



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1976

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INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) REGULATIONS APPROVED
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY APPROVED THE INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) REGULATIONS 1976 WHICH SEEK TO REDUCE AND EVENTUALLY ABOLISH OVERTIME FOR YOUNG WORKERS.

OF THE TEN UNOFFICIALS TAKING PART IN THE DEBATE, SEVEN SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED REGULATIONS AND THREE AGAINST.

SUPPORTING THE REGULATIONS WERE DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG, THE HON. MISS KO SIU-WAH, THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, REV. THE HON. PATRICK MCGOVERN, THE HON. T.S. LO, DR. THE HON. HENRY HU AND THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING.

THE THREE WHO OPPOSED THEM WERE THE HON. JAMES WU, THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN AND THE HON. S.L. CHEN.

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE REGULATIONS, MISS KO SAID THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT WAS INSEPARABLE AND WHILE THE GOVERNMENT WAS PROPOSING THE ABOLITION OF OVERTIME FOR YOUNG PERSONS IN INDUSTRY, IT MUST CAREFULLY CONSIDER THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES TO COPE WITH THESE CHANGES.

SHE STATED THAT THE GIVING OF MORE LEISURE TO YOUNG PEOPLE WOULD NOT NECESSARILY DO ALL OF THEM A LOT OF GOOD BECAUSE OF THE SHORTAGE OF FACILITIES.

+IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOUNG WORKERS OF 16 AND 17 WHO ARE AT AN IMPORTANT STAGE OF THEIR PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ARE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO USE THEIR INCREASED LEISURE TIME PRODUCTIVELY,+ SHE SAID. +FACILITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES, ESPECIALLY EVENING SCHOOLS, YOUTH PROGRAMMES, COUNSELLING SERVICE, SPORTS AND OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE IMPROVED AND EXPANDED.+

HOWEVER, SHE WARNED, HONG KONG MUST NOT BLINDLY FOLLOW THE WHOLE OF THE LABOUR LEGISLATION OF OTHER COUNTRIES WHOSE TYPE AND LEVEL OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VARIES FROM OURS.

MR. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN SAID IT WAS HIS BELIEF THAT AS A WHOLE THE COUNCIL HAD AN ENLIGHTENED AND PROGRESSIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOCIAL REFORM, AND EXPECTED THAT CHANGES IN SUCH DIRECTION OUGHT TO BE +CONSISTENT, MEASURED AND PRAGMATIC.+

+I SPOKE ON THIS SUBJECT DURING THE LAST LEGISLATIVE SESSION, AND I AGAIN EMPHASISE THE NEED FOR MORE CO-ORDINATION, ESPECIALLY SINCE YOUNG PERSONS AGED 16 AND 17 WILL BY 1980 BE UNABLE BY LAW TO WORK OVERTIME IN REGISTERED FACTORIES,+ HE SAID.

+FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS PARTICULAR AGE GROUP, THERE HAS TO BE A THOROUGH ASSESSMENT OF THE NUMBERS TO BE CATERED FOR, AND WHAT GENERAL OR SPECIFIC PLANS HAVE TO BE MADE FOR THEM BY WAY OF RECREATION, SPORT, ADULT EDUCATION, AND JOB PLACEMENT,+ HE ADDED.

ON OVERTIME WORK FOR WOMEN OVER 18 YEARS OF AGE IN INDUSTRY, HE SAID HE WOULD NOT SUPPORT ANY MOVE IN THE NEAR FUTURE AIMED AT REDUCING THE EXISTING OVERTIME LIMIT OF 200 HOURS IN ANY YEAR OR TWO HOURS IN ANY DAY.

MR. WU RAISED SEVERAL POINTS DURING HIS SPEECH IN WHICH HE SAID HE COULD NOT SUPPORT MR. PRICE'S MOTION.

THE POINTS HE RAISED INCLUDE: YOUNG PEOPLE IN HONG KONG TODAY ENJOY COMPLETE FREEDOM IN REGARD TO CHOICE OF WORK, OVERTIME, STUDIES AND SPORTS= YOUNG PEOPLE ARE REALISING THAT THE REWARDS AND PROSPECTS IN INDUSTRY ARE BETTER= FACTORIES OFFERING MORE OVERTIME WORK ATTRACT MORE WORKERS= 97.6 PER CENT OF THE WORKERS IN THE 16-17 AGE GROUP CONSULTED FEEL THAT OVERTIME FOR THEM SHOULD NOT BE ABOLISHED= AND ALL TRADE AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS HAVE OBJECTED TO THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION.

+SIR, IN MY VIEW OF THE FACTS ENUMERATED ABOVE, AND THE EMOTIONAL REMARKS OF THE COMMISSIONER WHEN HE UNFORTUNATELY USED THE WORDS +WEAR AND TEAR+ OF YOUNG BODIES AS IF THEY ACTUALLY OCCURRED IN HONG KONG IN THIS DAY AND AGE, ONE CAN ONLY LAMENT THE IGNORANCE AND ATTITUDES ROOTED IN THE POVERTY AND INEQUALITY OF THE PAST, WHICH EVILS HONG KONG HAS LARGELY ELIMINATED IRONICALLY BY THE SHEER DILIGENCE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP OF ITS INDUSTRIOUS PEOPLE IN CREATING AN AFFLUENT SOCIETY,+ HE SAID.

IN OPPOSING THE PROPOSED REGULATIONS, MR. TIEN SAID THERE WERE SEVERAL GROUNDS ON WHICH HE FELT HE COULD NOT SUPPORT THE COMMISSIONER.

HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT AN AVERAGE OF 33 MINUTES' OVERTIME WORK FOR YOUNG PERSONS WOULD AND COULD CAUSE UNDUE +WEAR AND TEAR+.

MR. TIEN SAID THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST, NOR HAD IT BEEN SUGGESTED, THAT THESE YOUNG PERSONS WERE BEING FORCED, OR DRIVEN TO WORKING OVERTIME.

+UNLESS AND UNTIL CONVINCING EVIDENCE IS ADDUCED THAT THERE IS A CASE FOR MAKING CHANGES, I FEEL STRONGLY THAT THIS COUNCIL SHOULD NOT ALLOW ITSELF TO BE USED TO LEGISLATE AWAY THE FREEDOM OF CHOICE WHICH ANY SECTOR OF THE COMMUNITY DOES, AND CAN REASONABLY EXPECT TO CONTINUE TO ENJOY,+ HE EMPHASISED.

REGARDING OVERTIME WORK FOR ADULT WOMEN, HE URGED THE COUNCIL TO ABOLISH THIS RESTRICTION AND +TO EQUATE THEM WITH THOSE AT PRESENT PERTAINING TO ADULT MALES UPON WHOM THERE ARE NO SUCH RESTRICTIONS.+

/MR. CHEN

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MR. CHEN SAID IF THE REGULATIONS WERE APPROVED, IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED THAT HONG KONG'S 17-YEAR-OLDS WERE INCAPABLE OF THINKING AND DECIDING FOR THEMSELVES EVEN TO WORK A COUPLE OF HOURS OVERTIME IF THEY WANTED TO.

HE POINTED OUT THAT IN UNITED KINGDOM, THE AGE OF MAJORITY IS 18.

HE ASKED WHETHER YOUNG PERSONS' FEELINGS AND REACTIONS HAD BEEN GAUGED, AND IF NOT, +I WOULD SUGGEST THAT WE DO BEFORE A DECISION IS TAKEN ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE.+

REGARDING RESTRICTIONS ON OVERTIME WORK FOR ADULT WOMEN, HE SAID: +IN THIS DAY AND AGE WHEN THERE IS EVERY EFFORT MADE TO BRING ABOUT EQUALITY OF SEX IN EMPLOYMENT, IT LOOKS A LITTLE ODD THAT THE LAW SHOULD APPEAR TO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST FEMALE WORKERS.+

MR. LEUNG WHO BACKED THE MOTION SAID HUMAN LABOUR, UNLIKE MACHINERY, SHOULD NOT BE EXPLOITED, PARTICULARLY WITH THE USE OF MONEY AS BAIT.

+INTERMITTENT OVERTIME WORK FOR YOUNG PERSONS IS DISRUPTIVE TO THEIR EVENING STUDIES, AND MAY RETARD THEIR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OWING TO LACK OF REST, WHICH IS VITAL FOR YOUNG PERSONS IN THEIR FORMATIVE YEARS,+ HE ADDED.

MR. HU SAID THE AMENDING REGULATIONS NOW UNDER DEBATE REPRESENTED A MUCH NEEDED IMPROVEMENT TO THE CONDITIONS OF WORK FOR YOUNG PERSONS AGED 16 AND 17 IN THE LABOUR FORCE WITHOUT, IN HIS VIEW, HAMPERING HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC VIABILITY.

