN MAGISTRACY AND THE TENANCY TRIBUNAL WILL REMOVE TO FIRE BRIGADE BUILDING AT 46 CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL, HONG KONG. THE MOVE WILL BE EFFECTED OVER THE WEEKEND OF THE 17TH AND 18TH JUNE AND THE COURTS WILL OPERATE AT FIRE BRIGADE BUILDING ON MONDAY, THE 19TH JUNE. FROM THAT DATE THE MAGISTRACY WILL BE KNOWN AS WESTERN MAGISTRACY, FIRE BRIGADE BUILDING. FROM TODAY'S DATE SUMMONS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS TO BE SERVED ON PARTIES WILL CONTAIN PARTICULARS OF THE NEW ADDRESS OF WESTERN MAGISTRACY. WHERE PARTIES HAVE ALREADY BEEN SERVED WITH PROCESS ENDEAVOURS WILL BE MADE TO PROVIDE PARTICULARS OF THE NEW ADDRESS AND FOR A SUITABLE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD PARTIES WHO ARE NOT AWARE OF THE PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE REFERRED FROM THE PRESENT WESTERN MAGISTRACY AT 2 POKFULAM ROAD TO THE NEW ADDRESS.
- (B) THE VICTORIA DISTRICT COURT WILL REMOVE TO WESTERN MAGISTRACY AT 2 POKFULAM ROAD OVER THE WEEKEND OF THE 24TH AND 25TH JUNE AND THE COURTS WILL OPERATE AT WESTERN MAGISTRACY ON THE 26TH JUNE. FROM THAT DATE WESTERN MAGISTRACY WILL BE KNOWN AS VICTORIA DISTRICT COURT AT WESTERN. SIMILAR ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE FOR NOTIFYING INTERESTED PARTIES OF THE CHANGE.
- (C) THE SUPREME COURT WILL REMOVE TO THE VICTORIA DISTRICT COURT AT BATTERY PATH OVER THE WEEKEND OF THE 8TH AND 9TH JULY. THE COURTS WILL OPERATE AT BATTERY PATH ON THE 10TH JULY. FROM THAT DATE THE PRESENT VICTORIA DISTRICT COURT WILL BE KNOWN AS THE SUPREME COURT AT BATTERY PATH. ALSO ON THE SAME DATES THE REGISTRARS OF THE SUPREME COURT EXCLUDING MYSELF, THE SUPREME COURT REGISTRY, THE PROBATE REGISTRY, THE ACCOUNTS OFFICE AND THE LIBRARY WILL REMOVE TO FIRE BRIGADE BUILDING. SIMILAR ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE FOR NOTIFYING PARTIES CONCERNED OF THE CHANGE. IN ADDITION ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE TO ENSURE THAT PROMINENT NOTICES ARE DISPLAYED AT THE PRESENT SUPREME COURT BUILDING TO ENSURE THAT SUFFICIENT INSTRUCTIONS AND DIRECTIONS ARE PROVIDED TO PERSONS HAVING RECOURSE TO THE COURTS TO ENSURE THAT THEY KNOW WHERE TO ATTEND.

MR. MAYO SAID A GREAT DEAL OF THE WORK CONNECTED WITH THE VARIOUS MOVES HAD ALREADY BEEN CARRIED OUT AND IT WAS HOPED TO HAVE IT ALL COMPLETED BEFORE THE MOVES TAKE PLACE. HE SAID ANY CHANGE OF PLAN WOULD BE GIVEN PUBLICITY SO AS TO REDUCE INCONVENIENCE TO THE PUBLIC.

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/12

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978

- 12 -

EXPANSION OF HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME TO BE CONSIDERED

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THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. DONALD LIAO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER EXPANDING THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME WHEN THE PROJECTS PROPOSED BY PRIVATE DEVELOPERS ARE FURTHER ADVANCED.

+ALL ASPECTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS PRESENTED BY DEVELOPERS WILL REQUIRE CAREFUL EVALUATION, AND WHEN THE PROJECTS ARE FURTHER ADVANCED, IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO CONSIDER WHETHER AND WHERE THIS EXPERIMENTAL SCHEME SHOULD BE FURTHER EXPANDED,+ MR. LIAO SAID.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN WHO ASKED IF THE GOVERNMENT WILL EXPAND ITS EXISTING PLANS FOR THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME, WITH OR WITHOUT THE COOPERATION OF THE PRIVATE BUILDING SECTOR, SO AS TO REDUCE OVER SPECULATION IN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED FLATS BY INDIVIDUAL PURCHASERS.

MR. LIAO SAID THE DEMAND FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED FLATS AMONG HOME BUYERS COULD BE ILLUSTRATED BY THE SIGNIFICANT INCREASE OF THEIR PRODUCTION BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR FROM ABOUT 18,000 FLATS FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS TO OVER 28,500 FOR THIS YEAR AND A SIMILAR NUMBER THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

MR. LIAO SAID IN 1979, PHASE I OF THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME WILL ADD A FURTHER 8,300 FLATS, AND IN 1980, PHASE II AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION SCHEME, A FURTHER 6,700.

WHILE THERE IS NO SCOPE FOR EXPANDING PRODUCTION IN THESE FIRST TWO YEARS, THE EXPERIENCE GAINED FROM THESE SCHEMES WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN REVIEWING THE SIZE OF FUTURE PHASES,+ MR. LIAO SAID.

MR. LIAO FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT BY 1979/80 THE HOUSING AUTHORITY WILL REACH AND MAINTAIN AN ANNUAL PRODUCTION OF OVER 30,000 SMALL FLATS IN ITS RENTED PROGRAMME.

+THIS LEVEL OF PRODUCTION BY BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS SHOULD HAVE A STABILISING EFFECT ON THE HOUSING MARKET,+ HE ADDED.

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/13

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978

- 13 -

GOVERNMENT MONITORING PROPERTY
AND LAND MARKET DEALINGS

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THE GOVERNMENT IS MONITORING THE MARKETS IN BOTH PROPERTY AND LAND AND, IF THIS SHOWS THAT SPECULATION IN LAND IS DAMAGING THE ECONOMY OR SLOWING DOWN THE SUPPLY OF ACCOMMODATION AND THAT THIS IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE, THEN STEPS WOULD BE TAKEN TO COUNTER THE SITUATION, THE HON. DEREK JONES, SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN ON WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WILL SHORTEN THE PAYMENT PERIOD FOR PUBLIC LAND PURCHASES IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE LEVEL OF SPECULATION ON LAND PRICES.

MR. JONES SAID MR. CHEONG-LEEN'S QUESTION FOLLOWED VERY CLOSELY A QUESTION ASKED BY THE HON. S.L. CHEN IN THE COUNCIL TWO SITTINGS AGO.

MR. JONES SAID, MR. CHEN'S QUESTION RELATED TO SPECULATION IN PROPERTY DEALINGS WHILE MR. CHEONG-LEEN WAS REFERRING TO SPECULATION IN LAND. THE TWO ARE IN MANY RESPECTS INTER-RELATED, HE ADDED.

HE SAID HIS REPLY IS MERELY ECHOING THE ONE GIVEN BY THE THEN ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY ON THIS ISSUE.

MR. JONES SAID IF SUCH COUNTER ACTION PROVED TO BE NECESSARY, MR. CHEONG-LEEN'S SUGGESTION WOULD CERTAINLY BE BORNE IN MIND.

