



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1979

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NEW SHIPPING LEGISLATION APPROVED BY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

THREE BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TO ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO COMBAT THE RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN RELATION TO PERSONS COMING TO HONG KONG FROM VIETNAM.

THEY WERE THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) BILL, THE PORT CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL AND THE IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) BILL AIMS AT DISCOURAGING SHIPS PARTICIPATING IN THE UNLAWFUL CARRYING OF PASSENGERS TO HONG KONG AND TO TAKE ADDITIONAL LEGAL POWERS TO ACT AGAINST OWNERS, MASTERS AND SHIPS INVOLVED SHOULD THIS HAPPEN.

THE SHIPPING AND PORT CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL MAKES IT AN OFFENCE FOR ANY PERSON WHO, WITHOUT REASONABLE EXCUSE, DISABLES, ABANDONS, SCUTTLES OR BEACHES ANY VESSEL WITHIN HONG KONG WATERS, AND IS PUNISHABLE WITH A PENALTY OF \$200,000 AND FOUR YEARS IMPRISONMENT.

THE IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL IS DESIGNED TO REMOVE THE TWO MONTHS LIMIT IN WHICH A PERSON FROM VIETNAM WHO WAS REFUSED PERMISSION TO LAND IN HONG KONG MIGHT BE REMOVED BY IMMIGRATION OFFICERS.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) BILL, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON. SIR JACK CATER SAID: +WE BELIEVE THAT THE PROBLEM OF 'BOAT REFUGEES', FROM INDO-CHINA SHOULD BE DEALT WITH IN A HUMANE AND ORDERLY FASHION- WE BELIEVE THAT STRICT ADHERENCE TO THE NEXT SCHEDULED PORT OF CALL PRINCIPLE IS MOST LIKELY TO ENSURE THAT NO ONE PORT IS OVER-WHELMED BY AN INTOLERABLE NUMBER OF GENUINE SURVIVORS OF SHIPWRECKS.+

SIR JACK SAID THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE OTHER BOATS LIKE THE +HUEY FONG+ NOW ON THE HIGH SEAS, AND IT HAS BEEN ARGUED, ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS, THAT HONG KONG SHOULD PERMIT ALL THESE VESSELS WITH THE UNFORTUNATE INDIVIDUALS ON BOARD TO LAND HERE SO THAT ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE FOR THEM TO BE RESETTLED IN OTHER PLACES.

HE NOTED THAT THE HUMANE STANCE WHICH THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF HONG KONG HAVE ALWAYS ADOPTED TOWARDS REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS IS SECOND TO NONE IN THE WORLD. AND WE ARE JUSTIFIABLY PROUD OF OUR RECORD IN DEALING WITH ALL THESE REFUGEES, NOT LEAST THOSE FROM VIETNAM.

+OUR EFFORTS ARE IN MARKED CONTRAST TO THE LACK OF INTEREST TAKEN IN THE PROBLEM OF REFUGEES BY SOME OTHER COUNTRIES, FAR BETTER ABLE TO ABSORB PEOPLE THAN THIS CROWDED LITTLE TERRITORY OF OURS,+ HE SAID.

/HE POINTED.....

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HE POINTED OUT THAT AT THE END OF LAST YEAR, HONG KONG HAD SETTLED 13,516 PEOPLE FROM VIETNAM IN HONG KONG= 3,954 WERE UNDER THE CARE OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND A FURTHER 1,568 WERE EITHER STILL BEING PROCESSED OR WERE BEING HELD IN DETENTION PENDING A DECISION ON WHETHER THEY COULD BE RETURNED TO CHINA.

THIS INFUX FROM VIETNAM HAS OCCURRED AT A TIME WHEN HONG KONG IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM OTHER DIRECTIONS. THE NUMBER OF LEGAL IMMIGRANTS FROM CHINA IN 1978 WAS 71,520, COMPARED WITH 26,000 IN 1977, AND THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE FIGURE FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION MAY HAVE BEEN IN THE REGION OF 33,000.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY ALSO NOTED THAT WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THE FLOW OF REFUGEES FROM VIETNAM WILL STOP AS LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE ARE STILL TRYING TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY.

