



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1977

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EDUCATION INSURANCE SCHEME SUGGESTED

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REV. THE HON. JOYCE M. BENNETT HAS SUGGESTED AN EDUCATION INSURANCE SCHEME TO HELP PARENTS WHO CAN SAVE UP ON JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL FEES NOW THAT THEY ARE TO BE FREE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, TO PAY FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S FEES IN FORMS IV TO VI.

REV. BENNETT, SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, SAID SUCH A SCHEME SHOULD BE INDEPENDENT OF THE GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH IT SHOULD SEE TO IT THAT THERE WERE THE NECESSARY SAFEGUARDS.

UNDER THE SCHEME, PARENTS WOULD PAY BY TEN ANNUAL INSTALMENTS EACH YEAR A TOTAL SUM SIMILAR TO THE ABOLISHED FEES AND WOULD BE ALLOWED TO TAKE OUT THE MONEY WITH THE ACCRUED INTEREST AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME WHETHER OR NOT THEIR CHILDREN DID IN FACT CONTINUE IN SCHOOL.

FROM PAST EXPERIENCE, SHE COULD SAY THAT NEARLY ALL PARENTS DEMANDED FORMS IV AND V PLACES FOR THEIR CHILDREN. WHILE SHE WELCOMED THE PROPOSED REVIEW OF THE 40 PER CENT AIDED PLACES IN THESE TWO FORMS, SHE FORESAW THAT PRIVATE SCHOOLS, WHICH NATURALLY WOULD HAVE TO CHARGE HIGH FEES, WOULD CONTINUE TO EXIST FOR SOME TIME.

SHE SAID THE ABOLITION OF JUNIOR SECONDARY FEES WAS A RELIEF TO PARENTS BUT WARNED THAT THEY NEEDED TO HAVE CONTINUAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION.

SHE ALSO URGED THAT THE TEACHER TO CLASS RATIO BE REVERTED TO 1.4 IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND 1.2 IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS BUT ONLY FOR THOSE SCHOOLS WHICH WERE PROVIDING AND WOULD EXPAND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES FOR THEIR STUDENTS.

+WE MUST ENSURE THAT THE STANDARDS OF OUR SCHOOLS DO NOT DROP BY MAKING THEM FREE,+ SHE SAID.

SHE SAW THE NEED FOR A POSITIVE DRIVE TO ENFORCE COMPULSORY EDUCATION AND SUGGESTED THAT EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS BE HELPED BY SOCIAL WORKERS FROM THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT'S FAMILY SERVICES DIVISION IN THIS WORK.

FURTHERMORE, SHE SAID, FREE SECONDARY EDUCATION MIGHT NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM FOR FAMILIES WHO NEEDED THE INCOME OF THEIR CHILDREN, SO THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT'S SOCIAL WORKERS WOULD HAVE TO LIAISE CLOSELY WITH THE PROPOSED SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS.

AS TO PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLING, REV. BENNETT WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE PRESENT LACK OF TRAINED TEACHERS AND THE INABILITY OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S SMALL STAFF TO LOOK CLOSELY AFTER THE LARGE NUMBER OF KINDERGARTENS.

+UNDOUBTEDLY ATTITUDES TO SCHOOL AND LEARNING ARE DEVELOPED IN THE KINDERGARTENS AND PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES OF OUR HOUSING ESTATES AND TENEMENT BUILDINGS,+ SHE SAID.

/SHE HOPED THAT .....

SHE HOPED THAT SUGGESTIONS BY VOLUNTARY BODIES TO START REGULAR COURSES FOR THE TRAINING OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS WOULD BE GIVEN EARLY AND SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION.

SHE WAS ENCOURAGED TO NOTE THAT THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES WAS CHAIRING THE STEERING COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE PRE-PRIMARY FACILITIES. FOR IT WAS IMPORTANT, SHE SAID, TO CO-ORDINATE WHAT WAS BEING DONE BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT IN THESE FIELDS.

ON TERTIARY EDUCATION, REV. BENNETT SAID SHE WAS INCREASINGLY CONCERNED THAT STUDENTS OF AN ACADEMIC CALIBRE AND QUALIFICATION ABLE TO BENEFIT WERE DENIED SUCH EDUCATION BECUASE OF INADEQUATE PLACES AT THE UNIVERSITIES AND THE POLYTECHNIC.

SHE POINTED OUT THAT THE STANDARD OF THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY MATRICULATION EXAMINATION HAD BEEN RAISED EXTREMELY HIGH IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF APPLICANTS.

SHE HOPED THAT THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY WOULD INVESTIGATE THE SYLLABUSES OF THE ADVANCED LEVEL EXAMINATIONS AND COMPARE THEM WITH THOSE OF THE UNIVERSITY COURSES.

+WE CANNOT AFFORD TO PRESSURISE OUR SIXTH FORM STUDENTS ANY LONGER TO STUDY MATERIAL UNSUITABLE AND IRRELEVANT TO THEM,+ SHE SAID.

QUOTING THE GOVERNOR'S REFERENCE TO THE NEED FOR GREATER CONSULATION WITH THE PEOPLE OF THE NEW TERRITORIES, REV. BENNETT THOUGHT OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, ALSO, NEEDED TO EXAMINE MORE CLOSELY WAYS OF IMPROVING THEIR CONSULTATIVE MACHINERY.

SHE GAVE AS EXAMPLE THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WITH WHICH SHE WAS MOST FAMILIAR, WHICH HAD NOT CONSULTED FULLY WITH SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN UPDATING THEIR CODE OF AID, PARTICULARLY ON STAFF ESTABLISHMENT AND GRADING OF THE SPECIAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

SHE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO RE-EXAMINE THE GRADING TO SAVE PUBLIC MONEY AND CREATE BETTER PROMOTION PROSPECTS FOR THE CERTIFICATED TEACHERS WHO WERE SPECIALLY NEEDED IN THESE SCHOOLS.

REV. BENNETT WELCOMED THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME WHICH SHE FELT WOULD INDIRECTLY HELP STUDENTS OF INFIRM PARENTS AND WIDOWS. SHE SAW THE NEED FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT IN CAREER COUNSELLING FOR HANDICAPPED STUDENTS.

SHE ASKED THAT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO THE RESTRUCTURING OF AID TO VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, AT THE SAME TIME AS THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

IT WAS CLEAR THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT CARRY OUT ALL THE MANY SOCIAL SERVICES WITHOUT THEM. +THEY HAVE BEEN HAMPERED BY NOT KNOWING EACH YEAR WHETHER OR NOT THEIR ESTIMATED INCOME FROM GOVERNMENT SOURCES WILL IN FACT BE AVAILABLE,+ SHE SAID.

SHE SUGGESTED, FOR THE AGENCIES, A SYSTEM SIMILAR TO THE CODE OF AID FOR VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS WHICH CLEARLY LAID DOWN THEIR OBLIGATIONS AND THE AMOUNTS THEY WOULD RECEIVE FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

GOVERNMENT URGED TO ASSIST TEXTILE INDUSTRY  
TO MAINTAIN COMPETITIVENESS  
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THE HON. LYDIA DUNN TODAY CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO ASSIST THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY TO MAINTAIN ITS COMPETITIVENESS AT THE SAME TIME AS THE GOVERNMENT SEEKS TO PROMOTE DIVERSIFICATION.

IN HER SPEECH IN THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS, SHE ARGUED THAT HONG KONG COULD ONLY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF GROWTH IN WORLD TRADE IN 1978 IF THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNISES THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION AND TAKES POLICY INITIATIVES AND DECISIONS WITH REGARD TO THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY, DOMESTIC INFLATION AND THE MAINTENANCE OF CONFIDENCE.

THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY HAD A REMARKABLE RECORD OF SURVIVAL AND EXPANSION OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS IN THE FACE OF GROWING RESTRICTIONS, YET ITS RELATIVE IMPORTANCE IN OUR ECONOMY HAS NOT DIMINISHED AND THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY ITS DOMINANT ROLE WOULD BE MORE THAN marginally REPLACED IN THE SHORT TERM NO MATTER HOW SUCCESSFULLY THE POLICY OF DIVERSIFICATION IS PURSUED, SHE SAID.

IN HER VIEW, THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DIVERSIFICATION SHOULD HELP THE INDUSTRY TO SURVIVE BY OFFERING SPECIAL LAND TERMS AND ASSISTANCE IN MARKETING.

+WE ARE, AFTER ALL, APPARENTLY PREPARED TO ASSIST NEW INDUSTRIES IN THESE WAYS, INDUSTRIES IN WHICH WE HAVE NO EXPERIENCE AND WHICH ARE OF UNTESTED PROFITABILITY,+ SHE SAID.

SHE WARNED THAT IF THERE WERE TO BE EMPHASIS ON DIVERSIFICATION RATHER THAN SPECIALISATION OF PRODUCTION, THERE WOULD BOUND TO BE LOSS OF PROFITABILITY AS HONG KONG MOVES AWAY FROM AREAS WHERE THERE WAS MAXIMUM COMPARATIVE COST ADVANTAGE.

IRRESPECTIVE OF THE STATE OF THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY HOWEVER, THERE WAS A CASE FOR BROADENING HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIAL BASE AND SHE WELCOMED THE SETTING UP OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

SHE ASKED THAT APART FROM ENGAGING IN ITS OWN RESEARCHES AND ACTIVITIES, IT SHOULD CO-ORDINATE THOSE OF ALL OTHER SIMILAR ORGANISATIONS.

+THERE IS A NEED FOR A CENTRALISED POOL OF INFORMATION ON POSSIBLE INVESTMENT AND MARKET OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPERT ADVICE AS TO HOW BEST THEY MIGHT BE EXPLOITED,+ SHE SAID.

DOMESTIC INFLATION WAS ANOTHER PROBLEM MISS DUNN RAISED IN REGARD TO THE COMPETITIVENESS OF HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIES.

/WHILST ADMITTING .....

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WHILST ADMITTING THAT THE GROWTH OF HONG KONG'S ECONOMY DEPENDED ON THE GROWTH OF EXPORTS, NEITHER THE GOVERNOR IN HIS ANNUAL POLICY SPEECH NOR THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY HAD INDICATED HOW THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSED TO RELIEVE THE PRESSURE ON COSTS SO AS TO RESTORE PRICE FLEXIBILITY, SHE SAID.

IT SEEMED THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONTENT TO SIT BACK AND HOPED THAT A DECLINE IN PRIVATE SECTOR DEMAND WOULD EASE OFF THE PRESSURE, +BUT SURELY THIS SHOULD AT LEAST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A TRIMMING BACK OF PUBLIC SECTOR DEMAND,+ SHE SAID.

YET TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS CONTAINED IN THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH AND GROWING COST OF EXISTING SERVICES, THE PROSPECT WAS FOR A SHARP INCREASE IN RECURRENT EXPENDITURE NEXT YEAR.

SHE HOPED THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE MINDFUL OF THE NEED TO MANAGE THE ECONOMY AND PUBLIC FINANCES IN SUCH A WAY AS TO SECURE OUR PROSPERITY +FOR IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE DO NOT SUFFER A PERMANENT LOSS OF OUR FLEXIBILITY.+

OUR ECONOMIC PROSPECTS ALSO DEPENDED ON THE MAINTENANCE OF CONFIDENCE IN OUR FUTURE, MISS DUNN CONTINUED.

+IT FOLLOWS THAT THOSE WHO ARE CONSTITUTIONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR HONG KONG SHOULD ENSURE THAT THERE IS NO AMBIGUITY IN THEIR ACTIONS WHICH COULD BE INTERPRETED, RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, AS SHOWING A LACK OF INTEREST IN OUR WELFARE,+ SHE EXPLAINED.

SHE SAID MANY IN HONG KONG HAD BEEN DISTURBED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S ACQUIESCENCE IN THE EEC'S DISCRIMINATORY TRADE POLICY.

WHAT UPSET PEOPLE WAS THE DISCRIMINATION OF BRITAIN AGAINST HONG KONG FOR WHICH IT HAS A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY, IN FAVOUR OF OTHER SUPPLIERS FOR WHOM IT HAS NONE.

HONG KONG HAD NOT ASKED THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO DISCHARGE THIS RESPONSIBILITY IN A WAY COSTLY TO THE BRITISH TAXPAYER OR DAMAGING TO THE BRITISH INDUSTRY, ALL WE ASKED WAS THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS MINDFUL OF ITS ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WELFARE OF HONG KONG +AND THIS INCLUDES RESISTING THE APPLICATION OF TRADE POLICIES TO US WHICH ARE SO INDEFENSIBLE IN TERMS OF INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED RULES,+ SHE SAID.

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COMPULSORY FREE JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION MOVE HAILED  
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THE PROVISION OF COMPULSORY FREE JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION WILL BE A MILESTONE FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS IN HONG KONG, ALTHOUGH OBSTACLES TO ITS IMPLEMENTATION, SUCH AS ECONOMIC PRESSURE ON CERTAIN FAMILIES AND DIFFICULTIES IN ENFORCING SUCH A LEGISLATION, MUST FIRST BE OVERCOME, DR. THE HON. RAYSON HUANG SAID TODAY.

SPEAKING AT THE ANNUAL POLICY DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, DR. HUANG SAID THE MAJORITY OF PRIMARY SIX PUPILS IN HONG KONG ARE AGED 13 OR ABOVE WHILE ONLY ABOUT 10 PER CENT ARE BELOW THE AGE OF 12.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION DEFINED IN RELATION TO AGE (12 TO 15) WOULD THEREFORE GUARANTEE COMPLETION OF FORM III FOR NOT MORE THAN 10 PER CENT OF EACH PRIMARY SIX COHORT, HE SAID.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE WORKING PARTY NOW REVIEWING PRIMARY EDUCATION MIGHT LOOK INTO THIS QUESTION.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT EDUCATION RECEIVED BY ALL CHILDREN BE OF A PROPER STANDARD, DR. HUANG CONTINUED.

IF IT IS A MATTER OF FINANCE THAT SOME SCHOOLS DO NOT HAVE WELL-QUALIFIED TEACHERS OR ADEQUATE FACILITIES, IT WOULD BE BETTER TO CONTINUE CHARGING FEES FOR THOSE WHO CAN AFFORD IT, AND DEPLOY THE FUNDS THUS COLLECTED TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATION OFFERED IN THESE SCHOOLS.

HE SAID THERE IS NEED TO FORMULATE A CORE SYLLABUS FOR THE JUNIOR SECONDARY CURRICULUM WHICH WOULD STRESS BASIC AND NECESSARY SKILLS (INCLUDING THE USE OF LANGUAGES), CONCEPTS, JUDGMENTS AND ATTITUDES, LEAVING THE REST OF THE CURRICULUM TO BE DESIGNED BY INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS TO SUIT THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF THEIR PUPILS.

THE CURRICULUM SHOULD NOT BE FORMULATED WITH ONLY THE ACADEMICALLY ORIENTATED IN MIND, BUT SHOULD BE ADAPTABLE TO THE DIFFERENT NEEDS OF THE PUPILS, 60 PER CENT OF WHOM DO NOT PROCEED TO FORM IV.

THERE SHOULD ALSO BE SCOPE FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF SECONDARY EDUCATION TO EMERGE, E.G., PART-TIME SCHOOLING.

HE HOPED THAT WHEN FURTHER PLANS BEYOND THE FORM III LEVEL ARE MADE IN FUTURE, A DIVERSIFIED SYSTEM OF EDUCATION, PROVIDING TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL AS WELL AS ACADEMIC, PART-TIME AS WELL AS FULL-TIME SCHOOLING, WILL BE CONSIDERED.