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/14

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978

- 14 -

SPECULATION ON INITIAL DEPOSITS ON FLATS
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THE GOVERNMENT IS AWARE THAT THERE IS SPECULATION ON INITIAL DEPOSITS WHEREBY INDIVIDUALS, FOR A RELATIVELY SMALL OUTLAY, ARE ABLE TO BOOK A FLAT WHILE THE SALE AND PURCHASE AGREEMENT IS BEING DRAWN UP AND MEANWHILE TO SELL THIS +BOOKING+ AT A PROFIT BEFORE THEY ARE REQUIRED TO PAY THE BALANCE OF THE FIRST INSTALMENT OF THE PURCHASE PRICE.

THIS WAS STATED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY BY THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. DAVID JORDAN, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. LYDIA DUNN.

BUT, HE SAID AT PRESENT THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO POWERS TO CONTROL THIS PRACTICE.

+IT IS ONE OF A NUMBER OF SPECULATIVE ACTIVITIES IN THE DOMESTIC PROPERTY MARKET WHICH REFLECT THE CURRENT IMBALANCE BETWEEN THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND FOR DOMESTIC ACCOMMODATION,+ HE SAID.

MR. JORDAN EMPHASISED THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS MONITORING THE PROPERTY MARKET TO ENSURE THAT IT HAS ADEQUATE WARNING IF THE SPECULATIVE ACTIVITIES IN THE MARKET APPEAR TO BE DAMAGING TO THE ECONOMY OR TO THE SUPPLY OF DOMESTIC ACCOMMODATION.

ON SECOND PART OF HER QUESTION, MR. JORDAN SAID THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THAT THE RECEIPTS TO WHICH MISS DUNN REFERRED ARE NOT DUTIABLE DOCUMENTS.

+APART FROM THE ENFORCEMENT PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN COLLECTING THE STAMP DUTY IF SUCH DOCUMENTS WERE MADE DUTIABLE, THE RATE OF DUTY WOULD HAVE TO BE VERY HIGH TO ACT AS A DETERRENT TO SPECULATION,+ HE SAID.

REPLYING TO ANOTHER QUESTION FROM MISS DUNN, MR. JORDAN SAID IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE TO COMBAT SPECULATION IN THE PROPERTY MARKET BY SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASING THE STAMP DUTY PAYABLE ON THE TRANSFER OF PURCHASE AND SALE AGREEMENTS.

MR. JORDAN SAID THAT ALTHOUGH, IN PRINCIPLE, A DUTIABLE DOCUMENT COULD BE MADE A NECESSARY PART OF THE TRANSFER OF A SALE AND PURCHASE AGREEMENT, THE STEP WOULD BE SUBJECT TO THE SAME DRAWBACKS AS REGARDS ENFORCEMENT AS IN THE CASE OF SALES OF +BOOKINGS+, OR INITIAL DEPOSIT RECEIPTS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT AS REGARDS HAVING AN ESPECIALLY HIGH RATE OF STAMP DUTY BOTH ON TRANSFERS OF SALE AND PURCHASE AGREEMENTS AND ON REALES WITHIN TWO OR THREE YEARS, THE SAME PROBLEM, OVER THE VERY HIGH RATES REQUIRED TO DETER SPECULATION AND THEIR UNFAIRNESS TO THOSE WITH GENUINE REASONS FOR SELLING, WOULD MAKE THE STAMP DUTY AN +INAPPROPRIATE INSTRUMENT+ WITH WHICH TO COMBAT SPECULATION.

/+IN ANY CASE,

+IN ANY CASE, EVEN IF IT WERE PRACTICABLE TO DEVISE A WAY OF USING STAMP DUTY TO CONTROL SPECULATION, I WOULD BE VERY DOUBTFUL ABOUT WIDENING THE AMBIT OF THE STAMP ORDINANCE IN THIS WAY TO MAKE IT A REGULATORY INSTRUMENT,+ HE SAID.

MR. JORDAN FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT TO DISCOURAGE BY FISCAL MEANS THE SPECULATION THAT IS FELT TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INCREASES IN PRICES EITHER OF SALE AND PURCHASE AGREEMENTS OR OF ACTUAL PROPERTY, IT WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE TO ATTACK THE PROFIT ARISING FROM IT THAN TO INCREASE THE TAX ON THE TOTAL VALUE OF THE TRANSACTIONS.

HE SAID THE FORM OF FISCAL CONTROL MEASURE THAT WOULD BE REQUIRED, IN PRINCIPLE, WOULD BE A DIRECT TAX ON SPECULATIVE PROFITS FROM PROPERTY -- A FORM OF CAPITAL GAINS TAX.

HOWEVER, MR. JORDAN POINTED OUT THAT UNLESS THE NEW TAX WAS FRAMED TO COVER ALL SPECULATIVE GAINS, IT WOULD BREACH ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENTS OF OUR TAX SYSTEM THAT +THE TAX SYSTEM IS AS NEUTRAL AS POSSIBLE AS REGARDS THE INTERNAL COST/PRICE STRUCTURE AND INVESTMENT DECISIONS+.

+THE INTRODUCTION OF A CAPITAL GAINS TAX AIMED SPECIFICALLY AGAINST PROPERTY DEALINGS WOULD VIOLATE THIS REQUIREMENT,+ MR. JORDAN SAID.

+I WOULD HESITATE TO PROPOSE THE INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO MAKE SUCH A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN OUR TAX SYSTEM,+ HE ADDED.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978

- 16 -

HONG KONG REPRESENTATIONS TO THE GATT ON TEXTILES
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IN A STATEMENT TODAY, MR. LAWRENCE MILLS, DIRECTOR OF TRADE, SAID THAT HE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE DISCUSSION IN THE GATT COUNCIL OF HONG KONG'S COMPLAINT AGAINST NORWAY.

+MR. TSAO, COUNCILLOR, HONG KONG AFFAIRS, GENEVA, WHO REPRESENTED HONG KONG AT THE GATT COUNCIL MEETING, POINTED OUT THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT HONG KONG HAD BROUGHT THE MATTER BEFORE THE GATT COUNCIL AND HAD DONE SO WITH GREAT RELUCTANCE.

+THIS IS CERTAINLY TRUE AND WE WERE PARTICULARLY SORRY THAT OUR DISPUTE SHOULD HAVE BEEN WITH A COUNTRY WITH WHICH HONG KONG HAS A LONG TRADING TRADITION,+ MR. MILLS SAID.

THE GATT COUNCIL AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

+THE COUNCIL REQUESTED NORWAY AND THE UNITED KINGDOM ON BEHALF OF HONG KONG TO PURSUE THEIR BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS UNDER ARTICLE XXIII. 1 ON THIS MATTER FOR A FURTHER PERIOD. THE COUNCIL AGREED THAT IF THESE CONSULTATIONS DID NOT LEAD TO A MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY SOLUTION, AN APPROPRIATE PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE HONG KONG COMPLAINT UNDER ARTICLE XXIII.2 WOULD BE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PANEL. THE COUNCIL AUTHORISED ITS CHAIRMAN TO TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PANEL IF THE MATTER HAD NOT BEEN SETTLED SATISFACTORILY ON THE PROPOSED BILATERAL BASIS BY JUNE 30, 1978.

THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF SUCH A PANEL WOULD BE AS FOLLOWS:

'TO EXAMINE, IN THE LIGHT OF THE RELEVANT GATT PROVISIONS, THE MATTER REFERRED TO THE CONTRACTING PARTIES BY THE UNITED KINGDOM ACTING ON BEHALF OF HONG KONG, RELATING TO IMPORTS BY NORWAY OF CERTAIN TEXTILE PRODUCTS FROM HONG KONG, AND TO MAKE SUCH FINDINGS AS WILL ASSIST THE CONTRACTING PARTIES IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS OR RULINGS, AS PROVIDED FOR IN ARTICLE XXIII.2'+

MR. MILLS SAID THAT HE ALREADY HAD PLANS TO TRAVEL TO BRUSSELS, LONDON AND GENEVA LATER THIS MONTH AND HE WOULD NOW BE MAKING URGENT CONTACT WITH THE NORWEGIAN AUTHORITIES IN AN EFFORT TO FIND A MUTUALLY CONVENIENT TIME AND PLACE FOR THE RESUMPTION OF CONSULTATIONS AS REQUESTED BY THE GATT COUNCIL.

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/17

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978

- 17 -

CONSULTANTS PREPARING REPORT ON TRAFFIC CONTROL AND
SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS ENGAGED CONSULTANTS TO PREPARE A REPORT ON TRAFFIC CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE WHICH WILL, AMONG OTHER THINGS, EXAMINE MEANS OF PROVIDING EARLY WARNING OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND INCIDENTS ON THE NETWORK OF HIGH SPEED ROADS NOW BEING BUILT, AND OTHER ROADS WHERE THE PROVISION OF A WARNING SYSTEM IS FELT TO BE NECESSARY.

THIS WAS STATED TODAY BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES IN REPLY TO THE HON. CHARLES YEUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR. YEUNG HAS ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT HAD PLANS TO FOREWARN MOTORISTS OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION OCCURRING IN THE MAJOR HIGHWAYS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES SO AS TO ENABLE THEM TO TAKE ALTERNATIVE ROUTES.

BUT MEANWHILE, MR. JONES SAID THE POLICE MONITORED THE TRAFFIC SITUATION ON A CONTINUING BASIS AND, WHEN CONGESTION OCCURRED ON ANY ROAD, THEY INFORMED RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG AND COMMERCIAL RADIO FOR THE NEWS TO BE BROADCAST.

+AS REGARDS THE LION ROCK TUNNEL, THERE ARE WARNING SIGNALS AT JUNCTIONS AT BOTH ENDS OF THE TUNNEL WHICH ARE ACTIVATED WHEN THE TUNNEL IS CLOSED AND THUS ENABLE TRAFFIC TO DIVERT TO ALTERNATIVE ROUTES.

+SIMILAR FACILITIES WILL ALSO BE PROVIDED AT THE ABERDEEN AND KAI TAK TUNNELS WHEN THEY ARE OPENED,+ MR. JONES ADDED.

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/18

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978

- 18 -

B.O.O. TO REMOVE ALL ILLEGAL STRUCTURES IN NEW BUILDINGS
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THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE IS HAVING ALL ILLEGAL STRUCTURES IN ALL NEW BUILDINGS SYSTEMATICALLY REMOVED, THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. LI FOOK-WO, HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE THAT ROOF AREAS WERE INCLUDED IN DEVELOPERS' SALE BROCHURES EITHER AS PART OF A UNIT FOR SALE, OR AS A SEPARATE ITEM.

+THIS PRACTICE IN ITSELF DOES NOT CONTRAVENE ANY LAW. ALTHOUGH THE HIGH PRICES PAID FOR SOME FLAT ROOFS SUGGESTS THERE MAY BE AN INTENTION TO CHANGE THE USE OF THE FLAT ROOF BY ERECTING ACCOMMODATION ILLEGALLY, MANY PEOPLE VALUE THE AMENITY PROVIDED BY A FLAT ROOF SIMPLY AS A GARDEN OR SITTING OUT AREA,+ MR. MCDONALD SAID.

+ACTION, SHOULD THEREFORE BE DIRECTED AGAINST THOSE WHO BREAK THE LAW AND CURRENTLY THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE IS HAVING ALL ILLEGAL STRUCTURES IN ALL NEW BUILDINGS SYSTEMATICALLY REMOVED.+

MR. MCDONALD SAID THAT THIS POLICY HAD RECEIVED SOME PUBLICITY WHICH HAD SERVED TO ALERT THE PUBLIC AS TO THE TRUE SITUATION AS REGARDS ROOF SPACES AND IT WAS INTENDED TO EMBARK ON A PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE PITFALLS RELATED TO THE ERECTION OF ILLEGAL STRUCTURES GENERALLY.

THE FIRST PUBLICATION, DEALING WITH THE PARTICULAR SUBJECT OF FLAT-ROOF SPACES, WOULD BE ISSUED NEXT MONTH, HE SAID.

MR. MCDONALD POINTED OUT THAT FOR THE PRESENT AT LEAST IT WAS LOGISTICALLY NECESSARY FOR THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE TO CONFINE ITS ATTENTION TO ILLEGAL STRUCTURES ERECTED ON OR AFTER AUGUST 1975 OR THOSE WHICH POSED A POSITIVE LIFE RISK.

+THE B.O.O. IS NOT THEREFORE ABLE TO DEAL WITH THE DIFFICULT QUESTION OF CHANGES OF USE WITHIN BUILDINGS, ALTHOUGH SOME LEASE ENFORCEMENT ACTION IS BEING TAKEN BY THE REGISTRAR GENERAL IN SOME OF THE WORST CASES,+ HE SAID.

HOWEVER, MR. MCDONALD SAID THAT A FURTHER EXPANSION OF THE B.O.O. WAS ENVISAGED LATER IN THIS FINANCIAL YEAR WHICH WOULD ENABLE MORE RESOURCES TO BE BROUGHT TO BEAR ON BREACHES OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE.

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/19

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978

- 19 -

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL PASSED
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WORKERS SUFFERING FROM SILICOSIS AND ASBESTOSIS -- LUNG DISEASES WHICH ARE JOINTLY KNOWN AS PNEUMOCONIOSIS -- WILL BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR COMPENSATION AS A RESULT OF A BILL PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THE COUNCIL APPROVED THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1978, WHICH ADDS THE TWO LUNG DISEASES TO THE LIST OF OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES COVERED BY THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ORDINANCE.

THE BILL ALSO PROVIDES FOR THE SETTING UP OF A PNEUMOCONIOSIS COMPENSATION FUND AND THE INTRODUCTION OF COMPULSORY INSURANCE FOR WORKERS LIABLE TO CONTRACT PNEUMOCONIOSIS.

VARIOUS PROVISIONS OF THE LAW ARE TO BE BROUGHT INTO OPERATION ON DIFFERENT DATES AND REGULATIONS HAVE YET TO BE MADE TO SPECIFY PNEUMOCONIOSIS-PRONE TRADES, INDUSTRIES OR PROCESSES, AND ALSO TO PRESCRIBE DETAILS OF INITIAL AND PERIODIC MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS FOR WORKMEN. LATER REGULATIONS WILL COVER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMPENSATION FUND AND THE CONSTITUTION, POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF A BOARD TO ADMINISTER THE FUND.

THE NEW LAW PROVIDES FOR A COMPENSATION SCHEME TO COVER WORKERS WHO ARE FOUND TO HAVE THE DISEASE AT THE TIME OF THE SCHEME'S INITIAL X-RAYS AND THOSE WHO SUBSEQUENTLY CONTRACT THE DISEASE.

THE GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE EX-GRATIA PAYMENTS AMOUNTING TO ABOUT \$25 MILLION TO PEOPLE ALREADY KNOWN TO BE SUFFERING FROM PNEUMOCONIOSIS.