HE SAID: +HONG KONG CANNOT BE THE LONG-TERM HOME FOR REFUGEES FROM INDO-CHINA. WE DO NOT HAVE THE LAND TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR ACCOMMODATION= INDUSTRY TO PROVIDE THEM WITH JOBS= SOCIAL RESOURCES TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR WELL-BEING= WITHOUT SERIOUSLY IMPAIRING THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HEALTH OF OUR OWN COMMUNITY.

+WE ARE GRATEFUL TO THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE TAKEN SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF 'BOAT REFUGEES', BUT THE NUMBER OF SUCH COUNTRIES IS STILL LAMENTABLY FEW AND THE PLACES RECENTLY OFFERED PATENTLY FALL SHORT OF WHAT IS POSSIBLE ON THE ONE HAND, AND ARE NECESSARY ON THE OTHER.+

SIR JACK CALLED FOR IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL ACTION TO ALLEVIATE THE SUFFERING AND HARDSHIP OF THOSE WHO NOW KNOCK AT OUR DOOR AND THOSE TO WHOM WE HAVE GIVEN TEMPORARY SHELTER. +OUR CONSCIENCE IS CLEAR BUT CAN THAT BE TRUE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AT LARGE?+ HE ASKED.

CLAUSE 2 OF THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) BILL SOUGHT TO INCREASE THE PENALTY FROM SIX MONTHS TO FOUR YEARS FOR OFFENCES OF CARRYING PASSENGERS ON BOARD A VESSEL IN EXCESS OF THE NUMBER PERMITTED BY THE PASSENGER CERTIFICATE OR EXCESS PASSENGERS ON AN UNCERTIFICATED SHIP.

TO FACILITATE PROSECUTION OF SUCH OFFENCES, THE BILL ALSO INTRODUCED TWO REBUTTABLE PRESUMPTIONS --- PERSONS ON BOARD A VESSEL OTHER THAN CREW MEMBERS AND INFANTS UNDER THE AGE OF ONE, WOULD BE PRESUMED TO BE PASSENGERS= AND A SHIP WITH MORE THAN 12 PASSENGERS ON BOARD WOULD BE PRESUMED TO BE A PASSENGER-SHIP.

ANOTHER CLAUSE OF THE BILL PROVIDES FOR THE FORFEITURE OF SHIPS WHERE THE MASTER OR THE OWNER IS GUILTY OF AN OFFENCE OF CARRYING EXCESSIVE PASSENGERS. IT ALSO PROVIDES THAT, BEFORE THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE INITIATES THE FORFEITURE PROCEDURE IN ANY PARTICULAR CASE, THE APPROVAL OF THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL MUST BE OBTAINED.

/SIR JACK.....

SIR JACK SAID IT IS PROPOSED THAT THE FORFEITURE PROVISIONS IN THE BILL SHOULD EXPIRE AT THE END OF THIS YEAR UNLESS EXTENDED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE SHIPPING AND PORT CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL, THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID THE OTHER PENAL PROVISION IN THE BILL WAS TO INCREASE THE PENALTIES TO A SIMILAR LEVEL FOR THE OFFENCE OF ENDANGERING THE SAFETY OF PERSONS CARRIED ON A VESSEL.

ON THE IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, SIR JACK SAID CLAUSE 2 OF THE BILL WOULD REMOVE THE TWO MONTHS LIMIT SO THAT PERSONS PREVIOUSLY RESIDENT IN VIETNAM COULD BE REMOVED AFTER A LONGER PERIOD AND DETAINED UNDER ANOTHER SECTION OF THE ORDINANCE.

HE SAID EACH CASE WOULD BE CONSIDERED ON ITS OWN MERITS AND IT WAS PROPOSED THAT THIS MEASURE SHOULD CEASE TO HAVE EFFECT AT THE END OF THIS YEAR UNLESS THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL EXTENDS ITS LIFE.