/NO INDIVIDUAL .....

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NO INDIVIDUAL SHOULD HAVE HIS PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT IRREVOCABLY DETERMINED UNDER A RIGID EDUCATIONAL PROGRESSIVE SYSTEM; DR. HUANG SAID.

EDUCATION IS THE MEANS TO SOCIAL MOBILITY, AND TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL THERE MUST BE INBUILT MOBILITY WITHIN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM ITSELF.

EACH STAGE OF ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT SHOULD HAVE A CAREFULLY DELINEATED PURPOSE FORMING BY ITSELF AS COMPLETE A PROCESS AS POSSIBLE, SO THAT AT THE END OF EACH STAGE A PUPIL MAY HAVE A CLEAR IDEA OF HIS EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND THE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES OPEN TO HIM AT THAT LEVEL. AT THE SAME TIME THERE SHOULD BE FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR MOBILITY TO OTHER LEVELS OF THE SYSTEM, OR FOR A CHANGE OF DIRECTION.

HE SAID SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE POSITION OF THE POST-SECONDARY COLLEGES. LINKS SHOULD BE ALSO KEPT OPEN BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM: BETWEEN CRAFT WORK AND STUDIES IN TECHNICAL INSTITUTES, BETWEEN TECHNICAL INSTITUTES AND THE POLYTECHNIC, BETWEEN THE POST-SECONDARY COLLEGES AND THE UNIVERSITIES, AND BETWEEN THE POLYTECHNIC AND THE UNIVERSITIES.

HE HOPED THAT THE FORTHCOMING GREEN PAPER ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF SENIOR SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION WILL DEAL WITH THESE AND OTHER ISSUES WHICH GOVERN OUR EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVES, AND THAT THERE WILL BE FULL CONSULTATION WITH PEOPLE INTERESTED AND EXPERIENCED IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION BEFORE THE WHITE PAPER IS FORMULATED.

HE SAID IT IS GRATIFYING THAT GOVERNMENT HAS MADE EXTENSIVE PLANS TO IMPROVE SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN HONG KONG.

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UNOFFICIAL MEMBER PRAISES REHABILITATION PLAN  
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THE PUBLICATION OF THE WHITE PAPER ON REHABILITATION AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE IS AN EXCELLENT CURTAIN-RAISER TO A +YEAR OF SOCIAL PROGRESS+.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, DR. THE HON. HENRY HU SAID THE PROGRESS IN EDUCATION, HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE OUTLINED BY THE GOVERNOR WOULD TOGETHER LEAD TO A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE MORE NEEDY SECTIONS OF OUR POPULATION.

HE HAD HOWEVER A NUMBER OF PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE ON THE VARIOUS PLANS. WHILE HE WISHED EVERY SUCCESS TO THE CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE, HE FELT THAT THE MAGNITUDE AND COMPLEXITY OF ITS TASK REQUIRED THE APPOINTMENT OF A COMMISSIONER OF REHABILITATION.

A PERSON OF SUCH RANK AND STATUS WOULD CERTAINLY ADD STRENGTH TO IT AND WOULD SERVE AS A FOCUS. +IT IS FAR EASIER TO RELATE TO A MAN THAN TO A COMMITTEE OR A UNIT IN THE SOCIAL SERVICES BRANCH,+ HE SAID.

TO OVERCOME THE LACK OF TRAINED STAFF - ONE OF THE BIGGEST STUMBLING BLOCKS IN THE REHABILITATION PROGRAMME, DR. HU SOUGHT REASSURANCE THAT THE PROBLEM HAD HIGH GOVERNMENT PRIORITY AND THAT PLANS WERE IN HAND TO SOLVE IT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

AS TO THE PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME, DR. HU URGED THAT IT WAS TIME TO REVIEW THE METHOD OF COMPILING THE ALLOWANCE INDEX AND THE LEVEL OF PAYMENTS.

MORE MIGHT BE NEEDED TO IMPROVE THE DIGNITY OF MAN AND GIVE HIM A SENSE OF WORTH IN SOCIETY, HE SAID.

DR. HU SAID THE VOLUNTARY WELFARE SECTOR WHICH HAD PLAYED AN ACTIVE AND STRATEGIC ROLE IN DRAFTING THE PROGRAMME PLANS FOR SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY AND YOUTH, WELCOMED THE GREEN PAPERS TO BE ISSUED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

THERE WAS CONCERN HOWEVER THAT THE PERSONAL SERVICES FOR YOUTH PROGRAMME PLAN DID NOT GO FAR OR WAS BROAD ENOUGH IN APPROACH.

+THERE IS A NEED TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMME WHICH CUTS ACROSS ALL OF THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES SERVING YOUTH,+ HE SAID, SIMILAR TO THE APPROACH TAKEN FOR THE DISABLED AND ELDERLY. HE CAUTIONED THAT ANY RE-STRUCTURING OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT SHOULD ONLY BE UNDERTAKEN AFTER THOROUGH DISCUSSION AND CONSULTATION WITH THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR.

THE SECTOR ALSO NEEDED AN IMPROVED SUBVENTION SYSTEM TO PLAN AHEAD WITH CONFIDENCE AND HE TRUSTED THAT THE PROPOSALS PUT TO THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE BY THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE WOULD HELP TO SOLVE THE LONG-STANDING PROBLEM.

ON THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT, DR. HU SUGGESTED THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO UPGRADE IT TO SECRETARIAL LEVEL. IT HAD A SIGNIFICANT ROLE TO PLAY IN LABOUR MATTERS AND HAD ACHIEVED A GREAT DEAL IN THE PAST FEW YEARS IN BRINGING FORWARD VARIOUS ITEMS OF LABOUR LEGISLATION TO BETTER THE LOT OF OUR WORKERS, HE SAID.

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IMPORTANCE OF CLEAR, SIMPLE HOUSING POLICY STRESSED  
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IT IS MOST IMPORTANT POLITICALLY, SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY FOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY TO CLARIFY ITS POLICY AND TO SIMPLIFY ITS IMPLEMENTATION OF THAT POLICY, REV. THE HON. PATRICK MCGOVERN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

+EVEN NOW, IT INVOLVES SOME TWO MILLION PEOPLE. EVEN A SMALL ERROR OR MISUNDERSTANDING AUTOMATICALLY BECOMES A BIG ISSUE,+ HE SAID.

+WHAT IS NEEDED TO REMOVE CONFUSION AND MISUNDERSTANDING IS A CLEAR ACCOUNT OR DESCRIPTION OF WHAT INGREDIENTS ITEMIZED IN DETAILS MAKE UP THE TOTAL RENT THAT MR. X MUST PAY IN Y ESTATE FOR A ROOM OF Z SQUARE FEET.

+IT WOULD BE GOOD ALSO TO SHOW HOW AND WHY THIS COMPARES WITH WHAT MR. A PAYS IN B ESTATE FOR A ROOM OF C SQUARE FEET.+

+MENTION MIGHT ALSO BE MADE OF WHETHER OR NOT THERE IS ANY RELATIONSHIP, VISIBLE OR INVISIBLE, BETWEEN SUCH ACTUAL RENTS AND THE FUNDING OF FUTURE MORE EXPENSIVE ESTATES IN WHICH NEITHER MR. X NOR MR. A IS EVER LIKELY TO LIVE,+ REV. MCGOVERN SAID.

HE WELCOMED THE +NEW AND REALISTIC+ FINANCIAL DEAL FOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY WHICH OPENED THE WAY FOR CLARIFICATION AND SIMPLIFICATION.

HE WAS HAPPY TO NOTE THAT THE LATEST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUTHORITY SAID IT COULD NOW TAKE A FRESH VIEW OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE RENT PACKAGE.