WORKERS OR THEIR DEPENDANTS WILL BE COMPENSATED FOR PERMANENT TOTAL OR PARTIAL INCAPACITY OR DEATH RESULTING FROM PNEUMOCONIOSIS CONTRACTED IN ANY SPECIFIED TRADE, INDUSTRY OR PROCESS. THE DISEASE IS CAUSED BY INHALATION OF DUSTS SUCH AS FREE SILICA AND ASBESTOS DUSTS.

SILICOSIS IS MAINLY FOUND AMONG WORKERS IN QUARRIES, MINING, TUNNELLING, CONSTRUCTION AND MASONRY WORK. ASBESTOSIS IS NORMALLY FOUND AMONG WORKERS IN AN INDUSTRY PROCESS IN WHICH ASBESTOS IS WIDELY USED FOR INSULATION PURPOSES AND FIREPROOFING. ONCE EITHER DISEASE IS PRESENT, THE CONDITION OF THE PATIENT IS IRREVERSIBLE AND REMOVAL FROM EXPOSURE MAY ONLY SLOW DOWN PROGRESSION OF THE DISEASE.

/PNEUMOCONIOSIS

PNEUMOCONIOSIS HAS A LONG GESTATION PERIOD AND THERE IS VARIABLE TIMING OF DISCOVERY OF THE DISEASE, WITH THE RESULT THAT WORKERS MAY HAVE CHANGED JOBS AND EVEN INDUSTRIES MANY TIMES BEFORE DIAGNOSIS OF THE CONDITION. IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO ASCERTAIN WHICH EMPLOYER IS LIABLE.

THIS SITUATION HAS LED TO THE DRAWING UP OF A THREE-STAGE COMPENSATION SCHEME.

THE FIRST STAGE COVERS THOSE WORKERS WHO ARE ALREADY KNOWN TO HAVE CONTRACTED PNEUMOCONIOSIS AND WHO MAY OR MAY NOT STILL BE EMPLOYED IN SPECIFIED INDUSTRIES. IT WILL ALSO COVER WORKERS WHO HAVE LEFT THE INDUSTRY BEFORE THE SCHEME COMES INTO OPERATION BUT WHO ARE DIAGNOSED WITHIN A PERIOD OF 10 YEARS FROM THE START OF THE SCHEME. ALL THESE WORKERS WILL BE COMPENSATED ON AN EX-GRATIA NON-STATUTORY BASIS BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE BASIS OF AN UPDATED ASSESSMENT OF THE DISABILITY SUSTAINED.

THESE PAYMENTS, AMOUNTING TO ABOUT \$25 MILLION, WILL BE MET ENTIRELY BY THE GOVERNMENT WITHOUT REIMBURSEMENT FROM THE EMPLOYERS.

THE SECOND STAGE OF THE SCHEME, TO BE IMPLEMENTED CONCURRENTLY WITH THE FIRST STAGE, WILL COVER WORKERS EMPLOYED IN SPECIFIED INDUSTRIES WHO ARE DIAGNOSED AS SUFFERING FROM PNEUMOCONIOSIS IN THE SCHEME'S INITIAL X-RAY EXAMINATIONS. THEY WILL BE PAID COMPENSATION BY THE GOVERNMENT INITIALLY BUT SUCH PAYMENTS, TOGETHER WITH INTEREST, ARE TO BE RECOVERED SUBSEQUENTLY THROUGH A LEVY TO BE IMPOSED ON EMPLOYERS IN THE SPECIFIED INDUSTRIES.

THE INITIAL X-RAY EXAMINATION PERIOD IS EXPECTED TO TAKE AT LEAST EIGHT MONTHS TO COMPLETE, AND ALL WORKERS IN THE SPECIFIED INDUSTRIES WILL BE REQUIRED TO UNDERGO X-RAY.

THE FINAL STAGE OF THE SCHEME WILL COME INTO EFFECT ON COMPLETION OF THE SECOND STAGE. IT WILL COVER ALL WORKERS WHO ARE GIVEN A CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH AT THE INITIAL X-RAY AND WHO ARE EMPLOYED IN SPECIFIED INDUSTRIES ON OR AFTER THE DATE THE SCHEME COMES INTO FORCE, OR WHO SUBSEQUENTLY LEAVE THE INDUSTRY AND ARE DIAGNOSED AS PNEUMOCONIOTIC WITHIN A PERIOD OF 10 YEARS.

ANY COMPENSATION DUE IN RESPECT OF SUCH WORKERS WILL BE PAID FROM THE STATUTORY COMPENSATION FUND. THIS FUND WILL BE FINANCED BY PREMIA FROM EMPLOYERS IN THE SPECIFIED INDUSTRIES, WHO WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED TO MEET THE COST OF THE INITIAL PERIODICAL MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS OF WORKERS.

ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL
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A BILL WHICH SEEKS TO MAKE IT ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THAT NO FURTHER PUBLIC CARS ARE TO BE REGISTERED WAS INTRODUCED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1978, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, SAID ALTHOUGH THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE PROVIDED FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE CATEGORY OF PUBLIC OR RED PLATE CARS UNDER A SCHEME TO CONVERT THESE VEHICLES INTO TAXIS, THE LEGISLATION DID NOT EXPRESSLY PROHIBIT THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT FROM REGISTERING FURTHER PUBLIC CARS, THOUGH IT DID SO BY IMPLICATION.

HE SAID SOME APPLICATIONS HAD RECENTLY BEEN MADE FOR REGISTRATION AS PUBLIC CARS AND IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE AIM OF THESE APPLICANTS WAS SOLEY TO OBTAIN TAXI LICENCES ON FAVOURABLE TERMS.

MR. JONES SAID THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT HAD REFUSED THESE APPLICATIONS AND, IN ORDER TO MAKE IT ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THAT NO FURTHER PUBLIC CARS ARE TO BE REGISTERED, THE BILL SOUGHT TO ADD A NEW SECTION TO THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE TO UNDERLINE THAT THE COMMISSIONER'S POWER TO LICENSE A VEHICLE AS A PUBLIC CAR CEASED ON NOVEMBER 1, 1977.

MR. JONES ALSO POINTED OUT THAT UNDER THE PUBLIC CAR CONVERSION SCHEME, REGISTERED OWNERS OF THESE VEHICLES ARE OFFERED THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONVERT THEIR CARS INTO TAXIS ON PAYMENT OF A PREMIUM, WHEN THEIR CURRENT LICENCES EXPIRED.

+THE MAJORITY OF THESE VEHICLES HAVE NOW BEEN CONVERTED TO TAXIS AND WITHIN TWO OR THREE MONTHS, THE CATEGORY OF PUBLIC CAR WILL CEASE TO EXIST,+ HE ADDED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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DETENTION CENTRES (AMENDMENT) BILL
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A BILL TO MAKE APPROPRIATE DISTINCTION BETWEEN YOUNG OFFENDERS UNDER AND OVER THE AGE OF 21 YEARS IN RESPECT OF RECALL ORDERS UNDER THE DETENTION CENTRES ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE DETENTION CENTRES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES, SAID THE BILL SEEKS TO RECTIFY THE DETENTION CENTRES (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE 1976 WHICH OMITTED THE AGE DISTINCTION OF YOUNG OFFENDERS.

+WHEN THE SCHEME OF DETENTION WAS EXTENDED TO APPLY TO PERSONS OVER 21 BUT UNDER 25 YEARS OF AGE IT WAS DECIDED THAT DETAINEES IN THIS AGE BRACKET WOULD BE SUBJECT TO A MINIMUM PERIOD OF DETENTION OF THREE MONTHS AND A MAXIMUM PERIOD OF 12 MONTHS,+ MR. DAVIES SAID.