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE BILLS ON BEHALF OF THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, THE HON. ROGER LOBO SAID THEY WERE SATISFIED WITH THE STRICT MEASURES IN THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) BILL AND THE SHIPPING AND PORT CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL WHICH WERE NECESSARY TO STRENGTHEN THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION IN MEETING THE THREAT POSED BY THOSE WHO SEEK TO USE HONG KONG AS A STAGING POST FOR +THIS TRAFFIC IN HUMAN MISERY+.

MR. LOBO ALSO ENDORSED THE INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY.

THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN WHO ALSO SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) BILL SAID A PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF THE AMENDED BILL WAS TO ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO STEP UP ITS EFFORTS TO PUT A STOP TO TRAFFICKING IN REFUGEES ON A LARGE SCALE.

HE SAID: +A RACKET NOW APPEARS TO HAVE STARTED TO USE OCEAN-GOING VESSELS TO PICK UP LARGE NUMBERS OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AT A DESIGNATED POINT AND TRANSPORT THEM TO PORTS SUCH AS HONG KONG.

+THE PROFITS ARE IMMENSE, AS IT IS REPORTED THAT EACH REFUGEE, WHETHER MAN, WOMAN OR CHILD, HAS TO PAY THE EQUIVALENT OF US\$2,000 TO GET OUT OF VIETNAM.

ON THE 2,700 REFUGEES ON THE HUEY FONG, HE SAID IT WAS REGRETTED THAT THEY HAD SO FAR NOT BEEN GRANTED PERMISSION TO PROCEED TO KAOHSIUNG. +THEIR CHIEF HOPE PERHAPS LIES IN THE VESSEL BEING ALLOWED TO PROCEED TO SOME NEARBY U.S. POSSESSION SUCH AS GUAM, WHICH WOULD BECOME A TEMPORARY STAGING GROUND PENDING FINAL RESETTLEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER COUNTRIES.+

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PRESENT STATE OF TAXI TRADE
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THE HON. LYDIA DUNN, WHO IS CONVENER OF A WORKING GROUP OF UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS MATTERS, SAID THE PROPOSED PACKAGE OF REFORMS OF THE TAXI TRADE SHOULD BE SUPPORTED NOT BECAUSE IT WAS BEYOND CRITICISM OR CERTAIN TO BE EFFECTIVE, BUT BECAUSE THE PRESENT STATE OF THE TAXI TRADE WAS AS THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SAID, +CHAOTIC+.

SHE SAID THE GOVERNMENT MUST ACCEPT SOME BLAME FOR ALLOWING THE SITUATION TO DETERIORATE TO THE PRESENT EXTENT, AND, UNLESS POSITIVE REMEDIAL STEPS WERE TAKEN URGENTLY, HONG KONG'S STANDING AS A MODERN, INTERNATIONAL CITY WOULD BE TARNISHED.

MISS DUNN WAS SPEAKING ON THE SECOND READING OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO. 4) BILL 1978 WHICH INTRODUCED STIFFER SANCTIONS AND PENALTIES AGAINST MALPRACTICES BY TAXI-DRIVERS.

THE OTHER TWO MEASURES IN THE PACKAGE ARE CONCERNED WITH FARES AND THE ISSUE OF LICENCES. SIX OTHER UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, THE HON. JAMES WU, THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, THE HON. S.L. CHEN, THE HON. PETER C. WONG, THE HON. WONG LAM AND THE HON. CHARLES YEUNG ALSO SPOKE ON THE BILL.

MISS DUNN SAID ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PACKAGE WOULD DEPEND ON THE VIGILANCE OF THE POLICE, THE CO-OPERATION OF THE PUBLIC IN REPORTING MALPRACTICES AND THE ATTITUDE OF THE TAXI OPERATORS THEMSELVES.

SHE THEREFORE SUGGESTED THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SHOULD CRITICALLY EXAMINE THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THE TRADE TO ENSURE A REALLY EFFECTIVE DIALOGUE.

AND AS THE OBJECTIVES CANNOT BE ASSURED IN ADVANCE, THE PROPOSED REVIEW OF THE EFFECTS OF THE PACKAGE IN NINE MONTHS' TIME WAS GREATLY SIGNIFICANT AND SHOULD BE WELL-FOUNDED ON FACTS. THE NECESSARY MACHINERY TO COLLECT THE INFORMATION SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY WHEN THE BILL BECAME EFFECTIVE.