REV. MCGOVERN, WHO WAS ONE OF THE SEVEN COUNCILLORS TO SUPPORT THE MOTION, SAID YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER 18 WERE NOT YET FULLY GROWN PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY AND THAT THEY NEEDED MORE TIME FOR RECREATION AND EXERCISE IF THEY WERE TO REMAIN HEALTHY.

HE SAID YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE MORE TIME TO DO OTHER THINGS AFTER NORMAL WORKING TIME SUCH AS GOING TO EVENING SCHOOLS.

+PERHAPS EVEN A BIGGER CONSIDERATION IS THE QUESTION OF THEIR FAMILY LIFE,+ HE SAID. +THEIR CROWDED HOMES MAY NOT BE THE MOST ATTRACTIVE PLACE IN THE WORLD, BUT IN OUR CULTURE THEIR FAMILY IS A MOST VITAL STABILISING FACTOR IN THEIR LIVES.+

HE SAID THAT IN TOO MANY CASES THERE WAS IN FACT NO FREEDOM OF CHOICE AND THAT HE HAD BEEN APPROACHED BY YOUNG PERSONS COMPLAINING THAT THEIR EMPLOYERS WOULD NOT RELEASE THEM FROM OVERTIME WORK.

HE POINTED OUT THAT ACCORDING TO THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT'S LATEST ANNUAL REPORT, SOME 4,900 PROSECUTIONS HAD BEEN TAKEN AGAINST EMPLOYERS AND OF THAT OVER 4,100 WERE FOR OFFENCES AGAINST WOMEN AND YOUNG PERSONS.

/IN SUMMING

IN SUMMING UP THE CONTRARY VIEWS OF THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, DR. CHUNG SAID THAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TOGETHER WITH THE MOTION TABLED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON DECEMBER 8, BY 74 LABOUR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT HAD UNFORTUNATELY LED SOME PEOPLE TO BELIEVE THAT HONG KONG WAS LAGGING BEHIND ITS ASIAN NEIGHBOURS IN RATIFYING INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION CONVENTIONS.

+FIRST, LET ME POINT OUT THAT IT IS A FALLACY THAT EVERY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD SHOULD OBSERVE ALL INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONVENTIONS WITHOUT CONSIDERING THE LOCAL CONDITIONS,+ HE EXPLAINED.

HE BELIEVED THAT AT PRESENT A TOTAL OF 32 ILO CONVENTIONS WERE APPLIED IN HONG KONG WITH OR WITHOUT MODIFICATIONS. OUT OF SOME 130 MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE ILO, ONLY ABOUT 50 COUNTRIES HAD MORE RATIFICATIONS THAN HONG KONG, HE SAID.

+IN COMPARISON WITH OUR PRINCIPAL ASIAN COMPETITORS, HONG KONG IS FAIRLY ADVANCED. WE ARE EQUAL TO JAPAN BUT, LIKE INDUSTRIAL WAGES, WE ARE VERY MUCH AHEAD OF INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE AND THAILAND,+ HE SAID. +TAIWAN AND SOUTH KOREA ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE ILO AND THEREFORE NEED NOT RATIFY ANY ILO CONVENTIONS.+

DR. CHUNG SAID THE PRESENT CASE OF EVENTUAL ABOLITION OF OVERTIME FOR YOUNG PERSONS AGED 16 AND 17 IN INDUSTRY WAS A MARGINAL ONE AND HAD BECOME A CONTROVERSY AMONG THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS.

+ON BALANCE, I, LIKE THE MAJORITY OF THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, WILL SUPPORT THE MOTION,+ HE SAID.

+HOWEVER, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT MAKE ANY REDUCTION ON PERMISSIBLE OVERTIME FOR ADULT WOMEN OF 18 YEARS AND OVER,+ HE ADDED.

WINDING UP THE DEBATE, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. IAN PRICE, SAID NO ONE HAD SUCCESSFULLY CHALLENGED GOVERNMENT'S VIEW THAT SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS WERE OVERRIDING IN THE CASE OF YOUNG PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY REQUIRE SPECIAL PROTECTION.

IN REPLY TO REMARKS MADE BY MR. FRANCIS TIEN, WHO DREW A COMPARISON WITH THE SITUATION IN SINGAPORE, MR. PRICE SAID MR. TIEN WAS COMPARING ONE SINGLE ASPECT OF OVERTIME WITHOUT TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ALL THE SURROUNDING CIRCUMSTANCES.

MR. PRICE ALSO REFUTED AN IMPLICATION THAT GOVERNMENT HAD NOT CONSULTED FULLY ON THE REGULATIONS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT, IN ADDITION TO DELIBERATIONS OF THE ADVISORY BOARD HE HAD CONSULTED, BY LETTER, ALL THE FOUR MAJOR EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS, HAD SUBSEQUENTLY EXCHANGED CORRESPONDENCE WITH THEM AND MET WITH SOME OF THEIR REPRESENTATIVES.

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REFERRING TO THE TWO SURVEYS MENTIONED BY MR. JAMES WU, MR. PRICE SAID HE HAD NOT BEEN INFORMED OF THE DETAILS AND THEREFORE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR METHODOLOGY, COVERAGE AND THE WAY IN WHICH THE QUESTIONS WERE PHRASED AND PUT TO THE WORKERS.

MR. PRICE NOTED THAT THE TWO SURVEYS OF WORKERS' OPINION PRODUCED RATHER DIFFERENT RESULTS AND SAID HE DOUBTED IF EITHER WAS CONDUCTED BY A QUALIFIED INDUSTRIAL SOCIOLOGIST.

MR. PRICE SAID: +MY HONOURABLE FRIEND MR. WU HAS SPOKEN OF THE PROGRESSIVENESS OF HONG KONG INDUSTRIALISTS AND MANAGERS. I SHOULD LIKE TO REFER TO THEIR INGENUITY AND ADAPTABILITY TO MEET CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES, AND TO STATE MY BELIEF THAT BY 1980 THEY WILL EASILY HAVE ACCOMMODATED THEMSELVES TO THE NEW CONDITIONS WHICH WILL THEN PREVAIL, IF THESE REGULATIONS ARE APPROVED.+

MR. PRICE ADDED: +IN CONNECTION WITH INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONVENTIONS, I MUST COUNSEL AGAINST MAKING TOO CLOSE A COMPARISON BETWEEN SOVEREIGN STATES AND HONG KONG. IT MUST NOT BE OVERLOOKED THAT SOVEREIGN STATES DO NOT HAVE THE OPTION OF PARTIAL APPLICATION BUT SUCH A COURSE OF ACTION IS OPEN TO HONG KONG WHICH HAS APPLIED 21 CONVENTIONS IN FULL AND 12 ONLY PARTIALLY. THEREFORE HONG KONG'S POSITION SHOULD BE SET AGAINST JAPAN'S COMPLETE RATIFICATION OF 34 CONVENTIONS.+

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PROPOSAL TO REDUCE GENERAL RATE PERCENTAGE

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IN VIEW OF THE NATURAL PUBLIC CONCERN AT THE REVISED RATEABLE VALUES OF PROPERTIES, IT IS THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S INTENTION TO PROPOSE A REDUCTION IN THE GENERAL RATE PERCENTAGE, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. DAVID JEAFFRESON TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, +PRECISELY WHAT THE NEW RATE PERCENTAGE WILL BE, CAN BE DECIDED ONLY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ECONOMIC AND BUDGETRY SITUATION AS IT DEVELOPS BEFORE BUDGET DAY.+

BUT, HE CONTINUED, THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF THE SORT OF MASSIVE INCREASE IN THE YIELD WHICH SOME SPECULATIVE STORIES IN THE PRESS HAD ASSUMED.

MR. JEAFFRESON, WHO WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG, SAID THERE WAS NO INTENTION TO INCREASE THE YIELD BY ANYTHING LIKE AS MUCH AS 80 PER CENT.

HE EMPHASISED THAT THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE INVOLVING THE ASSESSMENT OF RATEABLE VALUES HAD BEEN ENUNCIATED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS IN RECENT YEARS.

+THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE IS THIS: IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A REASONABLE INCREASE IN THE RATE YIELD OVER TIME, EITHER THE RATE PERCENTAGE ITSELF IS CHANGED OR THE UNDERLYING VALUES HAVE BEEN REVISED UPWARDS SUBSTANTIALLY, SO IT CLEARLY FOLLOWS, AS IT DID IN 1973, THAT THE RATE OF PERCENTAGE ITSELF SHOULD BE REDUCED,+ HE POINTED OUT.

HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY WOULD ANNOUNCE A REDUCTION IN THE GENERAL RATE PERCENTAGE (NOW AT 12 PER CENT FOR URBAN AREA) AS PART OF HIS BUDGET FOR NEXT YEAR AFTER THE FULL VALUATION LISTS WERE READY FOR PUBLICATION.