+THIS COMPARED WITH A MINIMUM DETENTION PERIOD OF ONE MONTH AND A MAXIMUM PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS FOR DETAINEES UNDER 21 YEARS OF AGE,+ HE ADDED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL HAS BEEN ADJOURNED.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978

- 22 -

CREATING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
IN THE CIVIL SERVICE FOR EX-DRUG ADDICTS

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THE COMMISSIONER FOR NARCOTICS, MR. E. I. LEE SAID TODAY HE IS HOLDING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CIVIL SERVICE BRANCH OF THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT IN AN EFFORT TO ENCOURAGE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT TO EMPLOY MORE REHABILITATED DRUG ADDICTS.

SPEAKING AT A CEREMONY MARKING THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE SCHEME FOR VOLUNTARILY REHABILITATED ADDICTS, MR. LEE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT, AS THE LARGEST EMPLOYER IN HONG KONG SHOULD SET A BETTER EXAMPLE IN OFFERING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO REHABILITATED ADDICTS.

AT PRESENT, THE CIVIL SERVICE REGULATIONS STIPULATE THAT THE EMPLOYMENT OF EX-DRUG ADDICT IN ANY POST IS ALLOWED AT THE DISCRETION OF DEPARTMENTAL HEADS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THOSE INVOLVED PREVIOUSLY IN SERIOUS DRUG OFFENCES SUCH AS TRAFFICKING IN, OR MANUFACTURING OF, DANGEROUS DRUGS.

AS AT APRIL THIS YEAR, A TOTAL OF 44 REHABILITATED ADDICTS WERE SERVING IN THE GOVERNMENT.

+THIS IS BY NO MEANS A LARGE FIGURE,+ THE COMMISSIONER SAID, +AND COMPARES POORLY WITH THE VERY LARGE RESOURCES OF PERSONNEL AND FINANCE WHICH THE GOVERNMENT IS DEVOTING TO DEAL WITH THE OVERALL NARCOTICS PROBLEM.+

HE SAID HE WAS THEREFORE CURRENTLY HOLDING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CIVIL SERVICE BRANCH OF THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT FOR THE ISSUE OF A CIRCULAR WITH A VIEW TO ENCOURAGING HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS TO EMPLOY MORE EX-ADDICTS IN THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE.

HE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE EMPLOYERS SHOULD NOW TAKE A FRESH LOOK AT THE POSITION AS THE OPPORTUNITIES WHICH CURRENTLY EXISTED FOR AN ADDICT TO SEEK OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT WERE MUCH GREATER THAN BEFORE.

HE WAS REFERRING TO THE OPENING OF 17 METHADONE DETOXIFICATION CENTRES SINCE 1976, WHICH HAS HELPED LARGELY TO INCREASING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ADDICTS UNDER TREATMENT AND AFTER-CARE FROM 6,000 FOUR YEARS AGO TO 14,000 AT ANY ONE TIME NOW.

+AN ADDICT CAN NOW READILY OBTAIN TREATMENT IN CENTRES NEAR TO HIS HOME OR PLACE OF WORK. AS A RESULT, THE PROBABILITY OF RELAPSE IS REDUCED AND THE PROGNOSIS FOR AN EMPLOYED EX-ADDICT TO REMAIN WITH THE JOB ARE VERY MUCH GREATER THAN BEFORE,+ MR. LEE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT OVER 90 PER CENT OF THE PATIENTS IN A THREE-YEAR METHADONE MAINTENANCE PILOT SCHEME CARRIED OUT BY THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT THREE YEARS AGO, WERE GAINFULLY EMPLOYED.

THIS UNDERLINED THE FACT THAT METHADONE TREATMENT COULD SUCCESSFULLY REHABILITATE AN ADDICT INTO SOCIETY BY HELPING HIM TO ELIMINATE HIS CRAVING FOR HEROIN AND RETAIN HIS EMPLOYMENT, HE SAID.

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/23

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978

- 23 -

DROP IN NUMBER OF DRUG ADDICTS EXPECTED

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THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES, TODAY SAID THERE WOULD BE A DECLINE IN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DRUG ADDICTS IN HONG KONG, ESPECIALLY IN THE NUMBERS OF YOUNG PERSONS TURNING TO DRUGS.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. DAVIES SAID IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE ITS FOUR INTER-LOCKING PROGRAMMES OF LAW ENFORCEMENT, TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION, PREVENTIVE EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY AND INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION, ON WHICH OUR ANTI-NARCOTICS STRATEGIES WERE BASED, ADJUSTED AS APPEARS NECESSARY IN THE LIGHT OF ALL AVAILABLE FACTS.

+WE SHALL AIM TO KEEP STREET DRUG PRICES HIGH, TO INDUCE MORE ADDICTS TO COME INTO TREATMENT AT THE 21 EXISTING METHADONE MAINTENANCE CLINICS, TO CONTINUE TREATMENT AT FOUR DRUG ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTRES AND THE VOLUNTARY TREATMENT BY THE SOCIETY FOR AID AND REHABILITATION OF DRUG ADDICTS AND TO PERSUADE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE TO STAY OFF DRUGS.+

MR. DAVIES SAID NO ACCURATE ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF DRUG ADDICTS IN HONG KONG THREE YEARS AGO OR NOW WAS AVAILABLE. +THIS IS DUE TO THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM, AND THE INADEQUACY OF THE DATA BASE.+

HOWEVER, HE SAID, WHEN THE COMPUTERISATION OF THE NEW CENTRAL REGISTRY IS COMPLETED IN AUGUST, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE, FOR THE FIRST TIME, RELIABLE DATA ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF, AND TRENDS IN, OUR ADDICT POPULATION, AND ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR VARIOUS TREATMENT PROGRAMMES.

+IN THE MEANTIME WE ALREADY KNOW THAT WE ARE MAKING INROADS INTO THE NUMBER OF YOUNG ADDICTS. THIS IS VERY PROMISING,+ HE ADDED.

MR. DAVIES SAID SINCE SEPTEMBER 1, 1976, WHEN A NEW SYSTEM OF REPORTING WAS INTRODUCED, 54,000 INDIVIDUAL REPORTS HAD BEEN ACCUMULATED FROM 21 AGENCIES AND 102 REPORTING SOURCES.

+THE NUMBER OF ADDICTS REPRESENTED BY THESE REPORTS IS LIKELY TO BE CONSIDERABLY LESS, BUT EVEN THEN THE RESULTANT FIGURE IS NOT COMPREHENSIVE BECAUSE WE DO NOT KNOW THE NUMBER OF ADDICTS RECEIVING TREATMENT FROM PRIVATE MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS, OR THOSE WHO HAVE ESCAPED ARREST.+

THE NUMBER OF ADDICTS BEING TREATED AT THE END OF APRIL THIS YEAR IN THE METHADONE PROGRAMMES AT SARDA AND AT TREATMENT CENTRES WAS 7,326 COMPARED WITH 3,282 THREE YEARS EARLIER, MR. DAVIES SAID.

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/24

UNOFFICIAL MEMBER ADVOCATES PROGRESSIVE
INCREASES IN TAXES ON LUXURY CARS

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UNOFFICIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR, THE REV. THE HON. PATRICK MCGOVERN, PROPOSED TODAY THAT THE TAX ON MOTOR VEHICLES SHOULD BE PROGRESSIVELY INCREASED IN RESPECT OF MORE LUXURY CARS.