COMMENTING ON THE REACTION OF TAXI-USERS TO THE BILL, MISS DUNN SAID IT WAS UNDERSTANDABLY DIFFICULT TO RECONCILE HIGH TENDER PRICES FOR TAXI LICENCES WITH THE PROPOSED FARE INCREASE.

YET IT WAS NOT ALTOGETHER LOGICAL TO TAKE THE LEVEL OF TENDER PRICES AS AN INDICATION OF PROFITABILITY BECAUSE THE PRICE WAS A ONE-OFF PAYMENT FOR A LIFE-LONG INVESTMENT IN A TRADE.

SHE WAS NOT ALTOGETHER CONVINCED BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT THAT +ANY FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVE WOULD PROBABLY HAVE EVEN GREATER DRAWBACKS+.

/AS TO.....

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AS TO THEIR FEELING THAT AN INCREASE IN TAXI FARES WAS UNFAIR GIVEN THE UNSATISFACTORY STATE OF OTHER FORMS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT, MISS DUNN REFERRED TO THE STATEMENT OF THE SECRETARY THAT +WE STAND ON THE THRESHOLD OF MASSIVE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM+, PARTICULARLY WITH THE COMING INTO OPERATION OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY.

THERE WAS AN ARGUMENT THAT THE PROPOSED INCREASE IN TAXI FARES HERALDS ANOTHER INCREASE IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARES GENERALLY. MISS DUNN SAID, HOWEVER, THAT AS FAR AS SHE WAS AWARE, THIS WAS NOT SO AND SHE SOUGHT CONFIRMATION FROM THE SECRETARY.

THE PROVIDERS OF TAXI SERVICE ALSO PUT THEIR POINT OF VIEW TO THE WORKING GROUP. AT A MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MOTOR TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION, THE REPRESENTATIVES MADE THREE POINTS:

- * THE PRESENT TAXI RENTAL SYSTEM IMPOSES A FINANCIAL BURDEN ON TAXI DRIVERS AND DRIVERS WHO RENT TAXIS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO ANY FORM OF MANAGEMENT CONTROL,
- * TAXI DRIVERS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO REFUSE TO GO TO ANY DESTINATION WHICH IS MORE THAN FIVE MILES AWAY FROM THE PLACE WHERE A SHIFT CHANGE TAKES PLACE, AND
- * IT IS UNFAIR TO INTRODUCE STIFFER PENALTIES TO CURB THE MALPRACTICES OF ONLY A SMALL MINORITY OF TAXI DRIVERS, AND THE PENALTIES WOULD IMPOSE A PSYCHOLOGICAL BURDEN ON THE MAJORITY OF LAW-ABIDING DRIVERS.

ON THE FIRST POINT, MISS DUNN SAID AT PRESENT, JUST UNDER 90 PER CENT OF ALL TAXIS OPERATING IN HONG KONG WERE OWNED BY INDIVIDUALS AND RENTED OUT PRIVATELY.

THESE WERE STRICTLY BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS AND IT WAS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW THE GOVERNMENT COULD SUBJECT THESE TRANSACTIONS TO ANY FORM OF REGULATION OR INSIST ON THEIR REPLACEMENT BY A SYSTEM OF EMPLOYMENT OF DRIVERS FOR WAGES, SHE SAID.

SHE AGREED, HOWEVER, THAT THE RENTAL SYSTEM WAS UNSATISFACTORY IN THAT DRIVERS WERE NOT SUBJECT TO ANY FORM OF MANAGEMENT CONTROL. ALSO, THE BENEFITS OF THE FARE INCREASE WOULD PROBABLY ACCRUE MAINLY TO OWNERS AND OWNER/OPERATORS.

+DRIVERS ARE UNLIKELY TO BE MORE THAN marginally BETTER OFF AND ONLY marginally LESS TEMPTED -- OR LESS FORCED -- TO INDULGE IN MALPRACTICES,+ SHE SAID.