BY THAT TIME, ALSO, HE CONTINUED, THE URBAN COUNCIL WOULD HAVE DECIDED WHETHER IT WISHED TO ASK THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO APPROVE A CHANGE OF ITS URBAN RATE PERCENTAGE (NOW AT SIX PER CENT).

THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID THAT IF THE BURDEN OF RATES WAS TO BE DISTRIBUTED FAIRLY, THE COMMISSIONER OF RATING AND VALUATION MUST BRING RATEABLE VALUES UP-TO-DATE FROM TIME TO TIME. HE SAID THE 1976 REVALUATION +DOES REFLECT TODAY'S OPEN MARKET RENTALS.+

HE ADDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT ALSO RECOGNISED THAT THERE WOULD BE INDIVIDUAL RATEPAYERS FOR WHOM THE INCREASE IN THE GENERAL RATE DEMANDED WOULD BE LARGE, SOME OCCUPIERS OF PRE-WAR RENT CONTROLLED PREMISES FOR INSTANCE.

+FOR THEM WE WILL APPLY A SYSTEM OF TEMPORARY RELIEF, PARTICULARLY IN RESPECT OF DOMESTIC ACCOMMODATION. THE DETAILS OF THE RELIEF SCHEME HAVE STILL TO BE WORKED OUT,+ HE SAID.

+SO, TO SUM UP THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE REVALUATION, THE INCREASE IN THE ACTUAL RATES PAID WILL BE NOTHING LIKE AS SEVERE AS HAS BEEN ASSUMED= IT WILL REPRESENT ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL COST OF ACCOMMODATION,+ HE ADDED.

IN REPLY TO ANOTHER QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG ABOUT RATES, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID RATES WERE NORMALLY REFUNDED IN FULL IN RESPECT OF PRIVATE NON-SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS WHICH CONTRIBUTED TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A DEFINED AND APPROVED TARGET, PROVIDED THAT THE ORGANISATIONS WERE NON-PROFIT-MAKING AND WERE UNABLE TO MEET THIS EXPENDITURE FROM THEIR OWN RESOURCES.

+SUCH ORGANISATIONS INCLUDE PRIVATE HOSPITALS, AGENCIES PROVIDING SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SOCIAL WELFARE FIVE YEAR PLAN, AND CERTAIN PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS,+ HE SAID. +THE REMAINDER WILL BENEFIT FROM ANY OVERALL REDUCTION IN RATES PERCENTAGES.+

TURNING TO QUESTIONS ASKED BY THE HON. JAMES WU, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT +DOES AGREE THAT PROPERTY TAX IS A TAX ON INCOME DEEMED TO BE DERIVED FROM OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY.+

MR. JEAFFRESON POINTED OUT THAT THE ASSESSABLE VALUE OF PREMISES CONTROLLED UNDER THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) ORDINANCE WAS THE ESTIMATED ANNUAL RENT PERMITTED UNDER PART ONE OR AUTHORISED UNDER PART TWO OF THAT ORDINANCE.

+IT HAS BEEN FOUND IN PRACTICE THAT WHERE ASSESSABLE VALUES EXCEED THE PERMITTED OR AUTHORISED RENTS, THIS HAS USUALLY BEEN BECAUSE TAXPAYERS HAVE FAILED TO PROVIDE CORRECT OR SUFFICIENT INFORMATION WHEN THE ASSESSABLE VALUES WERE BEING PREPARED,+ HE EXPLAINED.

+TAXPAYERS, OF COURSE, HAVE THE RIGHT OF OBJECTION UNDER SECTION 64 OF THE INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE, AND WHERE THEY ARE FACED WITH THE SITUATION MY HONOURABLE FRIEND DESCRIBED, THEY SHOULD EXERCISE THIS RIGHT,+ HE ADDED.

IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION ALSO INVOLVING NEW RATING VALUATIONS FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. IAN LIGHTBODY, SAID: +UNDER CLAUSE 3 OF THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1976, WHICH IS SCHEDULED FOR SECOND AND THIRD READINGS TODAY, PREMISES WHICH AT PRESENT ENJOY THE 21 PER CENT LIMIT ON RENT INCREASES WILL CONTINUE TO BE SUBJECT TO THIS LIMIT, DESPITE THE REASSESSMENT OF RATEABLE VALUES.+

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FERRY FARES TO OUTLYING DISTRICTS TO GO UP
FROM JAN. 1 NEXT YEAR

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY APPROVED A MOTION TO INCREASE FARES FROM JANUARY 1 NEXT YEAR ON OUTLYING DISTRICT SERVICES OPERATED BY THE HONG KONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY.

FARES WILL BE INCREASED BY ABOUT A QUARTER FOR MOST EXISTING WEEKDAY SERVICES AND BY SOMETHING LIKE DOUBLE THESE INCREASES ON SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF INTER-ISLAND SERVICES.

SECOND CLASS FARES ON THE TOLO HARBOUR SERVICE WILL BE ABOLISHED AND DE-LUXE CLASS FARES WILL BE INCREASED FROM \$4 TO A MAXIMUM PERMITTED FARE OF \$5.

WHERE FARES HAVE ALREADY BEEN INCREASED OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS, PARTICULARLY ON THE HONG KONG/LAMMA ISLAND SERVICE, THERE WILL NOT BE ANY FURTHER INCREASES ON WEEKDAYS.

SPEAKING ON THE MOTION UNDER THE HONG KONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY (SERVICES) ORDINANCE HE MOVED TO EFFECT THESE INCREASES, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES SAID VARIOUS STEPS WERE BEING CONSIDERED TO REMEDY THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE FERRY COMPANY, INCLUDING ACTIONS TO CUT COSTS AND OTHER ECONOMIES IN EXPENDITURE.

+BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT SOME FARE INCREASES WILL BE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY IF ADEQUATE FERRY SERVICES ARE TO BE MAINTAINED,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID A DETAILED REVIEW OF THE WHOLE OF THE COMPANY'S OPERATION HAS SHOWN THAT ITS TWO VEHICULAR FERRY SERVICES CONTINUED TO OPERATE AT A PROFIT WHILE MOST OF ITS PASSENGER SERVICES WERE MAKING A LOSS.

OUTLYING SERVICES, IN CONTRAST TO THE HARBOUR SERVICES, HAD BEEN OPERATING FOR MANY YEARS AT LARGELY UNCHANGED AND RELATIVELY LOW FARES,+ AND GIVEN THE DECLINE IN THE VALUE OF MONEY, FARES ON THE OUTLYING SERVICES ARE MUCH LOWER IN TERMS OF REAL PURCHASING POWER THAN THEY WERE, SAY, TEN OR TWENTY YEARS AGO,+ MR. JONES SAID.

THE COMPANY HAS ITS PASSENGER LOAD INCREASED FROM 7 MILLION IN 1965 TO OVER 15 MILLION IN 1975 AND NOW CARRIES ABOUT 40,000 PASSENGERS ON AN AVERAGE SUNDAY OR PUBLIC HOLIDAY, COMPARED WITH A WEEKDAY AVERAGE OF SOME 18,000 PASSENGERS.

+IT IS CONSIDERED TO BE ONLY FAIR THAT THE RECREATIONAL TRAFFIC SHOULD MAKE A GREATER CONTRIBUTION TO THE COST OF DEPRECIATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THESE VESSELS THAN HAS HITHERTO BEEN THE CASE,+ HE SAID.

/THE SECRETARY

THE SECRETARY SAID THE FARES REVISION WOULD IMPROVE THE COMPANY'S FINANCIAL POSITION BY SOME \$3 MILLION IN A FULL YEAR, CONVERTING ITS CURRENT ANNUAL LOSS OF AROUND \$2 MILLION ON THESE SERVICES INTO A PROFIT OF ABOUT \$1 MILLION.

+THIS WOULD, HOWEVER, STILL REPRESENT A RETURN OF ONLY ABOUT THREE PER CENT ON THE ASSETS EMPLOYED ON THESE SERVICES,+ HE SAID.

+FOR THE FUTURE,+ HE CONTINUED, +THE POSITION WILL CONTINUE TO BE CLOSELY MONITORED AND IF, AS NOW SEEMS LIKELY, A THIRD ROUND OF MEASURES PROVES TO BE NECESSARY, FURTHER PROPOSALS WILL BE PUT TO THIS COUNCIL IN THE COURSE OF 1977.+

DURING DEBATE ON THE MOTION, UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, SAID HE WOULD NOT OPPOSE THE FARE INCREASES IN VIEW OF THE REVIEW FINDINGS REFERRED TO BY MR. JONES BUT HE WOULD ABSTAIN FROM VOTING IN ORDER TO EXPRESS HIS CONCERN AT ANY CONTEMPLATED INCREASES IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

+ANY MOTION FOR FURTHER INCREASES SHOULD NOT BE PUT BEFORE THIS COUNCIL UNTIL THEY HAVE BEEN THOROUGHLY INVESTIGATED BY ADEQUATE AND COMPETENT PERSONNEL, BOTH FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF FINANCIAL VIABILITY AS WELL AS MAXIMUM ECONOMIES OF EXPENDITURE AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY,+ HE SAID.