HE HOPED THAT THE NEW VIEW WOULD NOT BECOME A +STATISTICAL RAZZLE-DAZZLE+ AND SUGGESTED THAT IF NO IRRELEVANT COMPARISONS WERE MADE WITH RENTS IN THE +RAPACIOUS PRIVATE SECTOR+ CREDIBILITY WOULD BE GREATLY ENHANCED.

+IT WOULD ALSO HELP IF THE VIEW SUPPRESSES ANY SUB-CONSCIOUS PATERNALISTIC ATTITUDE,+ HE SAID, LOOKING ON TENANTS AS PEOPLE ENJOYING A PRIVILEGE RATHER THAN A RIGHT JUST BECAUSE LAND FOR BUILDING WAS SUBSIDISED.

THE GOVERNOR'S ASSURANCE IN HIS POLICY SPEECH, THAT THE AUTHORITY +ACCEPTS ITS OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE DECENT HOUSING FOR LOW INCOME GROUPS AT RENTS THEY CAN AFFORD+ SHOULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARDS THE NEEDED CLARIFICATION, REV. MCGOVERN CONTINUED.

/+THIS LOGICALLY .....

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+THIS LOGICALLY INVOLVES A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE INCOME OF THE TENANT AND WHAT HE MUST PAY,+ AND HE HOPED HE WAS RIGHT IN THINKING THE CONCEPT OF SUBSIDY WAS INCLUDED IN THE ABILITY TO PAY, +SO THAT THE VERY POOR, WHOSE NEEDS ARE GREATEST, ARE NOT EXCLUDED FROM DECENT HOUSING.+

HOWEVER, HE SAID, IT WAS LESS CLEAR HOW MUCH CROSS-SUBSIDY WAS INVOLVED BETWEEN THE VARIOUS GROUPS OF RENTS, OR, TO WHAT EXTENT SOME LOWER INCOME GROUPS WERE SUBSIDISING OTHER GROUPS, +THUS RELIEVING THE RICH OF PART OF WHAT SHOULD BE THEIR BURDEN.+

HE SAID HE HAD READ THE HOUSING AUTHORITY ANNUAL REPORT, LISTENED TO PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPERS WHO WORKED WITH THEM, AND ADMITTED HE WAS CONFUSED.

IF A CLEAR ACCOUNT COULD BE GIVEN IN SUCH A WAY THAT EVEN HE, +OR ANY EQUALLY UNEDUCATED TENANT IN A PUBLIC HOUSING FLAT CAN UNDERSTAND, THEN JUSTICE WILL BE SEEN TO BE DONE AND MISGUIDED CRITICISM, IF ANY, WILL BE DEFUSED,+ HE SAID.

REV. MCGOVERN WELCOMED THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME AND ASKED THAT SAFEGUARDS BE TAKEN TO PREVENT PROFITEERING BY NEW OWNERS.

IT WOULD INDIRECTLY MAKE AVAILABLE MORE SPACE IN THE CHEAPER RENTAL AREAS AND ITS SUCCESS SHOULD BE JUDGED MAINLY BY THIS RATHER THAN ITS EFFECTS ON THE BETTER OFF PROSPECTIVE OWNERS, HE SAID.

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CALL TO MAKE TRAINING COUNCIL A STATUTORY BODY

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THE HON. S.L. CHEN HAS SUGGESTED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT THE TRAINING COUNCIL BE GIVEN STATUTORY STATUS TO BECOME A PERMANENT BODY TO ENSURE THAT HONG KONG HAS A BALANCED INDUSTRIAL TRAINING AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION SYSTEM.

MR. CHEN POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS HUGE IMBALANCE AT PRESENT. +WHEREAS TECHNICAL EDUCATION IS CONDUCTED IN A FORMAL MANNER, WITH PRESCRIBED COURSE CURRICULUM AND UNDER EFFICIENT SUPERVISION, INDUSTRIAL TRAINING IS IN THE MAIN CARRIED OUT PURELY ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS.+

HE SAID ALTHOUGH THE TRAINING COUNCIL THROUGH ITS VARIOUS TRAINING BOARDS HAD SUCCESSFULLY DRAWN UP STANDARDS AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR INDUSTRIES AT ALL LEVELS, WHETHER THEY WERE FOLLOWED WAS LEFT ENTIRELY TO INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYERS.

THE POSITION OF INDUSTRIAL TRAINING FOR THE TECHNOLOGIST, ESPECIALLY IN ENGINEERING FIELDS, AND PROFESSIONAL GRADES WAS PARTICULARLY SERIOUS, MR. CHEN SAID, SO THAT MANY EMPLOYERS HAD TO IMPORT THIS LEVEL OF MANPOWER FROM ABROAD.

HE WARNED THAT UNLESS WE COULD CORRECT THIS IMBALANCE, WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO PRODUCE SUFFICIENT MANPOWER OF THE QUALITY WE NEED, MORE SO WITH INDUSTRIAL DIVERSIFICATION.

HE SAID THERE WAS ALSO AN URGENT NEED TO CREATE A CENTRAL TECHNICAL INFORMATION SERVICE BY POOLING THE RESOURCES OF EXISTING ORGANISATIONS, TO AVOID DUPLICATION AND PROVIDE A FOCUS FOR THOSE SEEKING INFORMATION.

WHETHER OR NOT WE WOULD SUCCEED IN DIVERSIFICATION WOULD DEPEND ON HOW MUCH AND HOW BEST WE UTILISE MODERN TECHNOLOGIES AND TRANSFER THEM FROM MANAGEMENT TO SHOP FLOOR, AND ONE OF THE MOST COST EFFECTIVE MEANS TO ENCOURAGE THIS WAS SUCH A SERVICE TO INDUSTRY, HE SAID.

INDUSTRIAL DIVERSIFICATION, MR. CHEN NOTED, SHOULD BE BOTH VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL—PROVIDING FOR GREATER VARIETY AND MORE SOPHISTICATION IN EXISTING INDUSTRIES AS WELL AS GENERATING NEW AND HIGHER TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRIES.

IT SHOULD AIM AT LONG-TERM STABILITY RATHER THAN SHORT-TERM SUCCESS. IT MIGHT INVOLVE LONGER-TERM PLANNING THAN HONG KONG HAD BEEN USED TO, AND HAD TO BE GEARED TO GENERATE A HIGHER ADDED VALUE PER UNIT OF INVESTMENT.

/MR. CHEN LISTED .....

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MR. CHEN LISTED FACTORS WHICH COULD HINDER ITS PROCESS:

- \* LACK OF CENTRAL ECONOMIC PLANNING MACHINERY,
- \* LACK OF INDUCEMENT FOR NEW INDUSTRIES,
- \* INAVAILABILITY OF TECHNICAL MANPOWER AND KNOW-HOW,
- \* LACK OF TECHNOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE, SUCH AS A COMPREHENSIVE TECHNICAL INFORMATION SERVICE,
- \* INABILITY TO INFLUENCE EXPORT OUTLETS WHICH ARE HEAVILY RELIED ON,
- \* LACK OF A SECURE AND PROTECTED DOMESTIC MARKET, AND
- \* DEPENDENCE ON DISTANT SOURCES OF RAW MATERIAL SUPPLIES.

PROVIDED SUITABLE ANSWERS TO SOME OF THESE COULD BE FOUND, WITHIN THE LIMITS IMPOSED BY HONG KONG'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, THERE WERE STILL MEASURES WHICH COULD BE TAKEN TO ACCELERATE INDUSTRIAL DIVERSIFICATION, HE SAID.

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UNOFFICIAL MEMBER SEEKS MORE EQUITABLE  
COMPENSATION TO THOSE AFFECTED BY DEVELOPMENT

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THE HON. PETER C. WONG CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY TO BE MORE EQUITABLE IN ITS PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION TO PEOPLE DISTURBED OR DISLOCATED BY THE MASSIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN HONG KONG.