SHE SUGGESTED THAT SOME MEANS OF POLICING AND REGULATING BEHAVIOUR COULD BE DEvised UNDER THE RENTAL SYSTEM, PREFERABLY BY THE TRADE ITSELF, IN THE INTERESTS OF THE MORE CONscientIOUS DRIVERS.

/ON THE.....

ON THE SUGGESTION TO BE ALLOWED TO REFUSE CERTAIN FARES DURING SHIFT CHANGE, MISS DUNN SAID IT HAD BEEN SUGGESTED THAT, PROVIDED A DRIVER FIRMLY AFFIXED A CARD SHOWING THE TIME AND PLACE OF HIS SHIFT CHANGE, HIS REFUSAL TO ACCEPT PASSENGERS FOR DESTINATIONS NOT ON THE ROUTE OF HIS DEPOT MIGHT NOT CONSTITUTE THE OFFENCE OF +WILFULLY+ REFUSING A HIRE.

THE ARRANGEMENT, HOWEVER, COULD NOT BE GIVEN LEGAL STATUS.

SHE SAID THE MAJORITY OF UNOFFICIALS FELT STRONGLY THIS RIGHT OF REFUSAL SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED, FOR IT WAS LIKELY TO LEAD TO ABUSE, BEARING IN MIND THAT SHIFT CHANGING WAS THE ORIGIN OF THE NOW RAMPANT MALPRACTICES.

WHILE SHE SYMPATHISED WITH THE DRIVERS' DESIRE TO MAXIMISE THEIR INCOME SHE THOUGHT THE NEW FARE STRUCTURE WOULD OFF-SET ANY LOSS IN INCOME DURING THE HALF-HOUR SHIFT CHANGE.

AS TO THE UNION'S THIRD POINT THAT THE STIFFER PENALTIES WOULD BRING ABOUT A PSYCHOLOGICAL BURDEN ON DRIVERS, MISS DUNN SAID SHE WAS SURE THE TAXI TRADE WOULD AGREE THAT LAW-ABIDING DRIVERS HAD NOTHING TO FEAR AND THOSE WHO CONTINUED TO FLOUT THE LAW WOULD GET ONLY WHAT THEY DESERVED.

+FURTHERMORE, PUBLIC DISSATISFACTION IS NOW SUCH THAT ANY DELAY IN BRINGING IN STIFFER SANCTIONS AND PENALTIES FOR MALPRACTICES WILL SIMPLY NOT BE ACCEPTED- AND I AM AFRAID THE MOTOR TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION MUST ACCEPT THAT REALITY,+ SHE SAID.

MR. JAMES WU SUGGESTED TAXI FARE INCREASES SHOULD BE \$3 FOR THE FIRST 1.5 KILOMETRE AND 20 CENTS FOR EVERY SUBSEQUENT ONE-FIFTH OF A KILOMETRE AND A CHARGE OF 20 CENTS FOR EVERY MINUTE OF WAITING TIME, ALLOWING FOR A 50-60 PER CENT GENERAL INCREASE.

HE SAID THIS SCALE OF FARES WOULD HAVE MANY ADVANTAGES:

- * IT ALLOWS FOR A GRADUAL AND REASONABLE INCREASE,
- * IT GIVES A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO INTRODUCE THE METRIC SYSTEM IN DISTANCE MEASUREMENT,
- * IT WILL ENCOURAGE DRIVERS TO PICK UP BOTH LONG AND SHORT JOURNEY PASSENGERS. UNDER GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL, TAXI DRIVERS WILL, FOR EXAMPLE, ONLY GET A 25-30 PER CENT INCREASE ON A TRIP FROM STAR FERRY TO MAGAZINE GAP ROAD OR CONDUIT ROAD WHICH ARE HIGHLY CONGESTED,
- * IT IS PERFECTLY EASY TO ADJUST THE METER FOR THE NEW FARE,
- * IT WILL NOT UNDULY DISCOURAGE PEOPLE TO USE TAXIS TO GO TO GREATER DISTANCE IN A HURRY, AND
- * BECAUSE OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE DRIVER TO PICK UP LONG DISTANCE PASSENGERS, TAXIS WILL NOT AGGRAVATE TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN THE BUSY CITY CENTRES.