HE THOUGHT IT WAS MOST NECESSARY FOR GOVERNMENT TO MONITOR DURING THE COMING YEAR WHETHER THERE WOULD BE A LOSS OR A PROFIT AND BY HOW MUCH, AND TO WHAT EXTENT THE RESULTS WOULD HAVE MATCHED UP WITH THE FORECAST FIGURES PROVIDED BY MR. JONES, AND THE REASONS THEREFOR.

HE ASKED IF THE GOVERNMENT HAD ENOUGH QUALIFIED PERSONNEL TO THOROUGHLY INVESTIGATE AND TO PUT FORWARD PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD BRING ABOUT +MAXIMUM ECONOMIES IN EXPENDITURE, ELIMINATE ANY WASTE AND INEFFICIENCY, AND MAINTAIN THE EXISTING SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC AT MINIMUM POSSIBLE OR EVEN NO FURTHER INCREASES IN FARES DURING 1977.+

MR. CHEONG-LEEN SAID REPRESENTATIVES OF EIGHT RURAL COMMITTEES HAD PROPOSED, BESIDES THE SETTING UP OF A COMMITTEE BY GOVERNMENT TO INVESTIGATE INTO THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE FERRY COMPANY TO SEE IF THERE WERE SUFFICIENT GROUNDS FOR FARE INCREASES, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AD HOC COMMITTEE ON SEA TRANSPORT BY THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTED BY RURAL COMMITTEES OF THE OUTLYING ISLANDS.

THEY ALSO WANTED TO BE ASSURED THAT ANY INCREASE IN DE-LUXE FARES WOULD NOT DISCOURAGE URBAN RESIDENTS FROM VISITING THE OUTLYING ISLANDS ON WEEKENDS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS.

MR. JONES IN HIS REPLY VERY MUCH REGRETTED THAT ALTHOUGH THE RURAL COMMITTEES WERE CONSULTED IN A GENERAL WAY ABOUT FARE INCREASES AND IN PARTICULAR ABOUT CERTAIN FARE INCREASES THEY HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED IN DETAIL ABOUT ALL ASPECTS OF THE PACKAGE CONTAINED IN THE MOTION.

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HE GAVE AN ASSURANCE THAT THE FINANCIAL RESULTS OF THE CHANGES COMPARED WITH THE FORECASTS HE HAD MADE, AND INDEED THE WHOLE OF THE COMPANY'S FERRY OPERATIONS, WOULD BE MONITORED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

HE ALSO HAD EVERY CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT COST ACCOUNTANTS WHO WOULD EXAMINE WITH THE COMPANY SUCH MATTERS AS FLEET SIZE, ROUTES, FREQUENCY AND TIMING OF SERVICES AND SO ON TO SEE IF SIGNIFICANT SAVINGS COULD BE MADE.

EVEN SO IT MIGHT WELL BE THAT FURTHER FARE REVISIONS WOULD TURN OUT TO BE UNAVOIDABLE, +AND HERE I WOULD SAY THIS, CAN THERE BE ANY COMPANY, OR ANY WHOLESALER, RETAILER OR SUPPLIER OF SERVICES IN HONG KONG WHOSE PRICES HAVE RISEN LESS THAN THE FARES OF THE HONG KONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY - OR INDEED VIRTUALLY ANY PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPERATOR IN HONG KONG - OVER THE LAST 25 YEARS.+

AS REGARDS DE-LUXE FARES, HE SAID THE COMPANY HAD INDICATED TO THE GOVERNMENT THAT FOR THE TIME BEING AT LEAST THEY WOULD RETAIN THE PRESENT \$4 FARE ON SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, AND AN EVEN LOWER FARE DURING WEEKDAYS.

HE ASSURED MR. CHEONG-LEEN ON A POINT HE RAISED THAT SEATING ARRANGEMENTS ON ALL FERRIES, INCLUDING THE TOLO HARBOUR SERVICE, HAD BEEN OR WERE BEING ADJUSTED TO FIT IN WITH ONE CLASS SERVICES.

ON THE SETTING UP OF A SUB-COMMITTEE TO DEAL WITH WATERBORNE TRANSPORT MATTERS, MR. JONES POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS ALREADY AN UNOFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE NEW TERRITORIES ON THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE AS WELL AS THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES HIMSELF, AND FROM HIS OWN EXPERIENCE OF THE COMMITTEE, HE COULD ALSO SAY THAT IT DEALT VERY FULLY AND COMPETENTLY WITH THESE MATTERS.

+I DOUBT VERY MUCH WHETHER A SUB-COMMITTEE DEALING SOLELY WITH THESE QUESTIONS WOULD ADD ANYTHING AT ALL TO THE TAC'S EFFECTIVENESS IN THIS AREA,+ HE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1976

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EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977

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THE EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977 WHICH SEEKS TO INCREASE THE RATE OF SICKNESS ALLOWANCE FOR EMPLOYEES FROM HALF TO TWO-THIRDS PAY WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THE BILL ALSO PROVIDES FOR AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF SICKNESS DAYS WHICH MAY BE ACCUMULATED FROM 24 OVER TWO YEARS TO 36 OVER THREE YEARS.

IT ALSO SEEKS TO REDUCE THE PERIOD OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE BY WORKERS TO QUALIFY FOR PAID SICKNESS DAYS FROM THREE MONTHS TO ONE MONTH.

IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. IAN PRICE, SAID THE PROPOSED INCREASE WOULD BRING THE RATE OF SICK PAY INTO LINE WITH THE RATE FOR TEMPORARY INCAPACITY UNDER THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ORDINANCE.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE INCREASED NUMBER OF SICKNESS DAYS WHICH MIGHT BE ACCUMULATED WOULD BENEFIT THOSE EMPLOYEES WITH LONGER SERVICE AND WHO SUFFER MORE LENGTHY OR SERIOUS SICKNESS.

MR. PRICE SAID THE NEW QUALIFYING PERIOD WOULD ENTITLE A WORKER TO ONE PAID SICKNESS DAY FOR EACH COMPLETED MONTH OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE SICKNESS DAYS.

HE ADDED THAT THIS NEW PROPOSAL SHOULD SIMPLIFY THE KEEPING OF RECORDS.

FINALLY MR. PRICE POINTED OUT THAT ALL THE OTHER EXISTING PROVISIONS PERTAINING TO SICKNESS ALLOWANCE IN THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1976

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BEST MIX OF FLAT SIZES IN NEW ESTATES UNDER STUDY
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THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT IS MAKING A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE MOST APPROPRIATE MIX OF FLAT SIZES TO BE BUILT IN FUTURE BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. IAN LIGHTBODY TOLD LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR. THE HON. HENRY HU IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID : +THE MIX OF FLAT SIZES WHICH THE HOUSING AUTHORITY BUILDS IS DERIVED FROM A NUMBER OF OFTEN CONFLICTING CONSIDERATIONS, SUCH AS THE CENSUS DEPARTMENT'S FORECAST OF HOUSEHOLD NUMBERS AND SIZES, THE HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES COMING FORWARD FOR PUBLIC HOUSING UNDER VARIOUS CATEGORIES, THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK OF VARIOUS SIZES, THE CONTINUING SHORTAGE OF PUBLIC HOUSING , RISING HOUSING ASPIRATIONS AND THE ECONOMICS OF BUILDING LARGER, AS OPPOSED TO SMALLER, FLATS.+

MR. LIGHTBODY SAID THE HOUSING AUTHORITY IN RECENT YEARS HAD MAINLY PROVIDED FLATS WHICH UNDER PRESENT RULES WERE ALLOCATED TO FAMILIES OF FOUR OR MORE PERSONS IN ITS NEW ESTATES.

HOWEVER, HE ADDED, OVER 70 PER CENT OF ALL SELF-CONTAINED FLATS WERE SMALLER THAN 25 SQUARE METRES (270 SQUARE FEET) AND OVER 50 PER CENT WERE SMALLER THAN 20 SQUARE METRES (215 SQUARE FEET).

MANY OF THESE FLATS, HE SAID, WERE OVERCROWDED WITH FAMILIES WHO WERE OFTEN EAGER TO MOVE TO LARGER FLATS IN NEW ESTATES.

+THIS DESIRE FOR IMPROVEMENT IN LIVING CONDITIONS IS ENCOURAGED BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY, PARTICULARLY AS THE SMALLER FLATS VACATED IN THIS WAY ALLOW IT TO MEET THE NEEDS OF SMALLER HOUSEHOLDS OF TWO OR THREE PERSONS,+ HE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1976

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CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG BILL PASSED
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IT IS HIGH TIME THAT PARTICULAR EMPHASIS IS GIVEN TO STUDENT-ORIENTATED EDUCATION WHICH IS SO IMPORTANT FOR THE STUDENTS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, DR. THE HON. HENRY HU SAID TODAY.