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE MOTOR VEHICLES (FIRST REGISTRATION TAX) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978 AT ITS RESUMED DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, FR. MCGOVERN SAID THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF VEHICLE TAX IT WOULD BE BETTER IF THE DEGREE OF PROGRESSIVITY WERE GREATER IN THE HIGHER BRACKETS.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE AMENDMENT WOULD BE BETTER IF IT CONTAINED A FIVE PER CENT INCREASE AS A FIRST OR SECOND STEP FOR NON-LUXURY CARS, AND THEN PROGRESSIVELY HIGHER PERCENTAGE INCREASES FOR EACH SUCCEEDING STEP, EVEN UP TO 100 PER CENT FOR THE TOP BRACKET.

+TO BE JUST UNDER SUCH A SYSTEM THERE SHOULD BE MORE CATEGORIES INTRODUCED, PERHAPS CORRESPONDING ROUGHLY WITH THE PRESENT EIGHT STEPS IN THE ANNUAL LICENCE FEE BASED ON CYLINDER CAPACITY,+ FR. MCGOVERN SAID.

FR. MCGOVERN ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF A GREATER DEGREE OF PROGRESSIVITY BE APPLIED ON ANNUAL LICENCE FEE.

+AS I POINTED OUT BEFORE, UNDER THE PRESENT SYSTEM THE OWNER OF A SMALL VEHICLE PAYS MORE PER CC THAN THE OWNER OF A LARGE VEHICLE. THIS SHOULD OBVIOUSLY BE REVERSED,+ FR. MCGOVERN SAID.

+TO WHAT DEGREE DEPENDS ON WHETHER POLICY IS TO RAISE MORE REVENUE OR TO ENCOURAGE THE USE OF SMALL CARS OR TO DISCOURAGE METAL MONSTERS, OR PERHAPS A BIT OF EACH,+ HE ADDED.

FR. MCGOVERN FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT EVEN IF THERE WERE NO PROGRESSION A FLAT RATE FOR ALL WOULD BE FAIRER TO THE SMALL CAR OWNER AND BRING MORE REVENUE FROM THE LUXURY CAR.

AS REGARDS TWO WHEELED VEHICLES, FR. MCGOVERN SAID THEY SHOULD BE TREATED SEPARATELY, PERHAPS DIVIDED INTO UTILITY AND HIGHER CLASSES TO DISCOURAGE OVER-POWERED CYCLES WHICH MIGHT TEMPT THE OWNER TO INDULGE IN SPEEDING OR ILLEGAL RACING.

+IN ALL OF THIS, PROVIDED THAT A REASONABLY SIZED CAR IS NOT CONSIDERED AS A LUXURY, THERE WOULD BE NO HARDSHIP FOR ANYONE EXCEPT THOSE WHO CAN AFFORD TO PAY FOR LUXURY,+ FR. MCGOVERN SAID.

THE BILL WAS LATER PASSED INTO LAW.

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- 25 -

GOVERNMENT STUDYING INTO PYRAMID SELLING

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THE GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO OBTAIN LEGISLATION IN USE IN OTHER COUNTRIES TO SEE HOW THEY HAVE TACKLED PYRAMID SELLING, THE HON. DAVID JEAFFRESON, SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. ROGER LOBO, MR. JEAFFRESON SAID IF NO SATISFACTORY ANSWER WAS AVAILABLE CONSIDERATION INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF REGULATING IT WOULD BE GIVEN.

MR. JEAFFRESON SAID THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAD JUST ISSUED A DRAFT BILL DESIGNED TO REGULATE THE PRACTICE TO THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED FOR THEIR COMMENTS. THE BILL REPRESENTED INITIAL THINKING ONLY.

+IN REACTING TO THE BILL, THE CONCENSUS WAS FOR PROHIBITION. SO ANOTHER BILL WAS DRAFTED ACCORDINGLY. THIS ONE HAS RUN INTO THE SERIOUS SNAG THAT WE ARE UNABLE TO FIND A DEFINITION OF PYRAMID SELLING THAT DOES NOT INCLUDE OTHER TYPES OF SELLING WE DO NOT WISH TO PROHIBIT.

+WE ARE NOW TRYING TO GET HOLD OF LEGISLATION IN USE ELSEWHERE TO SEE HOW OTHERS HAVE TACKLED THIS PROBLEM. IF WE DON'T GET A SATISFACTORY ANSWER, WE SHALL HAVE TO RECONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF REGULATION,+ MR. JEAFFRESON POINTED OUT.

HE ADDED THAT THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN REGULATING PYRAMID SELLING ARE FORMIDABLE AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NEED TO BE SATISFIED THIS PROBLEM WAS SUFFICIENTLY SERIOUS TO JUSTIFY OVERCOMING THESE DIFFICULTIES.

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KAI TAK MIDNIGHT FLIGHT BAN

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THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON. DAVID JEAFFRESON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT IT IS GOVERNMENT'S POLICY NOT TO ALLOW AIRCRAFT TO TAKE OFF OVER KOWLOON CITY BETWEEN MIDNIGHT AND 6.30 A.M.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. PETER C. WONG, MR. JEAFFRESON SAID THE DIRECTOR OF AVIATION GENERALLY ALLOWS ONLY FLIGHTS DELAYED BECAUSE OF UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES TO TAKE OFF AND TO LAND AT KAI TAK DURING THIS PERIOD.

+AND UNLESS WEATHER CONDITIONS WOULD MAKE THIS DANGEROUS, ALL LANDING AIRCRAFT MUST USE THE APPROACH OVER LEI YUE MUN,+ MR. JEAFFRESON SAID.

MR. JEAFFRESON ALSO REVEALED THAT DURING THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR, 403 AIRCRAFT MOVEMENTS, COMPRISING 192 ARRIVALS AND 211 DEPARTURES, WERE ALLOWED BETWEEN MIDNIGHT AND 6.30 A.M.

+ONLY 23 AIRCRAFT WERE ALLOWED TO APPROACH KAI TAK OVER KOWLOON CITY,+ HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978

- 26 -

AGREEMENT TERMS TO ATTRACT MORE LOCAL OFFICERS PROPOSED
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THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON. MARTIN ROWLANDS TODAY PROPOSED TO EXTEND THE PRACTICE OF OFFERING LOCAL CANDIDATES THE OPTION OF APPOINTMENT ON AGREEMENT TERMS WHERE THAT WOULD HELP OVERCOME DIFFICULTIES IN ATTRACTING SUITABLE LOCAL CANDIDATES INTO CIVIL SERVICE.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. WONG LAM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MR. ROWLANDS SAID SUCH PRACTICE, AS OPPOSED TO PENSIONABLE TERMS, WAS INTRODUCED IN 1968 IN RESPECT OF MEDICAL AND LEGAL OFFICERS BECAUSE OF RECRUITMENT DIFFICULTIES.

+THE PRACTICE HAS SINCE BEEN EXTENDED TO A TOTAL OF 98 GRADES, MOSTLY PROFESSIONAL, THROUGHOUT THE CIVIL SERVICE,+ HE ADDED.

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TALKS ON NEW MACAU FERRY TERMINAL IN FINAL STAGE
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THE GOVERNMENT AND THE DEVELOPER ARE NOW IN THE FINAL STAGES OF NEGOTIATION TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS IN THE PROPOSED NEW MACAU FERRY TERMINAL.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY.

MR. MCDONALD SAID THAT A SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC FACILITIES TO BE PROVIDED IN THE PROPOSED NEW TERMINAL HAD BEEN AGREED, AND DESIGN DRAWINGS AND ESTIMATED COSTS OF CONSTRUCTION HAD BEEN PREPARED.