WHILE THE ULTIMATE AIM OF SUCH DEVELOPMENT WAS TO BENEFIT THE WHOLE OF HONG KONG, HE SAID, THE PROCESS ITSELF WAS NOT WITHOUT SACRIFICES AND ADEQUATE COMPENSATION IN CASH OR IN KIND HAD TO BE PROVIDED TO +MAKE THE WOUND LESS PAINFUL.+

HE ELABORATED ON THE INADEQUACIES IN COMPENSATION IN EXISTING LEGISLATION OR POLICY RELATING TO LAND AND BUILDINGS.

MR. WONG SPOKE AT LENGTH ON LAND RESUMPTION, DANGEROUS BUILDINGS AND CLOSURE ORDERS, STREET ALTERATIONS, CROWN TENANTS AND TOWN PLANNING.

ON LAND RESUMPTION, MR. WONG POINTED OUT THAT WHILE THE GOVERNMENT SELDOM MADE ANY ATTEMPT TO ENFORCE LEASE CONDITIONS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND MIGHT EVEN HAVE ACCEPTED RATES AND PROPERTY TAX ASSESSED ON HOUSES BUILT ON AGRICULTURAL LAND, UPON RESUMPTION THE LAND WOULD ONLY BE COMPENSATED AS AGRICULTURAL LAND AND THE VALUE OF THE HOUSES ON IT WHOLLY IGNORED.

HE SUGGESTED A SOLUTION BY GIVING TWO EXAMPLES WHICH HE SAID WERE BOTH FAIR AND REALISTIC : GRANTING EX-GRATIA PAYMENT, AS ON THE CLEARANCE OF SQUATTER AREAS, AND AWARDING COMPENSATION AT THE HIGHER USER RATE, AS PRACTISED BY TENANCY TRIBUNALS FOR TENANTS OCCUPYING PRE-WAR DOMESTIC FLATS BUT USING THEM FOR COMMERCIAL OR INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES.

ON DANGEROUS BUILDINGS AND CLOSURE ORDERS, MR. WONG SUPPORTED THE EXISTING GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO RELIEVE HARDSHIPS CAUSED BY EMERGENCY CLOSURE ORDERS ON DANGEROUS BUILDINGS BUT FELT THAT FURTHER EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE, THROUGH WELL-PLANNED DEPARTMENTAL CO-ORDINATION AND CLEARLY-DEFINED POLICIES.

AS A PREVENTIVE MEASURE, HE SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD INSPECT ALL AGING AND POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS BUILDINGS MORE FREQUENTLY AND THOROUGHLY TO ENABLE REPAIRS TO BE MADE IN TIME SO AS TO REDUCE THE NEED TO MAKE CLOSURE ORDERS.

/FURTHERMORE, .....

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FURTHERMORE, IN VULNERABLE DISTRICTS, IT WOULD BE WISE TO MAKE RESOURCES AVAILABLE AND DRAW UP CONCRETE PLANS TO DEAL WITH ANY CONTINGENCIES, HE SAID.

MR. WONG ASKED ON BEHALF OF TENANTS OF POST-WAR DANGEROUS BUILDINGS FOR SOME FORM OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE. IN CASES WHERE AN OCCUPATION PERMIT WAS ISSUED TO A BUILDING NOT FULLY COMPLYING WITH REQUIREMENTS, OR WHERE DEFECTS SHOWED UP BECAUSE GOVERNMENT SERVANTS HAD FAILED TO EXERCISE DUE SUPERVISION OF THE BUILDING WORK, IT WAS ONLY FAIR FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY AND COMPENSATE THE PEOPLE THUS DISPOSSESSED, HE SAID.

ON THE STREETS (ALTERATION) ORDINANCE AND OTHER ORDINANCES INVOLVING COMPENSATION, MR. WONG CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO INCORPORATE IN THEM SOME OF THE PROVISIONS OF A PROCEDURAL NATURE CONTAINED IN THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY (LAND RESUMPTION AND RELATED PROVISIONS) ORDINANCE, WHICH WAS A VAST IMPROVEMENT OVER THE OTHER ORDINANCES.

IMPROVEMENT COULD BE MADE BY EXTENDING THE PERIOD ALLOWED FOR MAKING CLAIMS FOR COMPENSATION UNDER THE STREETS (ALTERATION) ORDINANCE FROM ONE, OR TWO MONTHS, DEPENDING ON THE NATURE OF THE CLOSURE OR ALTERATION, TO A YEAR.

IT WAS PATENTLY OBVIOUS THAT THE TIME NOW ALLOWED WAS UNREASONABLY SHORT AND THERE WERE NO PROVISIONS WHEREBY THE PUBLIC WERE NOTIFIED OFFICIALLY OF THE CESSATION OR COMPLETION OF WORK SO AS TO KNOW THE TIME LIMIT FOR LODGING A CLAIM.

HARDSHIPS ALSO OFTEN AROSE FROM DELAYED PAYMENTS OF COMPENSATION BECAUSE OF RED-TAPE AND OTHER PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS. +A SYSTEM FOR ADVANCE PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION SHOULD THEREFORE BE ESTABLISHED ADMINISTRATIVELY, IF NOT STATUTORILY,+ MR. WONG SAID.

BESIDES, IN LINE WITH THE MTR ORDINANCE, THERE SHOULD BE A TIME LIMIT FOR PAYMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT, PREFERABLY THREE MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF AGREEMENT OR AWARD. +PROVISION SHOULD ALSO BE MADE TO INCLUDE PAYMENT OF INTEREST ON COMPENSATION,+ HE ADDED.

ON CROWN TENANTS OF PRE-WAR BUILDINGS, MR. WONG DREW ATTENTION TO THE ABSENCE OF THEIR RIGHT TO COMPENSATION. HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THERE COULD BE INJUSTICE IN SOME CASES AS ORDINARY TENANTS MIGHT BECOME CROWN TENANTS THROUGH NO FAULT OF THEIR OWN, AS WHEN THE GOVERNMENT TOOK OVER OWNERSHIP BY BUYING THE BUILDING, OR RE-ENTERED THE BUILDING ON A BREACH OF LEASE COVENANTS OR DEFAULT IN PAYMENT OF CROWN RENT.

/+ THEIR RIGHT TO .....

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+THEIR RIGHT TO COMPENSATION WAS IRREVOCABLY LOST THE MOMENT THE CROWN BECAME OWNER. THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS IS OBVIOUSLY UNSATISFACTORY. THEIR HARDSHIP IS JUST THE SAME AS ANY OTHER TENANT,+ HE SAID.

FOR THEM, MR. WONG ADVOCATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT EXEMPT ITSELF FROM THE DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF A PRIVATE OWNER.

ON THE RATHER COMPLEX SUBJECT OF TOWN PLANNING, MR. WONG CONFINED HIS SPEECH TO THE AMBIT OF THE TOWN PLANNING LEGISLATION, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COMPENSATION.

ON THE FIRST POINT ABOUT THE AMBIT OF THE LEGISLATION, MR. WONG SAID THAT THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE WAS PASSED IN 1939, WHEN THE GOVERNMENT PLAYED ONLY A COMPARATIVELY MINOR ROLE IN CONTROLLING DEVELOPMENT. THE COUNTRYSIDE HAD NOW ASSUMED CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE AND THE TREND WAS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE.

ALTHOUGH THE COUNTRY PARKS ORDINANCE WAS ENACTED IN 1976, ITS PURPOSE WAS NOT IDENTICAL, AND OUTSIDE THE NEW TOWN, +IT IS NOT COMPETENT FOR THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD TO PREPARE PLANS FOR THE RURAL AREAS OF HONG KONG,+ HE SAID.

HE THEREFORE STRONGLY RECOMMENDED CLEARLY WORDING THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE TO INCLUDE THE RURAL AREAS, SO AS TO GIVE LEGAL BACKING TO WHATEVER ZONING PLANS WERE NEEDED FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES.

HE ALSO SUGGESTED SETTING UP A SYSTEM OF MAKING INQUIRIES AND SEARCHES AT THE TOWN PLANNING OFFICE TO ENABLE INTERESTED PARTIES TO OBTAIN PRECISE INFORMATION REGARDING DRAFT OR APPROVED PLANS.