SPEAKING ON THE PREAMBLE OF THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG BILL 1976 DURING ITS COMMITTEE STAGE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID IT PROVIDED THE COLLEGES WITH A MEANINGFUL AND BENEFICIAL ROLE TO PLAY IN THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY.

+STUDENTS SHOULD BE EQUIPPED TO BECOME USEFUL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY,+ HE SAID. +FOR THIS PURPOSE, MORAL AND CHARACTER TRAINING IS AT LEAST AS IMPORTANT IF NOT MORE IMPORTANT THAN INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT.+

HE SAID THERE WAS NO NEED TO INCLUDE A RIGID DEFINITION IN THE BILL OF THE CONCEPT OF STUDENT-ORIENTATED EDUCATION AND AGREED THAT THIS SHOULD BE LEFT TO EACH COLLEGE TO DEVELOP.

DR. HU POINTED OUT THAT WHILE THE ROLE OF THE COLLEGES WAS TO IMPLEMENT STUDENT-ORIENTATED TEACHING, THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY LAY IN ACADEMIC-ORIENTATED TEACHING.

+IN THIS RESPECT+, HE SAID, +THE MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY IS TO RAISE ITS ACADEMIC STANDARDS SO THAT IT WILL BECOME ONE OF THE MOST HIGHLY RESPECTED UNIVERSITIES IN THE WORLD.+

+ANOTHER EQUALLY IMPORTANT MISSION FOR THE UNIVERSITY IS TO REKINDLE THE SPIRIT OF RENAISSANCE WHICH FIRST FLOURISHED IN CHINESE CULTURE IN THE PERIOD OF FIGHTING KINGDOMS ABOUT 2,500 YEARS AGO.

+WITH THE LIBERAL ATMOSPHERE IN HONG KONG'S ACADEMIC LIFE, NOW IS THE TIME TO REVIVE AND PROMOTE THIS SPIRIT SO THAT IT WILL BECOME A LIVING TRADITION OF THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY AND MAKE IT THE LEADING CENTRE FOR THE STUDY AND PROMOTION OF CHINESE CULTURE,+ HE ADDED.

ALSO SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF VARIOUS AMENDMENTS TO THE BILL, REV. THE HON. JOYCE BENNETT SAID THAT UNDER THE AMENDED BILL, EACH BOARD OF TRUSTEES WOULD HAVE SUFFICIENT AUTHORITY TO PRESERVE ITS OWN INDIVIDUAL VIRTUES AND EACH COLLEGE COULD BE ASSURED THAT THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY WOULD NOT DESTROY THE VITALITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL COLLEGES.

+IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT EACH OF THE THREE COLLEGES BE PERMITTED TO PRESERVE THEIR TRADITIONS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTIC NATURE WHICH INHERE TO THEM BY VIRTUE OF THE AIMS OF THEIR FOUNDERS,+ SHE SAID.

SHE ALSO SUPPORTED OTHER AMENDMENTS WHICH WOULD ENABLE INDIVIDUAL COLLEGES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF ITS HEAD AND STAFF= ENSURE THAT THE PREFERENCES OF STUDENTS AND COLLEGES ARE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION IN ALLOCATING STUDENTS TO COLLEGES= AND PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE ASSEMBLY OF FELLOWS TO MAINTAIN DISCIPLINE WITHIN THE COLLEGE.

/+I ALSO

+I ALSO SUPPORT THE ADDITION OF THE PROVISION OF A STUDENTS UNION FOR EACH COLLEGE ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE COLLEGE STUDENTS UNION WILL GIVE STUDENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP THEIR TALENTS IN SMALLER GROUPS AND IN THEIR OWN COLLEGE,+ SHE SAID.

+MODERN SOCIETY SHOULD FOSTER THE SMALL COMPACT INSTITUTIONS AS WELL AS THE BROADER, LARGER ORGANISATIONS,+ SHE ADDED. +BOTH ARE IMPORTANT IN THE TRAINING OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.+

THE BILL RECEIVED ITS THIRD READING AND BECAME LAW.

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IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR CLERICAL STAFF
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ALL CLERICAL STAFF ON JOINING THE CIVIL SERVICE TAKE PART IN AN INDUCTION COURSE AND LEARN COURTESY TO THE PUBLIC, HUMAN RELATIONS AND TELEPHONE MANNERS, THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON. ALAN SCOTT TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

AND FROM APRIL THIS YEAR, HE ADDED, FOLLOW-UP TRAINING IS AVAILABLE TO THOSE IN THE EARLY PART OF THEIR CAREERS TEACHING THEM HOW TO INTERVIEW CALLERS AND COMPLETE FORMS FOR THE PUBLIC, RECORD SEARCHING AND COUNTER WORK.

MR. SCOTT WAS REPLYING TO THE HON. JOYCE BENNETT WHO WANTED TO KNOW IF ALL CLERICAL STAFF IN THE SOCIAL WELFARE AND MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENTS, WHO HAVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE ILLITERATE, POOR AND NEEDY MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY, WILL HAVE APPROPRIATE IN-SERVICE TRAINING TO BE ENCOURAGED TO GIVE MORE THOROUGH AND HELPFUL ADVICE TO THE PUBLIC.

MR. SCOTT SAID A BOOKLET +HOW TO BE A MORE CIVIL SERVANT+ IS GIVEN TO THE STAFF DURING THE INDUCTION AND THE DUTY OF ALL CIVIL SERVANTS TO BE COURTEOUS AND HELPFUL IS EMPHASISED THROUGHOUT THE TRAINING COURSES.

HE EXPLAINED THAT CLERICAL STAFF OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT DO NOT DEAL DIRECTLY WITH MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC BUT IN THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT, ABOUT 400 OF THEM ARE IN DIRECT DAILY CONTACT WITH THEM.

HE ADDED THAT AN INFORMATION OFFICER WAS SHORTLY TO BE POSTED TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR DUTIES INCLUDING ADVISING ON HOW TO PROVIDE MORE THOROUGH AND HELPFUL ADVICE TO THE PUBLIC.

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MORE COUNTRY PARKS ON THE WAY

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THE GOVERNMENT ATTACHES CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY PARK CONCEPT AND ONE MAY ANTICIPATE A STEADY AND HOPEFULLY INCREASING PROVISION OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES WITHIN DESIGNATED COUNTRY PARKS AND POTENTIAL COUNTRY PARK AREAS ADMINISTERED AND MANAGED AS SUCH IN ADVANCE OF DESIGNATION, THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, THE HON. EDWARD NICHOLS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN, HE SAID THE FIRST THREE COUNTRY PARKS -- SHING MUN, KAM SHAN AND LION ROCK WITH A TOTAL AREA OF SOME 2,300 HECTARES -- HAD RECENTLY BEEN GAZETTED.

+IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THE FIRST SPECIAL AREA, TAI PO KAU, WILL BE GAZETTED IN THE NEAR FUTURE,+ HE SAID. +IT IS HOPED TO GAZETTE TWO MORE COUNTRY PARKS ON HONG KONG ISLAND EARLY IN 1977, OTHERS WILL FOLLOW AS SOON AS PLANNING AND BOUNDARY DEFINITION PERMITS.+

MR. NICHOLS POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS ALSO IMPORTANT THAT THE NECESSARY COUNTRY PARKS REGULATIONS BE BROUGHT INTO LAW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

+I UNDERSTAND THAT DRAFTING INSTRUCTIONS HAVE BEEN AGREED AND THAT DRAFTING ITSELF SHOULD BE COMPLETED SOMETIME AROUND FEBRUARY 1977,+ HE ADDED.

HE SAID THERE WERE ALREADY 15 MANAGEMENT CENTRES IN HIS DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONSERVATION AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOME 80 SQUARE MILES OF COUNTRYSIDE INCLUDING MORE THAN 4,000 HECTARES OF WOODLAND.

+WITHIN THESE AREAS THERE ARE MORE THAN 250 KILOMETRES OF FOOTPATH, 45 KILOMETRES OF MANAGEMENT ROADS, ALMOST 200 PICNIC AND BARBECUE AREAS -- VARYING INDIVIDUALLY FROM A FEW HUNDRED SQUARE METRES TO MORE THAN A HECTARE, 13 ADVENTURE PLAYGROUNDS, 13 RAIN SHELTERS, AND PROTOTYPE CAMPING SITES AND TOILET FACILITIES,+ HE SAID.

WITHIN THE RESOURCES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE, HE CONTINUED, THE COUNTRY PARKS AUTHORITY WAS GIVING TOP PRIORITY TO THE INTRODUCTION OF PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN THE SAI KUNG PENINSULA.

+A TEMPORARY MANAGEMENT CENTRE HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED PENDING COMPLETION OF THE FIRST PERMANENT CENTRE WHICH SHOULD BE COMPLETED IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS,+ HE SAID.