+GOVERNMENT AND THE DEVELOPER ARE NOW IN THE FINAL STAGES OF NEGOTIATION TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS THAT SHOULD BE GRANTED IN RETURN FOR THE CONSTRUCTION COSTS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC FACILITIES AND ONCE THIS HAS BEEN DONE A SUBMISSION WILL BE MADE TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THIS COUNCIL,+ HE SAID.

+IF THE PROPOSAL IS APPROVED A FORMAL AGREEMENT WILL BE ENTERED INTO AND THE DEVELOPER CAN PROCEED WITH THE PROJECT.+

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/27

QUERY ON HK - US DOLLARS EXCHANGE RATE IMPOSED BY IATA
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THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON. DAVID JEAFFRESON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC +TO THINK IN TERM OF HONG KONG TAKING UNILATERAL ACTION+ TO ADJUST THE HONG KONG AND U.S. DOLLARS EXCHANGE RATE IMPOSED BY THE INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION.

MR. JEAFFRESON WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. JAMES WU WHO ASKED WHETHER THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT CAN INTERVENE TO SAVE LOCAL SHIPPERS FROM PAYING AT A DISCRIMINATING RATE WHICH IS NOW 21 PER CENT HIGHER THAN THE CURRENT MARKET RATE OF THE U.S. DOLLARS.

HE SAID: +AIR SERVICES BETWEEN HONG KONG AND THE U.S.A. ARE GOVERNED BY A TREATY BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE UNITED STATES.

+IT PROVIDES, AMONG OTHER THINGS, MECHANISM FOR ESTABLISHING TARIFFS TO BE CHARGED BY AIRLINES SERVING BRITISH AND AMERICAN POINTS.

+THIS MECHANISM INCLUDES THAT BOTH THE U.K. CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY AND THE UNITED STATES AERONAUTICAL BOARD WOULD NEED TO BE IN AGREEMENT ON ANY CHANGES TO TARIFFS,+ HE EXPLAINED.

REPLYING TO ANOTHER QUESTION FROM MR. WU, MR. JEAFFRESON CONFIRMED THAT THE GOVERNMENTS OF MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE HAVE UNILATERALLY DIRECTED FROM FEBRUARY 1 AND MARCH 31 THIS YEAR RESPECTIVELY THAT FREIGHT PAYMENTS FOR CARGO FROM THESE TWO COUNTRIES DESTINED FOR THE U.S.A. ARE REQUIRED TO BE MADE IN LOCAL CURRENCIES CONVERTED FROM THE U.S. DOLLAR TARIFF AT THE BANKERS' BUYING RATE.

IN THE CASE OF TAIWAN AND KOREA, MR. JEAFFRESON SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE IATA EXCHANGE RATE SYSTEM STILL APPLIES, AND THESE RATES ARE CLOSE TO THEIR MARKET RATES,+ HE ADDED.

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PROPOSALS FOR STRENGTHENING LEGISLATION
ON REGISTRATION OF MONEY LENDERS

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THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. DAVID JORDAN SAID TODAY THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE HAD RECENTLY MADE PROPOSALS FOR STRENGTHENING THE LEGISLATION CONTROLLING THE REGISTRATION OF MONEY LENDERS.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MR. JORDAN SAID AT PRESENT APPLICATIONS FOR REGISTRATION AS A MONEY-LENDER WERE NOT VETTED BECAUSE THERE WERE NO RESTRICTIONS ON WHO MIGHT REGISTER AS A MONEY-LENDER UNDER THE MONEY-LENDERS ORDINANCE.

MR. JORDAN ALSO SAID THAT THE POLICE TOOK ACTION ON ALLEGATIONS OF BREACHES OF THE MONEY-LENDERS ORDINANCE THAT WERE BROUGHT TO THEIR ATTENTION, AND IN 1977, FIVE PERSONS WERE CONVICTED OF OFFENCES UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

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ASSISTANCE TO SMALL-SCALE BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIES

THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS, THE HON. WILLIAM DORWARD, SAID THE ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY OF HONG KONG'S SMALL INDUSTRIES AND BUSINESSES HAVE BEEN PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR EXPORT GROWTH AND THAT THE VARIOUS FORMS OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE HAVE SERVED THEM ADEQUATELY.

SPEAKING AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR. THE HON. HENRY HU, MR. DORWARD SAID: +DEPENDING ON THE DEFINITION ONE CHOOSES, NEARLY ALL INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS IN HONG KONG COULD BE DESCRIBED AS SMALL. FACTORIES WITH LESS THAN 50 WORKERS, FOR EXAMPLE, ACCOUNT FOR ABOUT 90 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL. I HAVE NO COMPARABLE STATISTICS FOR NON-INDUSTRIAL BUSINESSES, BUT I AM SURE THE RATIO OF SMALL UNITS TO BIG WOULD BE EVEN HIGHER.+

HE SAID IT COULD THEREFORE BE SAID THAT VIRTUALLY ANY ASSISTANCE THE GOVERNMENT RENDERS TO TRADE AND INDUSTRY BENEFITS SMALL UNITS.

+ASSISTANCE IS GIVEN MAINLY THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF STATUTORY BODIES WHICH GOVERNMENT SUBVENTS OR OTHERWISE SUPPORTS. THESE INCLUDE THE HONG KONG PRODUCTIVITY CENTRE, WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED WITH SMALL TO MEDIUM OPERATIONS PRIMARILY IN MIND AND WHICH CONTINUES TO PLACE GREAT EMPHASIS ON SERVING THIS SECTOR. IT CATERS, THROUGH COURSES, IN-PLANT TRAINING, CONSULTANCY AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION SERVICES, TO THE NEEDS OF BOTH INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE.

+THE HONG KONG TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL'S WORK IN PROMOTING EXPORTS BY SUCH MEANS AS MISSIONS, TRADE FAIRS AND DISSEMINATION OF TRADE ENQUIRIES IS WELL ENOUGH KNOWN NOT TO NEED REHEARSAL HERE. THE SAME I THINK IS TRUE OF THE ACTIVITIES OF SUCH BODIES AS THE EXPORT CREDIT INSURANCE CORPORATION AND THE PACKAGING AND INDUSTRIAL DESIGN COUNCILS.+

AS REGARDS FINANCE, MR. DORWARD SAID HE REPORTED TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON JULY 21, 1976 THAT A LOANS FOR SMALL INDUSTRY SCHEME, WHICH HAD BY THEN BEEN RUNNING FOR FOUR YEARS, WAS BEING DISCONTINUED DUE TO LACK OF DEMAND.

+ONLY 10 LOANS WERE MADE DURING ITS LIFE, APPARENTLY BEARING OUT THE CONTENTION OF THOSE WHO HAD SAID FROM THE OUTSET THAT THE HONG KONG BANKING SYSTEM WAS CAPABLE OF PROVIDING ADEQUATE FACILITIES. I HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THE SITUATION HAS CHANGED, AS WITNESS THE CURRENT LIQUIDITY OF THE BANKS AND THEIR RELATIVELY LOW PRIME RATE.+

+SMALL INDUSTRIES AND BUSINESSES ARE THE SINEWS OF HONG KONG. IT IS THEIR ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY WHICH HAVE BEEN PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR EXPORT GROWTH. I BELIEVE THE VARIOUS FORMS OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT ASSISTANCE SO FAR GIVEN THEM BY GOVERNMENT HAVE SERVED THEM ADEQUATELY= AND THE LIST I HAVE GIVEN HAS BEEN INDICATIVE RATHER THAN EXHAUSTIVE, FOR I HAVE NOT EVEN MENTIONED, FOR EXAMPLE, TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

MR. DORWARD ADDED THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY DEEPLY FELT DEFICIENCIES IN THE PRESENT LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE. THE NEED FOR EXPANSION OF SUCH ASSISTANCE, IN SCOPE OR FORM, TO KEEP PACE WITH THE CHANGING REQUIREMENTS OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY WILL, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO BE KEPT UNDER REVIEW.