MR. WU SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE PUBLIC OBJECTED STRONGLY TO THE STEEP INCREASE PROPOSED BY THE GOVERNMENT WHILE OWNERS AND DRIVERS FELT THE HIGH INCREASES WOULD AFFECT BUSINESS.

HE BELIEVED HIS PROPOSAL WAS A REASONABLE COMPROMISE AND POINTED OUT TO THE GOVERNMENT THAT THE INCREASE UNDER HIS PROPOSAL COULD BE RAISED IF FOUND INADEQUATE IN THE REVIEW IN NINE MONTHS' TIME, WHILE THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED STEEPER INCREASE WOULD BE IRREVERSIBLE.

HE ALSO DREW THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTENTION TO THE EFFECT OF ITS PROPOSED STEEP INCREASE ON THE PRESENT HIGHLY INFLATIONARY TREND WHICH MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.

MR. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN ABSTAINED FROM VOTING ON THE BILL. HE SAID HE DID NOT OPPOSE THE STIFFER SANCTIONS BUT WAS NOT ENTIRELY SATISFIED WITH THE PROPOSED NEW FARE STRUCTURE FOR URBAN TAXIS, AND THE REVISED TENDER SYSTEM.

HE SAID THE INCREASE FOR THE FIRST MILE AND FOR WAITING TIME WAS REASONABLE BUT THE INCREASE FROM 20 CENTS TO 50 CENTS FOR EACH ONE-FIFTH MILE AFTER THE FIRST MILE WAS UNACCEPTABLE BECAUSE IT WOULD BE TOO MUCH OF A DAILY FINANCIAL BURDEN TO THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC.

A MODERATE INCREASE, FROM 20 CENTS TO 30 CENTS WOULD ALSO BE AGREEABLE TO TAXI DRIVERS WORRYING THAT THE PROPOSED 100 PER CENT INCREASE ON THE AVERAGE FARE WOULD DRASTICALLY REDUCED THEIR INCOME FOR MANY MONTHS TO COME.

HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY TAXIS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A LUXURY AND PUT OUT OF REACH OF MIDDLE INCOME FAMILIES, WHO USED TAXIS BECAUSE THERE WAS A SERIOUS SHORTAGE OF BUSES AND NO MINI-BUSES WENT TO THEIR DESTINATIONS.

AS TO THE NEW TENDERING SYSTEM, MR. CHEONG-LEEN SAID IT WOULD DETER SPECULATORS WHO GAMBLED WITH A SMALL SUM BUT IN THE PROCESS WOULD PERMIT ONLY INDIVIDUALS OR SYNDICATES WITH MORE CASH RESOURCES TO TAKE OVER AND DID EXACTLY THE SAME THING BUT ON A LARGER AND MORE ORGANISED SCALE.

IT WOULD BE A HEALTHIER TREND FOR THE TAXI TRADE IF THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WERE TO ENCOURAGE MORE NEW TAXIS TO BE OWNER-DRIVEN, EVEN IF IT MEANT A REDUCTION IN THE TENDER PRICES, HE SAID.

FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID, INDIVIDUALS COULD BE ALLOWED TO TENDER BUT THEIR PARTICIPATION COULD BE RESTRICTED TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN HOLDERS OF A TAXI DRIVING LICENCE FOR A MINIMUM PERIOD OF TWO OR THREE YEARS, WITH THE DEPOSIT RAISED FROM \$2,500 TO \$5,000.

/MR. S.L. CHEN.....

MR. S.L. CHEN, SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL, SUGGESTED THE EXISTING TENDER SYSTEM BE REVISED SO THAT LICENCES WERE ISSUED TO DRIVER-OWNERS ONLY.

HE SAID STIFFER PENALTIES WOULD DETER MALPRACTICES IF THESE AROSE FROM PLAIN HUMAN GREED BUT WOULD NOT BE EFFECTIVE IF THEY AROSE FROM INSUFFICIENT INCOME OF TAXI DRIVERS.