THERE ARE PLANS FOR TWO MORE MANAGEMENT CENTRES IN THE REGION IN 1977/78 AND CONTINUED COUNTRY PARK DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE AREA IS ENVISAGED OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS IN ANTICIPATION OF THE INCREASINGLY HEAVY RECREATIONAL COMMITMENT AS THE HIGH ISLAND WATER SCHEME NEARS COMPLETION, HE SAID.

+AS ADDITIONAL STAFF BECOME AVAILABLE ATTENTION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE RECREATIONAL POTENTIAL OF LANTAU ISLAND AND THE SCENIC COUNTRYSIDE TO THE NORTH OF TOLO HARBOUR,+ MR. NICHOLS ADDED.

IN REPLY TO ANOTHER QUESTION FROM MR. TIEN ON THE PROVISION OF FOREST ROADS AND JEEP TRACKS TO FACILITATE FORESTRY OPERATIONS AND THE EARLY SUPPRESSION OF HILL FIRES, HE SAID PLANS FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE INCLUDED \$2 MILLION OF NEW CONSTRUCTION IN 1977/78 TO PROVIDE A MANAGEMENT ROAD INTO THE AREAS NORTH OF THE PAT SIN LING AND AN IMPROVED NETWORK WITHIN THE TAI TAM CATCHMENT ON HONG KONG ISLAND.

+PROVISIONALLY LONGER TERM PLANNING ENVISAGES THE USE OF THE HIGH ISLAND WATER SCHEME ACCESS ROADS FOR FIRE FIGHTING AND MANAGEMENT PURPOSES= PLUS A NOTIONAL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME FOR APPROXIMATELY FOUR KILOMETRES OF NEW ROADS PER ANNUM FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS TOGETHER WITH CONTINUING IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE EXISTING NETWORK.+ HE SAID.

MR. NICHOLS POINTED OUT THAT NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION WAS AIMED AT PROVIDING A COHERENT NETWORK OF ROADS PRINCIPALLY WITHIN COUNTRY PARKS= AND CONCENTRATING PRIMARILY ON THOSE AREAS WHERE THE RISK OF FIRE WAS KNOWN TO BE PARTICULARLY HIGH, AND ON AREAS DEFICIENT IN ACCESS.

HE SAID THESE ROADS WERE REFERRED TO AS +MANAGEMENT+ ROADS RATHER THAN +FIRE FIGHTING+ ROADS BECAUSE BESIDES SERVING PRIMARILY AS FIRE FIGHTING ACCESS DURING CERTAIN TIMES OF THE YEAR, THEY SERVED WIDER MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS AND PROVIDED +PEDESTRIAN+ ROADS FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC UTILISING COUNTRY PARK FACILITIES AT ALL TIMES.

CONTROLS AGAINST LITTERING OF N.T. PICNIC SPOTS
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THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE HON. DAVID AKERS-JONES, SAID TODAY THAT LEGAL CONTROLS AGAINST THE LITTERING OF SCENIC SPOTS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WERE ADEQUATE, BUT PROBLEMS EXISTED IN ENFORCEMENT AND THE ORGANISATION OF LITTER COLLECTION, ESPECIALLY IN THE MORE INACCESSIBLE AREAS.

AT THE SAME TIME, HE SAID THE PRESENT SITUATION WOULD IMPROVE AS MORE RESOURCES WERE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES AND URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENTS.

REPLYING TO QUESTIONS FROM THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. AKERS-JONES SAID THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO FEEL SATISFIED WITH THE PRESENT CONTROL OVER LITTERING KNOWING HOW COVERED WITH LITTER ARE SOME OF OUR MOST BEAUTIFUL PICNIC SPOTS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT NT PICNIC SPOTS FELL INTO THREE MAIN CATEGORIES - THE FIRST BEING THE PICNIC AND BARBECUE FACILITIES PROVIDED BY THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT AS PART OF THE COUNTRY PARKS PROGRAMME.

+THESE HEAVILY USED SITES ARE CLEANED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER EACH WEEKEND, AND I THINK THAT HONOURABLE MEMBERS WILL AGREE GENERALLY THAT A GOOD JOB IS BEING DONE,+ HE SAID.

+AS THE COUNTRY PARKS PROGRAMME PROCEEDS, MORE AREAS WILL BE COVERED IN THIS WAY, PARTICULARLY IN THE SAI KUNG PENINSULA, WHERE TWO MANAGEMENT CENTRES, EACH WITH A STAFF OF 36, ARE TO BE OPENED IN 1977.+

OTHER AREAS OF CROWN LAND NOT IN THE COUNTRY PARKS WERE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT NEW TERRITORIES DIVISION, WHICH HAD 27 WORK GANGS GIVING COVER TO THE MORE ACCESSIBLE PICNIC SPOTS.

BUT AT THE MOMENT THERE WAS INSUFFICIENT STAFF TO DEPLOY IN AREAS INACCESSIBLE BY ROAD BUT ADDITIONAL GANGS WERE BEING SOUGHT IN NEXT YEAR'S ESTIMATES TO EXTEND THIS WORK.

MR. AKERS-JONES SAID THE THIRD CATEGORY CONSISTED OF PRIVATE LAND, MUCH OF IT ABANDONED PADDY, WHICH WAS ALSO EXTENSIVELY USED FOR PICNICKING AND CAMPING, AND WHERE CLEANSING STAFF CARRIED OUT 'LITTER RAIDS' FROM TIME TO TIME ON INDIVIDUAL BLACK SPOTS.

HE CONCLUDED: +THE LEGAL CONTROLS AGAINST LITTERING ARE ADEQUATE= THE PROBLEM IS LARGELY ONE OF ENFORCEMENT, AND THE ORGANISATION OF LITTER COLLECTION, ESPECIALLY IN THE MORE INACCESSIBLE AREAS.

+THE SITUATION WILL IMPROVE AS MORE RESOURCES ARE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES AND URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENTS.

+BUT HOW MUCH EASIER THE TASK WOULD BE IF THOSE VISITING THE COUNTRYSIDE WOULD 'PUT IT IN THE BIN' OR 'TAKE IT AWAY'.

+I AM SURE LEADERS OF ORGANISED PARTIES, SCHOOL TEACHERS AND MANY OTHERS COULD DO MUCH MORE TO GET THIS MESSAGE ACROSS.+

273 PRIMARY CLASSES PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITY APPROACH SCHEME
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ACTIVITY APPROACH IS USED IN 273 CLASSES IN 38 GOVERNMENT, SUBSIDISED AND PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

THIS WAS STATED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON BY THE HON. KENNETH TOPLEY, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, IN REPLY TO THE HON. MISS KO SIU-WAH WHO ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE A STATEMENT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE ACTIVITY APPROACH TO LEARNING NOW BEING CONDUCTED IN SOME PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

MR. TOPLEY SAID: +AT THE PRIMARY 1 TO PRIMARY 3 LEVEL, FOR WHICH THE SCHEME IS PRIMARILY INTENDED, ABOUT THREE PER CENT OF ALL CHILDREN ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE SCHEME.+

IT WAS ORIGINALLY A PILOT PROJECT LAUNCHED BY THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE IN SEPTEMBER 1972 IN SIX PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH THE INTENTION OF BRINGING ABOUT A LESS FORMAL APPROACH TO TEACHING IN LOCAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

+THE APPROACH AIMS AT PROMOTING A LESS PASSIVE ATTITUDE TO LEARNING, AND ENCOURAGES ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF PUPILS THROUGH LEARNING BY DOING. AS PART OF THE SCHEME ROWS OF DESKS ARE REPLACED BY SMALL GROUPS OF TABLES WHICH THE TEACHER VISITS INSTEAD OF STANDING CONTINUOUSLY BEFORE THE CLASS,+ THE DIRECTOR SAID.

FOLLOWING THE ADVICE OF A SPECIALIST ADVISER, SPONSORED BY THE BRITISH COUNCIL, WHO VISITED HONG KONG LAST YEAR, +A MODEST RATE OF EXPANSION IS ENVISAGED AT PRESENT BECAUSE IT IS VITAL TO GIVE SYSTEMATIC IN-SERVICE TRAINING TO THE TEACHERS ADOPTING THE TECHNIQUES AND ALSO TO MONITOR PROGRESS IN THE EARLY STAGES,+ HE SAID.

MR. TOPLEY SAID A SUBSTANTIAL SUM HAS BEEN REQUESTED IN THE 1977/78 ESTIMATES TO GIVE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS WHICH SO FAR HAVE NOT BEEN GIVEN SUCH AID FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE SCHEME.

IT WOULD ALSO ENCOURAGE A STEADY EXPANSION OF THE SCHEME.