ON THE QUESTION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, MR. WONG EMPHASISED THAT IN THE UK, LOCAL AUTHORITY WAS REQUIRED TO MAKE PUBLIC ITS DECISION TO PREPARE A PLAN FOR A CERTAIN AREA.

+AS TOWN PLANS ARE BASICALLY DESIGNED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PEOPLE, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE PUBLIC BE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE VARIOUS STAGES OF THEIR PREPARATION,+ HE SAID.

HE ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO INFORM THE PUBLIC OF A COMPLETED DRAFT PLAN OR OF ITS INTENTION TO PREPARE A PLAN IN A MORE POSITIVE WAY.

+NOTIFICATION BY WAY OF A CIRCULAR TO THE OWNERS AND TENANTS DIRECTLY AFFECTED IS ONE GOOD SUGGESTION. WHERE JUSTICE DEMANDS IT, ADMINISTRATIVE DIFFICULTIES CANNOT BE AN EXCUSE,+ HE SAID.

/ON THE QUESTION .....

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ON THE QUESTION OF COMPENSATION ARISING FROM THE EFFECTS OF GOVERNMENT TOWN PLANNING, MR. WONG POINTED OUT THAT THE HONG KONG TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE, UNLIKE THE UK TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT, SPECIFICALLY DENIED THE RIGHT OF ANY LANDOWNER, WHO CONSIDERED HIS INTEREST AFFECTED, FROM CLAIMING COMPENSATION.

+VERY OFTEN A PLAN MAY, MERELY BY BEING PUBLISHED AS A DRAFT PLAN, DRAIN AWAY DEVELOPMENT VALUE FROM LAND,+ HE SAID. AN OWNER, FOR EXAMPLE, MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO SELL HIS PROPERTY OR BE PERMITTED TO DEVELOP IT IF IT WAS AFFECTED BY A PLANNED NEW ROAD WHICH MIGHT NOT BE DUE FOR CONSTRUCTION FOR SOME YEARS.

+IN ALL SUCH CASES WHERE THERE IS A POTENTIAL ELEMENT OF COMPULSORY PURCHASE, THE OWNER AFFECTED SHOULD BE ABLE TO SERVE A NOTICE REQUIRING THE ACQUISITION BY GOVERNMENT OF HIS INTEREST IN THE BLIGHTED LAND,+ MR. WONG SAID.

HE SAID THE PRICE PAID FOR A LEASE OFTEN REFLECTED ITS FULL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL FOR ITS ENTIRE TERM. +HOWEVER THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD IS ALWAYS AT LIBERTY TO INTRODUCE ANY RESTRICTIONS IT THINKS FIT.+

THE OWNER WAS THUS DEPRIVED OF HIS RIGHT TO RE-DEVELOP IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LEASE CONDITIONS BUT WAS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR ANY FORM OF COMPENSATION. +SUCH DEROGATION OF PRIVATE RIGHTS IS SOCIALLY UNDESIRABLE AND SHOULD NOT BE EFFECTED WITHOUT ADEQUATE COMPENSATION,+ HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THERE WAS FURTHER CASE FOR COMPENSATION SINCE PREMIUMS WERE PAYABLE WHENEVER A LANDOWNER APPLIED FOR A MODIFICATION OF THE CROWN LEASE CONDITIONS. BESIDES, HE SAID, COMPENSATION WAS PAYABLE UNDER THE COUNTRY PARKS ORDINANCE, TO A LANDOWNER WHOSE LAND WAS DETRIMENTALLY AFFECTED.

MR. WONG STRESSED THAT COMPENSATION MUST BE BASED ON EQUITABLE GROUNDS AND NOT +SHACKLED BY NARROW LEGISLATION.+

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CONTRIBUTORY INSURANCE SCHEME MORE  
ATTRACTIVE AS SAVINGS FOR WORKERS  
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THE CONTRIBUTORY DEATH, SICKNESS AND INJURY INSURANCE SCHEME WOULD BE MORE ATTRACTIVE TO WORKERS AS SOME FORM OF A SAVINGS SCHEME SO THAT THEY COULD GET BACK PART OF THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS AFTER A NUMBER OF YEARS, THE HON. WONG LAM SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE CHINESE DO NOT VIEW LIFE INSURANCE IN THE SAME WAY AS WESTERNERS. ALTHOUGH THE WORKERS MAY BE WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE INITIALLY, AFTER A WHILE THEY MAY BE RELUCTANT TO PART WITH A SUM OF MONEY EVERY MONTH, HE SAID.

HE THOUGHT THE RATE OF 2 PER CENT TO BE CONTRIBUTED BY THE EMPLOYEE WAS NOT HIGH. AT PRESENT, A LARGE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATING IN PROVIDENT FUND SCHEMES CONTRIBUTE SOME 4 TO 5 PER CENT OF THEIR INCOME, HE SAID.

MR. WONG SUGGESTED THAT THE EMPLOYEE BE ALLOWED TO FIX HIS OWN CONTRIBUTION RATE, AT NOT LESS THAN 2 BUT NOT MORE THAN 5 PER CENT, TO SUIT INDIVIDUAL FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS AND PREFERENCES.

HE AGREED WITH SETTING THE TIME FOR IMPLEMENTING THE SCHEME IN 1980, TO GIVE EMPLOYERS AMPLE TIME TO PREPARE THEMSELVES.

+GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO ENSURE THAT AN EMPLOYER WILL NOT REFUSE EMPLOYMENT TO A WORKER WHO WISHES TO JOIN THE SCHEME, AND THAT AN EMPLOYEE WILL NOT SUFFER ANY LOSS ON INSURANCE BENEFITS IF HE CHANGES JOBS,+ HE SAID.

HE HOPED THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SO THAT ALL THOSE CONCERNED MAY BE ABLE TO DISCUSS IT AND MAKE SUGGESTIONS.

ON HONG KONG'S EXPORT TRADE PROBLEMS, MR. WONG ASKED IF THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER ENCOURAGING INVESTMENT IN NEW INDUSTRIES BY WAY OF SAY, 5 YEARS' TAX HOLIDAY.

EXPERIMENTS IN THIS FIELD HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT QUITE SUCCESSFULLY IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES, HE SAID, AND WE COULD PERHAPS TAKE A LEAF FROM THEIR BOOK.

HE FELT THAT CHANGES SHOULD BE INTRODUCED TO ENSURE LONGER-TERM PLANNING AND INVESTMENT IN LOCAL INDUSTRY, TO PLACE MORE EMPHASIS ON THE MANUFACTURE OF MORE SOPHISTICATED PRODUCTS, AND BROADEN OUR INDUSTRIAL BASE.

/THE SETTING UP .....

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THE SETTING UP OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DIVERSIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF LANTAU ISLAND AND PROVISION OF LAND FOR NEW INDUSTRIES SHOULD MEET URGENT NEEDS, HE SAID.

HE SUPPORTED THE INTRODUCTION OF NINE YEARS OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION WHICH HE THOUGHT MIGHT BE MORE BENEFICIAL THAN TO PROMOTE FIVE YEARS OF SUBSIDISED SECONDARY EDUCATION.

HE EXPLAINED THAT JAPANESE WORKERS GENERALLY HAVE A HIGHER STANDARD OF EDUCATION WHICH PUT THEIR COUNTRY IN A MOST ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORE SOPHISTICATED INDUSTRIES.

IF MOST OF HONG KONG'S WORKERS HAVE AT LEAST NINE YEARS' EDUCATION, HONG KONG WILL ALSO HAVE BETTER CHANCES OF DEVELOPING SIMILAR INDUSTRIES, HE SAID.

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/18 .....