LEGO APPROVES SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY APPROVED A MOTION WHICH SEEKS THE COVERING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNCIL ON THE SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS OF \$245 MILLION MADE IN THE THIRD QUARTER OF THE 1977-78 FINANCIAL YEAR.

MOVING THE MOTION, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. DAVID JORDAN, SAID ALL THE ITEMS IN THE SCHEDULE OF SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS HAD BEEN APPROVED BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

MR. JORDAN POINTED OUT THAT THE SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS COVERED BY THE SCHEDULE RESULTED IN A NET INCREASE OF \$105 MILLION IN THE EXPENDITURE APPROVED FOR THE YEAR WITH THE REMAINDER BEING OFFSET BY SAVINGS UNDER OTHER SUBHEADS OF EXPENDITURE AND BY THE FREEZING OF FUNDS PROVIDED UNDER ADDITIONAL COMMITMENTS OF MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

MR. JORDAN SAID OF THE \$245 MILLION, \$97 MILLION WERE REQUIRED FOR EXPENDITURE ON PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS, INCLUDING A SUM OF \$15 MILLION FOR 25 NEW PROJECTS UPGRADED TO CATEGORY A OF THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME.

OTHER ITEMS INCLUDE \$79 MILLION FOR MAINTAINING THE DESALTERS IN FULL OPERATION UNTIL THE END OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR, \$26 MILLION TO MEET GRANTS TO THE URBAN COUNCIL AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES ARISING AS A RESULT OF SALARIES REVISIONS FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE IN JULY 1977, \$16 MILLION FOR ESTIMATED PAYMENTS OF EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCES TO ELIGIBLE PERSONS INVOLVED IN CLEARANCES SCHEDULED DURING THE YEAR AND \$12 MILLION FOR ADDITIONAL PURCHASES OF SAND TO MEET INCREASING DEMAND FROM THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY.

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36 YOUNG ADULTS IN SHA TSUI DETENTION CENTRE
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UP TO JUNE THIS YEAR, 36 YOUNG ADULTS HAD BEEN SENT TO THE ADULT DETENTION CENTRE AT SHA TSUI, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES, SECRETARY FOR SECURITY TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. ROGER LOBO, MR. DAVIES ADDED, OF THIS NUMBER, EIGHT HAVE BEEN REMOVED, SEVEN HAVING BEEN GIVEN ALTERNATIVE SENTENCES ON APPEAL OR REVIEW BY THE COURTS AND ONE HAVING BEEN FOUND NOT GUILTY ON APPEAL.

+THE BALANCE OF 28 HAVE BEEN DETAINED FOR THE PRESCRIBED PERIOD AND SO FAR THREE HAVE BEEN RELEASED AND PLACED UNDER SUPERVISION,+ MR. DAVIES SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978

- 30 -

PAYMENT FOR ENTRIES IN TRADE DIRECTORIES
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THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON. DAVID JEAFFRESON, SAID IT IS ILLEGAL UNDER THE POST OFFICE ORDINANCE TO SEND INVOICES BY POST TO COMPANIES OVERSEAS SEEKING PAYMENT FOR ENTRIES IN TRADE DIRECTORIES OF WHICH IMPORTATION AND CIRCULATION ARE BANNED BY THAT COUNTRY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. ROGER LOBO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, HE SAID THE ENFORCEMENT OF THIS LEGISLATION IS DIFFICULT BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTIES IN IDENTIFYING SUCH MATERIAL IN POSTS LEAVING HONG KONG AND IN GETTING OVERSEAS POSTAL ADMINISTRATION TO GIVE EVIDENCE IN HONG KONG.

MR. JEAFFRESON SAID: +THE SAME SORT OF DIFFICULTIES WOULD APPLY IF WE WERE TO TRY AND DEVISE LEGISLATION TO MAKE THE SENDING OF INVOICES FOR UNSOLICITED ENTRIES IN TRADE DIRECTORIES AN OFFENCE IN HONG KONG IN ITS OWN RIGHT.+

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WAITING TIME FOR DISCIPLINARY INQUIRY OF CONVICTED SEAMEN
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A SEAMAN WHO HAS BEEN CONVICTED IN COURT OR HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF MISCONDUCT IS REQUIRED TO WAIT GENERALLY FOR TWO MONTHS BEFORE A DISCIPLINARY INQUIRY IS CONDUCTED TO DETERMINE WHETHER HIS REGISTRATION AS A SEAMAN SHOULD BE SUSPENDED UNDER THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (RECRUITING OF SEAMEN) ORDINANCE, THE HON. DAVID JEAFFRESON, SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE ALSO SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM HON. PETER C. WONG THAT THE PRESENT WAITING TIME WAS REASONABLE.

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

THEY WERE THE MOTOR VEHICLES (FIRST REGISTRATION TAX)(AMENDMENT) BILL 1978, THE STAMP (AMENDMENT)(NO. 4) BILL 1978, THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978 AND THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1978.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978

- 31 -

TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN WAN CHAI AND KWUN TONG
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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT TODAY ANNOUNCED THAT THE UP AND DOWN RAMPS ON THE SECTION OF CANAL ROAD NORTH OF HENNESSY ROAD LINKING WAN CHAI TO THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL AND NORTH POINT WILL BE CLOSED TO ALL TRAFFIC FROM 10 A.M. ON FRIDAY (JUNE 9).

THE RAMPS WILL BE DEMOLISHED LATER TO FACILITATE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CANAL ROAD EXTENSION PROJECT.

THE SLIP ROAD UNDERNEATH THESE RAMPS JOINING CANAL ROAD EAST AND WEST WILL ALSO BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC ON FRIDAY FOR A PERIOD OF ABOUT THREE MONTHS.

THE DEPARTMENT ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT THE RIGHT TURN FROM HONG NING ROAD TO KWUN TONG ROAD AND THE RIGHT TURN FROM KWUN TONG ROAD TO HONG NING ROAD WILL BE PROHIBITED BETWEEN 1.30 A.M. AND 5.30 A.M. FOR FOUR DAYS FROM FRIDAY (JUNE 9).

MOTORISTS ARE ADVISED TO USE THE ROUNDABOUT AT THE JUNCTION OF HIP WO STREET AND HOI YUEN ROAD AS AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE.

THE ARRANGEMENT IS TO FACILITATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY IN THE AREA.

APPROPRIATE TRAFFIC SIGNS WILL BE SET UP IN THE AFFECTED AREAS TO GUIDE MOTORISTS.

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WATER CUT
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THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY THAT WATER SUPPLY TO A NUMBER OF PREMISES IN SHA TAU KOK, NEW TERRITORIES WILL BE TEMPORARILY TURNED OFF FOR EIGHT HOURS FROM 10 P.M. ON FRIDAY (JUNE 9) TO FACILITATE THE INSTALLATION OF WATER VALVE AT SHA TAU KOK ROAD.

AFFECTED WILL BE PREMISES ON SHA TAU KOK ROAD BETWEEN QUEEN'S HILL CAMP AND SHA TAU KOK MARKET, INCLUDING THOSE ON PING CHE ROAD, AND TA KWU LING POLICE STATION.

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