SINCE THE ACTIVITY APPROACH MAKES MORE STRENUOUS DEMANDS ON TEACHERS IN THE EARLY STAGES, MR. TOPLEY SAID,+ THE FUTURE RATE OF EXPANSION WILL LARGELY DEPEND ON THE ENTHUSIASM OF TEACHERS AND HEADS OF SCHOOLS.+

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REGISTERED FIRE SERVICE INSTALLATION CONTRACTORS WARNED
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THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT TODAY WARNED ALL REGISTERED FIRE SERVICE INSTALLATION CONTRACTORS THAT PROSECUTIONS WOULD BE TAKEN OUT AGAINST THOSE WHO DID NOT COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS LAID DOWN UNDER THE FIRE SERVICES ORDINANCE.

THE WARNING WAS ISSUED FOLLOWING A COURT CASE ON MONDAY IN WHICH A MAGISTRATE FINED A REGISTERED FIRE SERVICE INSTALLATION CONTRACTOR \$400 FOR ISSUING A FALSE CERTIFICATE TO A CENTRAL RESTAURANT OWNER. THE PROPRIETOR OF THE RESTAURANT WAS FINED \$300 FOR FAILING TO KEEP THE FIRE SERVICE EQUIPMENT IN EFFICIENT ORDER.

THE CONTRACTOR WAS ADDITIONALLY SUMMONSED FOR FAILING TO FORWARD A COPY OF CERTIFICATE TO THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES WITHIN 14 DAYS AFTER THE COMPLETION OF MAINTENANCE TO THE RESTAURANT'S FIRE SERVICE EQUIPMENT.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID THE OFFENCE WAS DISCOVERED DURING A RECENT ROUTINE INSPECTION OF THE RESTAURANT BY FIRE PREVENTION OFFICERS.

HE SAID THE CONTRACTOR HAD ISSUED A LABEL CERTIFYING THAT THE RESTAURANT'S TWO-GALLON FOAM FIRE EXTINGUISHER TO BE IN GOOD WORKING ORDER DESPITE THE CONTRARY.

HE SAID IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT A REGISTERED CONTRACTOR WAS PROSECUTED.

+ACTION WILL BE TAKEN AGAINST THOSE WHO INFRINGE THE FIRE SAFETY REGULATIONS,+ HE WARNED.

TO BUILDING OWNERS, THE SPOKESMAN ADVISED THAT THEY SHOULD FULLY ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR KEEPING FIRE SERVICE INSTALLATIONS, SUCH AS FIRE EXTINGUISHERS OR SPRINKLERS, IN PROPER WORKING ORDER.

+THE LAW HAS LAID DOWN INSTALLATION REQUIREMENTS FOR BUILDINGS AND IT IS UP TO THE OWNERS AND MANAGEMENT TO MAKE SURE THAT SUCH EQUIPMENT FUNCTION EFFICIENTLY AT ALL TIMES,+ HE STATED.

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TRIBUTE TO DR. GERALD CHOA

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THE RETIRING DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT, DR. THE HON. GERALD CHOA, WAS TODAY DESCRIBED AS A PERSON WHO HAS +PROVED HIMSELF AS A DIRECTOR OF THE HIGHEST DISTINCTION+.

THIS TRIBUTE WAS PAID BY THE GOVERNOR, SIR MURRAY MACLEHOSE, IN TODAY'S LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING.

SIR MURRAY SAID DR. CHOA, WHO HAS BEEN WITH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FOR SIX YEARS AND 20 YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT, WOULD BE REMEMBERED BY THE COUNCIL AS THE MOST ABLE AND COURTEOUS COLLEAGUE AND, +IF I MAY SAY SO AS A MASTER OF ELLIPTICAL SPEECH, TYPICAL OF THE MOST FINEST TRADITIONS OF THE MANDARINATE.+

HE SAID DR. CHOA'S CONTRIBUTIONS HAD COVERED A WIDE FIELD AND LISTED SOME OF THE THINGS FOR WHICH HE HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE.

THEY INCLUDE THE OPENING OF THE PRINCESS MARGARET HOSPITAL, THE LARGEST GENERAL HOSPITAL IN HONG KONG= THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW METHOD OF TREATMENT OF DRUG ADDICTION IN THE FORM OF METHADONE DETOXIFICATION= THE GOVERNMENT'S NEW AND DECISIVE ROLE IN FAMILY PLANNING= THE INTRODUCTION OF GERIATRIC SERVICES AND THE SUPPORT BY GOVERNMENT TO THE COMMUNITY NURSING SERVICE.

+AS A PLANNER, HE WILL BE PARTICULARLY REMEMBERED FOR HIS WORK IN THE PREPARATION OF THE 10 YEARS' MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, AND INTRODUCING THE NEW CONCEPT OF REGIONALISATION OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES,+ HE SAID.

DR. CHOA WILL BE TAKING UP THE APPOINTMENT AS THE DEAN OF THE NEW MEDICAL SCHOOL AT THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG WHICH, SIR MURRAY SAID +HONG KONG SO BADLY NEEDS+.

+I AM SURE MEMBERS WILL JOIN ME IN WISHING DR. CHOA AND MRS. CHOA ALL OUR VERY BEST WISHES IN THEIR HAPPINESS AND SUCCESS IN THE YEARS TO COME,+ SIR MURRAY ADDED.

ON BEHALF OF OTHER UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS AND HIMSELF, DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG ALSO WISHED DR. CHOA EVERY SUCCESS IN HIS NEW ENDEAVOUR.

+SIR, HIS DEPARTURE FROM THIS COUNCIL WILL REDUCE THE NUMBER OF LONG SERVING MEMBERS AND BY THAT TOKEN ALONE THIS DIMINISHING OF OUR COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE IS TO BE REGRETTED,+ HE SAID.

+OUR LOSS, HOWEVER, IS BALANCED BY THE GAIN TO THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SECOND MEDICAL SCHOOL IS A STEP WHICH WILL BE OF INCALCULABLE BENEFIT TO THE FUTURE HEALTH OF OUR GROWING POPULATION,+ HE ADDED.

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WORKSHOP ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF SCIENCE EQUIPMENT
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FIFTY SCIENCE TEACHERS WILL ATTEND A WORKSHOP TOMORROW ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A DECADE RESISTANCE BOX AND A LOW COST GALVANOMETER JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE SCIENCE SUBJECTS SECTION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION FOR SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS EDUCATION.

THE NEW JUNIOR SECONDARY SCIENCE CURRICULUM EMPHASISES INVESTIGATION, OBSERVATION, EXPERIMENT AND DISCOVERY BY THE PUPILS THEMSELVES, WHICH IN TURN LEADS TO A GREAT DEMAND FOR SIMPLE LABORATORY EQUIPMENT.

THE AIM OF THE WORKSHOP, WHICH WILL BE HELD AT THE JOCKEY CLUB GOVERNMENT SECONDARY TECHNICAL SCHOOL, IS TO ENCOURAGE SCIENCE TEACHERS TO CONSTRUCT HOME-MADE APPARATUS AT MUCH LOWER COST TO AUGMENT SCHOOLS' LIMITED LABORATORY FACILITIES.

THE DEPARTMENT'S SCIENCE SUBJECTS SECTION AND THE ASSOCIATION HAVE BEEN ADVOCATING THE CONSTRUCTION OF HOME-MADE APPARATUS.

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ACCESS TO P.O. BOXES ON HOLIDAYS
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THE POSTMASTER GENERAL HAS BEEN CONSULTING THE GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT TO SEE WHETHER IT IS PRACTICABLE TO MAKE CHANGES TO THE NEW GENERAL POST OFFICE BUILDING TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO POST OFFICE BOXES ON SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS WITHOUT COMPROMISING SECURITY.

THIS WAS STATED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY BY THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. DAVID JEAFFRESON, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. ROGER LOBO.

MR. JEAFFRESON SAID POST OFFICE BOXES IN THE NEW BUILDING HAVE BEEN MADE ACCESSIBLE FROM THE MAIN HALL AND FOR SECURITY REASONS, HIRERS OF THE BOXES COULD COLLECT THEIR MAIL ONLY WHEN THE GENERAL POST OFFICE WAS OPEN.

+IN THE OLD GENERAL POST OFFICE BUILDING, ACCESS TO THE POST OFFICE BOXES WAS FROM A SEPARATE ENTRANCE,+ HE SAID. +SO HIRERS OF THE BOXES COULD COLLECT THEIR MAIL FROM 7 A.M. TO 8 P.M. DAILY, INCLUDING SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE SECURITY OF THE BUILDING AS A WHOLE WHEN THE MAIN GENERAL POST OFFICE WAS SHUT.+

+UNDER THIS ARRANGEMENT, SOME HIRERS APPARENTLY COMPLAINED AT THE LACK OF ACCESS TO THE BOXES FROM THE MAIN HALL OF THE POST OFFICE,+ HE ADDED.

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CONSUMER PRICE INDEX FOR NOVEMBER
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THE NEW CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (A) FOR NOVEMBER 1976 WAS 113, THE SAME AS THAT FOR THE PREVIOUS MONTH.