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DESIRE TO RAISE NORMAL RETIRING AGE  
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THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING SAID TODAY THERE WAS A DESIRE AMONG WORKERS TO RAISE THE NORMAL RETIRING AGE OF EMPLOYEES, PARTICULARLY IN THE LOWER GRADES OF THE CIVIL SERVICE FROM 55 YEARS TO 60 OR EVEN 65.

HE SAID PENDING A FAVOURABLE RULING ON THIS BY THE GOVERNMENT, WORKERS NEARING THEIR 55TH BIRTHDAY WOULD FIND IT MORE ENCOURAGING, REASSURING AND SATISFYING BECAUSE OF THE IMPROVEMENT IN RECENT YEARS TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE.

HE WAS SPEAKING AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL DEBATE ON THE MOTION OF THANKS FOR THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS WHICH HE SAID WAS GENERALLY HAILED BY THE WORKING POPULATION IN HONG KONG, AND BROUGHT GOOD TIDINGS IN MATTERS OF IMMEDIATE CONCERN.

ON THE PROPOSED CONTRIBUTORY SICKNESS AND DEATH INSURANCE SCHEME, HE SAID THE REACTION OF THE WORKERS TOWARDS IT WAS GENERALLY FAVOURABLE IN THE ABSENCE OF A MORE COMPREHENSIVE AND BENEFICIAL SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEME, PARTICULARLY IN THE CASE OF MIDDLE-AGED WORKERS AND THOSE WITH HEAVY FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES.

HE NOTED THAT THE PROPOSED SCHEME WOULD HELP TO REHABILITATE GRIEF-STRIKEN FAMILIES AND TIDE THEM OVER THESE PERIODS OF MISFORTUNE.

+I CAN ENVISAGE THAT THIS PROPOSAL WILL THEREFORE RECEIVE ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT FROM WORKERS GENERALLY, AND HOPE THAT IT WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE SOONER THAN 1980,+ MR. LEUNG ADDED.

HE ALSO WELCOMED THE MOVE TO REDUCE THE QUALIFYING AGE FOR OLD AGE ALLOWANCE AND TO IMPROVE THE DISABILITY ALLOWANCE.

HOWEVER HE SAID: +ALTHOUGH THESE ARE CERTAINLY STEPS FORWARD TOWARDS PROVIDING BETTER SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY THEY STILL FALL SHORT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE AIM TO AMELIORATE THE HARDSHIPS OF THE AGED, THE POOR AND THE HELPLESS, SINCE THE PRESENCE OF HARSH LIVING CONDITIONS FORMS AN ADVERSE REFLECTION ON THE NAME OF THE COMMUNITY WITHIN ANY ORDERED SOCIETY.+

COMMENTING ON THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME, MR. LEUNG SAID IT WAS THE EARNEST DESIRE OF THE WORKERS TO BE ABLE TO BENEFIT FROM AND TO QUALIFY FOR IT, SINCE HOUSING FOR WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES WAS STILL A MAJOR SOCIAL PROBLEM.

+THE HIGH COST OF LIVING AND RENT FOR LIVING ACCOMMODATION REMAIN A HEAVY BURDEN ON WAGE-EARNERS. SUCH DEMANDS ON THE LIMITED MEANS OF EMPLOYEES CAN BE AGGRAVATING, PARTICULARLY IN THE CASE OF YOUNG MARRIED COUPLES WHO NEED, BUT ARE NOT QUALIFIED FOR, LOW COST HOUSING,+ HE REMARKED.

/MR. LEUNG .....

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MR. LEUNG PLEDGED THE SUPPORT OF THE WORKFORCE TO THE EFFORTS OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR TO FURTHER THE SOCIAL BENEFITS AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF THE WORKING POPULATION WHO, HE SAID, ARE LESS FORTUNATE THAN OTHERS.

HE ALSO URGED THAT THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT BE APPROPRIATELY EXPANDED AND STRENGTHENED TO ENABLE IT TO COPE WITH THE VERY RAPID DEVELOPMENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS WHICH RELY SO MUCH ON THE DEDICATED EFFORTS OF ITS STAFF.

ON THE MOVE TO PROVIDE MORE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, HE SAID IT WAS VERY COMMENDABLE THAT THE GOVERNMENT LOOKED ON THE PROVISION OF SUITABLE FACILITIES FOR LEISURELY RELAXATION AS A NEW AND INDISPENSABLE CONCEPT FOR SUCH ACTIVITIES.

+IN FACT THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL PROVISION IN THIS FIELD WILL SOON BECOME PRESSING, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO MORE VIGOROUS AND MORE INTENSIFIED ACTION IN THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL RECREATIONAL AND SPORTS CAMPS, COUNTRY PARKS AND OTHER OUT-DOOR ACTIVITIES.

+INDEED, SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS IN THESE DIRECTIONS WILL ALSO BE OF GREAT HELP IN PROVIDING SOLUTIONS TO A VARIETY OF YOUTH PROBLEMS,+ HE ADDED.

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/20 .....

POINTS TO BE CONSIDERED IN SETTING UP ADVISORY BOARDS FOR NT  
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IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSAL TO SET UP ADVISORY BOARDS IN ALL NEW TERRITORIES DISTRICTS BE VIEWED RATIONALLY RATHER THAN EMOTIONALLY OR FACTIONALLY, THE HON. CHARLES YEUNG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE BELIEVED THAT THE MAIN QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WERE WHETHER THE SCHEME WOULD SERVE THE BEST INTEREST OF THE GENERAL INHABITANTS IN A PARTICULAR DISTRICT, HAVING DUE REGARD TO THE TRADITIONAL RIGHTS AND CUSTOMS OF THE INDIGENOUS INHABITANTS.

THE ADVISORY BOARDS AND THE RURAL COMMITTEES WOULD ALSO HAVE TO BE COMPATIBLE WITH AND COMPLEMENTARY TO EACH OTHER= +WELL-DEFINED AND CAREFULLY WORDED TERMS OF REFERENCE SHOULD BE FORMULATED AND ANNOUNCED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE,+ HE SAID.

SINCE EACH DISTRICT AND EACH TOWN IN THE NEW TERRITORIES IS UNIQUE, THE PLAN FOR THE OPERATION OF THE SCHEME AND THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOARDS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED CAREFULLY AND INDIVIDUALLY WITH FULL CONSULTATION WITH THE RURAL COMMITTEES AND THE LOCAL PEOPLE CONCERNED, MR. YEUNG POINTED OUT.

HE SAID THE SOUNDNESS OF THE PRINCIPLE OF THE SCHEME COULD NOT BE HONESTLY CHALLENGED. +INDIRECTLY, THIS SCHEME WILL HELP PROVIDE A SOURCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OR PROMOTION OF THE MUCH NEEDED LEADERSHIP AT THE LOCAL GRASS-ROOTS LEVEL,+ HE ADDED.

HE WAS PLEASED THAT THE UNDER-PROVISION OF AMENITIES IN THE URBANISED AREAS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WOULD BE RECTIFIED AND THE CLAIMS OF THE SMALLER TOWNS WOULD NOT BE NEGLECTED.

HOWEVER, HE SUGGESTED THAT SUCH SERVICES AND AMENITIES SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO VILLAGES AND OTHER AREAS WHERE THERE IS A FAIR CONCENTRATION OF POPULATION OUTSIDE THE TOWNS.

HE SAID THAT IT WAS HIGH TIME FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO CONSIDER A FULL PROGRAMME OF RESUMING LAND FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF MOTORABLE ACCESS ROADS TO SERVE THE VILLAGES, HOUSING AND FARMING AREAS WHERE THERE WERE NO SUCH FACILITIES, THE LACK OF WHICH HAD MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE OTHER SERVICES.