THE INDEX FOR FOODSTUFFS ROSE BY ONE POINT. THE AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES OF FRESH WATER FISH AND MEALS BOUGHT AWAY FROM HOME ADVANCED WHILE THAT OF FRESH VEGETABLES DECLINED.

THE INDEX FOR CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR INCREASED BY THREE POINTS DUE TO HIGHER PRICES FOR SOME ITEMS OF OUTERCLOTHING AND WOMEN'S FOOTWEAR AS SOME SHOPS SUSPENDED THEIR CLEARANCE SALES DURING THE MONTH.

THE INDEX FOR MISCELLANEOUS GOODS ADVANCED BY ONE POINT AS A RESULT OF THE CONTINUED UPWARD PRICE MOVEMENTS OF MEDICINES, ESPECIALLY CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINES.

MOVEMENTS IN THE INDEXES FOR OTHER COMMODITY SECTIONS AND SERVICES WERE INSIGNIFICANT.

THE NEW CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (B) FOR NOVEMBER 1976 WAS 114, ONE POINT HIGHER THAN THE PREVIOUS MONTH'S FIGURE.

THE INDEX FOR FOODSTUFFS ROSE BY ONE POINT. THE AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES OF FRESH WATER FISH AND MEALS BOUGHT AWAY FROM HOME ADVANCED WHILE THAT OF FRESH VEGETABLES DECLINED.

THE INDEX FOR CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR INCREASED BY THREE POINTS DUE TO HIGHER PRICES FOR SOME ITEMS OF OUTERCLOTHING AND WOMEN'S FOOTWEAR AS SOME SHOPS SUSPENDED THEIR CLEARANCE SALES DURING THE MONTH.

THE INDEX FOR MISCELLANEOUS GOODS ADVANCED BY ONE POINT AS A RESULT OF THE CONTINUED UPWARD PRICE MOVEMENTS OF MEDICINES, ESPECIALLY CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINES.

MOVEMENTS IN THE INDEXES FOR OTHER COMMODITY SECTIONS AND SERVICES WERE INSIGNIFICANT.

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TEXTILE QUOTA UTILISATION POSITION
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THE COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT TODAY PUBLISHED THE END OF NOVEMBER 1976 FIGURES ON THE UTILISATION OF QUOTA IN RESPECT OF ALL RESTRAINED MARKETS.

COMMENTING ON THE FIGURES, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT SAID THAT WHILST THE RATE OF UTILISATION WAS HIGH IN A NUMBER OF CATEGORIES TO CERTAIN MARKETS, THE FLEXIBILITY PROVISIONS IN THE AGREEMENTS COULD ENABLE HONG KONG TO EXPORT UP TO CERTAIN SPECIFIED PERCENTAGES OVER AND ABOVE THE RESTRAINT LIMITS.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT FREE QUOTAS FOR CERTAIN CATEGORIES AND MARKETS WERE STILL AVAILABLE FOR APPLICATION AND INTERESTED PARTIES SHOULD GET IN TOUCH WITH THE DEPARTMENT FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE QUOTA POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES AND EEC, HONG KONG'S TWO MAJOR TEXTILE MARKETS.

USA

THE CURRENT 12-MONTH RESTRAINT PERIOD BEGAN ON OCTOBER 1, 1976. IN THE FIRST TWO MONTHS OF THE PERIOD, TOTAL QUOTAS USED AMOUNTED TO 89.79 MILLION EQUIVALENT SQ. YDS. OR 9.52 PER CENT OF THE OVERALL RESTRAINT LIMIT. FIGURES SHOWING THE QUANTITIES LICENSED FOR EXPORTS AND PERCENTAGE UTILISATION ON A GROUP BASIS ARE SET OUT BELOW :-

<u>GROUP</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>QUANTITY LICENSED (IN MILLION EQUIVALENT SQ. YDS.)</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE UTILISATION AGAINST GROUP LIMITS</u>
I	YARNS AND FABRICS OF COTTON AND MAN-MADE FIBRES	12.60	4.89
II	APPAREL OF COTTON AND MAN-MADE FIBRES	68.97	11.79
III	MADE-UPS AND MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES OF COTTON AND MAN-MADE FIBRES	4.97	8.54
IV	WOOL TEXTILES AND APPAREL	3.25	7.73

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OF THE CATEGORIES SUBJECT TO SPECIFIC LIMIT IN THE HONG KONG/US TEXTILE AGREEMENT, THE RATE OF UTILISATION IN 3 OUT OF 21 CATEGORIES COULD BE DESCRIBED AS RELATIVELY HIGH. THESE 3 CATEGORIES WERE CATEGORY 41/42/43/62(2) (COTTON KNIT T-SHIRTS, OTHER KNIT SHIRTS AND BLOUSES, EXCEPT SWEAT-SHIRTS), CATEGORY 48 (COTTON RAINCOATS, 3/4 LENGTH OR LONGER, NOT KNIT) AND CATEGORY 50/51 (COTTON TROUSERS, SLACKS AND SHORTS, NOT KNIT).

EEC

THE CURRENT 12-MONTH RESTRAINT PERIOD BEGAN ON JANUARY 1, 1976. QUOTA UTILISATION POSITIONS ON MEMBER STATE BASIS FOR THE ELEVEN MONTHS ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1976 ARE GIVEN BELOW :-

<u>MEMBER STATE</u>	<u>QUANTITY LICENSED (IN MILLION EQUIVALENT KGS.)</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE UTILISATION</u>
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY	38.93	79.0
UNITED KINGDOM	49.06	72.2
BENELUX	4.93	59.0
DENMARK	2.32	73.5
ITALY	2.09	50.0
FRANCE	1.37	63.5
IRISH REPUBLIC	0.30	44.5

OUT OF A TOTAL OF 109 CATEGORIES ON MEMBER STATE/CATEGORY BASIS, THE RATE OF UTILISATION IN 27 OF THEM WAS RELATIVELY HIGH. THE POPULAR CATEGORIES INCLUDED CATEGORY 4 (KNIT PULLOVERS, ETC), CATEGORY 8 (WOVEN TROUSERS), CATEGORY 10 (WOVEN DRESSES), CATEGORY 11 (WOVEN BLOUSES, WOMEN'S, GIRLS' AND INFANTS') AND CATEGORY 13 (WOVEN NIGHTWEAR).

NOTE TO EDITORS:

COPIES OF THE RELEVANT NOTICES TO EXPORTERS WHICH GIVE DETAILED FIGURES OF UTILISATION OF QUOTAS FOR EACH RESTRAINED MARKET ON A CATEGORY BY CATEGORY BASIS ARE DISTRIBUTED SEPARATELY IN G.I.S. PRESS BOXES.

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LEGCO BUSINESS TODAY

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A MOTION TO APPROVE THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) REGULATIONS 1976, WHICH SEEK TO REDUCE AND EVENTUALLY TO ABOLISH OVERTIME WORK FOR WORKERS AGED 16 AND 17, WAS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON.

ALSO PASSED WAS A MOTION UNDER THE HONG KONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY (SERVICES) ORDINANCE TO INCREASE FARES ON THE COMPANY'S OUTLYING DISTRICT SERVICES.

NINE BILLS PASSED THEIR THIRD READING. THEY WERE : THE INLAND REVENUE BOARDS OF REVIEW (VALIDATION) BILL 1976, THE COMMODITIES TRADING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976, THE SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (1975-76) BILL 1976, THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1976, THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1976, THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1976, THE DETENTION CENTRES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976, THE PENSIONS (INCREASE) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976 AND THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG BILL 1976.

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WATER CUT

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WATER SUPPLY TO SOME PREMISES IN MONGKOK AND IN ABERDEEN WILL BE INTERRUPTED FROM 1 A.M. TO 6 A.M. THIS FRIDAY (DECEMBER 24) TO ENABLE THE WATERWORKS OFFICE TO CARRY OUT LEAKAGE TESTS.

IN MONGKOK, THE PREMISES TO BE AFFECTED ARE BOUNDED BY LAI CHI KOK ROAD, BOUNDARY STREET, NATHAN ROAD AND PRINCE EDWARD ROAD, INCLUDING THOSE ON PLAYING FIELD ROAD, CEDAR STREET, POPLAR STREET, MAPLE STREET, TAI NAM STREET, KI LUNG STREET, YU CHAU STREET AND PORTLAND STREET.

IN ABERDEEN, THE PREMISES TO BE AFFECTED ARE ON ABERDEEN MAIN ROAD FROM ABERDEEN TRADE SCHOOL TO ABERDEEN DOCK, INCLUDING THOSE ON OLD MAIN STREET, WU NAM STREET, WU PAK STREET, TUNG SING ROAD, CHENGTU ROAD, SAI ON STREET, LOK YEUNG STREET AND TSUNG MAN STREET.

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