HE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO PAY MORE ATTENTION TO THE PLIGHT OF ALL THOSE PEOPLE UPROOTED IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT, +WHO ARE OTHERWISE SO EASILY FORGOTTEN BY THE REST OF THE COMMUNITY THAT IS ONLY TOO EAGER TO SHARE THE FRUITS OF DEVELOPMENT.+

+EVERY POSSIBLE WAY SHOULD BE EXPLORED TO SEE HOW THEIR LOSSES AND SUFFERINGS MAY BE AVERTED AND, IN UNAVOIDABLE CIRCUMSTANCES, BE MINIMISED AND THEIR STANDARDS OF LIFE ADEQUATELY MAINTAINED AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE AND NOT AS A MATTER OF CONCESSION OR SYMPATHY.+ HE SAID.

MR. YEUNG SAID THAT TO BE ON THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, +I DEEM IT AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXTEND MY SERVICES TO THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY, THE INTERESTS OF WHICH OBVIOUSLY WILL, TO MY MIND, TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER THOSE OF A PARTICULAR DISTRICT OR A PARTICULAR GROUP OF PEOPLE.+

+ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS MY STRONG DESIRE THAT THE FUNDAMENTAL SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUALS ARE MAINTAINED AND GOOD TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS RESPECTED AND DEFENDED,+ HE ADDED.

NEW POLITICAL ADVISER ARRIVING TOMORROW

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THE NEW POLITICAL ADVISER, DR. DAVID WILSON, ARRIVES IN HONG KONG TOMORROW (FRIDAY) TO TAKE OVER FROM MR. ALAN DONALD, WHO LEFT LAST MONTH AFTER MORE THAN THREE YEARS HERE.

DR. WILSON JOINED THE FOREIGN OFFICE IN 1958 AND WAS FIRST POSTED TO VIENTIANE WHERE HE SERVED AS THIRD SECRETARY IN THE BRITISH EMBASSY. IN 1960, HE CAME HERE TO SPEND THREE YEARS STUDYING MANDARIN AT HONG KONG UNIVERSITY.

IN 1963, HE WAS APPOINTED SECOND SECRETARY AT THE OFFICE OF THE BRITISH CHARGE D'AFFAIRES IN PEKING, REMAINING THERE UNTIL 1965 WHEN HE RETURNED TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE TO WORK ON THE CHINA DESK OF THE FAR EASTERN DEPARTMENT. HE SUBSEQUENTLY BECAME EDITOR OF THE CHINA QUARTERLY.

IN 1974, DR. WILSON RE-JOINED THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE AND HAS BEEN WORKING IN THE CABINET OFFICE IN LONDON UNTIL HIS APPOINTMENT AS POLITICAL ADVISER IN HONG KONG.

DR. WILSON, WHO IS AGED 42, IS MARRIED AND HAS TWO SONS.

MR. DONALD HAS BEEN APPOINTED BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO ZAIRE AND GOES THERE NEXT MONTH.

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CONSULTANT TO PRINTING DEPARTMENT

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A BRITISH PRINTING AND DESIGN EXPERT HAS BEEN SECONDED BY THE COMMONWEALTH FUND FOR TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION TO THE PRINTING DEPARTMENT TO SERVE FOR A SHORT TIME AS CONSULTANT ON TRAINING FACILITIES FOR PRINTING STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

HE IS MR. JOHN BIGGS WHO HAS HAD A LONG AND DISTINGUISHED CAREER IN PRINTING AND DESIGN IN BRITAIN. MR. BIGGS ARRIVES IN HONG KONG TOMORROW (FRIDAY).

HE WAS EDUCATED AT DERBY SCHOOL OF ART, LONDON UNIVERSITY AND AT THE CENTRAL SCHOOL OF ARTS AND CRAFTS IN LONDON. HE WAS AN INSTRUCTOR AT THE LONDON SCHOOL OF PRINTING FOR SIX YEARS, TEACHING BOTH APPRENTICES AND MATURE MANAGERIAL STUDENTS, AND WAS LATER PRODUCTION MANAGER FOR THE 'COUNTRY LIFE' MAGAZINE. FROM 1950 - 53, HE WAS DEPUTY HEAD OF NORWICH ART SCHOOL AND, FROM 1953 - 74, WAS HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR BRIGHTON CORPORATION WHERE HE ORGANISED DEGREE COURSES IN GRAPHIC DESIGN COVERING PRINTING, TYPOGRAPHY, PHOTOGRAPHY, ILLUSTRATIONS AND ADVERTISING.

MR. BIGGS IS A MEMBER OF A NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS INCLUDING THE SOCIETY OF THE INSTITUTE OF ARTISTS AND DESIGNERS AND THE PRINTING HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

HE HAS PUBLISHED SEVERAL BOOKS INCLUDING 'BASIC TYPOGRAPHY', 'APPROACH TO TYPE' AND 'THE USE OF TYPE'.

LAST YEAR, MR. BIGGS CARRIED OUT A SHORT ASSIGNMENT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH FUND FOR TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION IN JAMAICA.

MR. BIGGS WILL BE IN HONG KONG FOR APPROXIMATELY THREE MONTHS.

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TRAFFIC BAN ON GOODS VEHICLES TO BE LIFTED

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY THE EXISTING BAN ON GOODS VEHICLES USING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF CLEAR WATER BAY ROAD AND CASTLE PEAK ROAD ON SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS WILL BE LIFTED FROM 9 A.M. ON SUNDAY (OCTOBER 30).

THE SECTIONS OF ROADS INVOLVED ARE :

- \* CLEAR WATER BAY ROAD (EASTBOUND) FROM KWUN TONG ROAD TO FEI NGO SHAN ROAD=
- \* CLEAR WATER BAY ROAD (WESTBOUND) FROM HIRAM'S HIGHWAY TO ANDERSON ROAD, AND=
- \* CASTLE PEAK ROAD (BOTH KOWLOON BOUND AND YUEN LONG BOUND) FROM SHA TSUI ROAD TO PUI TO ROAD.

THE BAN WAS INTRODUCED ON MAY 1, THIS YEAR AS A MEASURE TO RELIEVE CONGESTION ON THESE TWO ROADS RESULTING FROM HEAVY TRAFFIC GOING TO BEACHES IN SUMMER.

WITH THE RE-OPENING OF CASTLE PEAK ROAD, ROUTE TWISK WILL NO LONGER BE REQUIRED BY GOODS VEHICLES AS AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE BETWEEN YUEN LONG AND TSUEN WAN, AND LEARNER DRIVERS FROM NEXT SUNDAY (OCTOBER 30) WILL BE ALLOWED TO ENTER ROUTE TWISK ON SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS.

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GIRL GUIDES PRAISED FOR RAISING QUALITY OF LIFE IN HONG KONG

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THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR. KENNETH TOPLEY THIS EVENING PAID TRIBUTE TO THE GIRL GUIDES ASSOCIATION FOR MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS RAISING THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN HONG KONG.

ADDRESSING THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION'S HONG KONG BRANCH, MR. TOPLEY SAID, +YOU BY YOUR EFFORTS TO FORM YOUNG WOMEN OF INDEPENDENT MIND, RELIABLE AND RESPONSIBLE, ACTIVE IN THE SERVICE OF THE COMMUNITY, ARE SHAPING HONG KONG'S FUTURE FOR THE GOOD.+

HE NOTED THAT THE GIRL GUIDES, WHO WERE WELL ORGANISED, WERE FORMING A COMMITTEE TO DRAW UP THE NEXT FIVE-YEAR PLAN.

THE DIRECTOR CONGRATULATED THE MEMBERS, ORGANISERS AND LEADERS OF THE GIRL GUIDES ASSOCIATION AND ASSURED THEM OF HIS SUPPORT AS WELL AS THAT OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

MR. TOPLEY SAID HE WOULD WRITE TO THE HEADS OF SCHOOLS IN HONG KONG INVITING THEM TO HELP THE ASSOCIATION IN ITS EFFORTS TO EXPAND BY OFFERING THE USE OF THEIR SCHOOLS AS MEETING PLACES.

HE WOULD ALSO INVITE THE SUPPORT OF TEACHERS TO BECOME ADULT LEADERS IN THE GIRL GUIDES MOVEMENT.

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