HE POINTED OUT THE TAXI RENTAL SYSTEM RENDERED THE NON-OWNER DRIVERS OPEN TO EXPLOITATION BY UNSCRUPULOUS TAXI OWNERS, WHILE THE CONGESTED TRAFFIC CONDITIONS MADE IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR THE DRIVERS TO OBTAIN SUFFICIENT BUSINESS.

THE FARES REVISION WOULD GIVE SOME BENEFIT BUT THIS COULD SOON BE WIPED OUT BY PROPORTIONAL RENT INCREASES.

ISSUING TAXI LICENCES TO DRIVER-OWNERS ONLY WOULD CURB SPECULATION. THE DRIVER WOULD HAVE SOME MEASURE OF CONTROL OVER HIS BUSINESS OVERHEADS AND WITH A REASONABLE FARE STRUCTURE, HAVE A BETTER CHANCE TO MAKE A DECENT LIVING. SUCH A SYSTEM WOULD ALSO HELP TO ERADICATE THE LONG-STANDING PROBLEMS OF +PAK-PAIS+.

FURTHERMORE, TO ENCOURAGE DRIVERS TO BECOME LICENCE HOLDERS, MR. CHEN SUGGESTED SOME FORM OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, SUCH AS A PAY-BY-INSTALMENTS SCHEME, COULD BE CONSIDERED.

HE HOPED THAT WHEN THE FURTHER REVIEW OF THE TAXI TRADE WAS UNDERTAKEN IN NINE MONTHS' TIME, HIS COMMENTS COULD BE GIVEN DUE CONSIDERATION.

MR. PETER C. WONG POINTED OUT THAT IN RELATION TO THE NEW OFFENCES LAID DOWN, DISQUALIFICATION OF TAXI-DRIVERS SHOULD BE LIMITED TO THE HOLDING OR OBTAINING OF A +TAXI DRIVING+ LICENCE ONLY AND NOT A +DRIVING+ LICENCE. HE NOTED THAT THE BILL WOULD BE AMENDED TO REFLECT THIS.

MR. WONG LAM AGREED WITH A FARE INCREASE BUT FELT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE AND CAREFUL REVIEW OF THE CURRENT TENDER SYSTEM SO THAT BETTER ARRANGEMENTS MAY BE WORKED OUT FOR THE BENEFIT OF BONA FIDE MEMBERS OF THE TAXI TRADE AND INDIRECTLY THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

HE SAID THE EXISTING TENDER SYSTEM HAD A GREAT BEARING ON THE INCOME OF TAXI DRIVERS, +BECAUSE THE HIGHER THE TENDER PRICES, THE HIGHER WILL BE THE TAXI RENTAL CHARGED BY TAXI OWNERS.+

IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT AN INCREASE IN FARES MAY GIVE THE OWNERS AN EXCUSE TO RAISE THE RENTAL AND CONSEQUENTLY GREATLY REDUCE THE EARNINGS OF THE DRIVERS.

HE SAID WHETHER THE INCREASES PROPOSED WERE REASONABLE WAS A MATTER OF OPINION BUT COMPARED WITH OTHER PLACES AND EVEN SOME COUNTRIES IN SOUTH EAST ASIA, HONG KONG'S TAXI FARES WOULD STILL BE REGARDED AS SO.

/HE ALSO.....

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE DISQUALIFICATION OF DRIVING LICENCES IN RELATION TO OFFENCES UNDER THE BILL SHOULD BE LIMITED TO A DRIVER'S +TAXI-DRIVING+ AND NOT HIS +DRIVING+ LICENCE.

MR. CHARLES YEUNG COULD SEE NO REASON WHY THE ISSUING OF NEW LICENCES AT NIL PREMIUM FOR NEW TERRITORIES TAXIS HAD TO BE WITHHELD ESPECIALLY WHEN THE SYSTEM HAD PROVED A SUCCESS.

HE BELIEVED THAT TO FACILITATE TRAVELLING CONVENIENCE, TAXI LICENCES SHOULD BE ISSUED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE AND NOT AS A MEANS OF REVENUE PRODUCTION.

HE SUGGESTED THE GOVERNMENT COULD ENCOURAGE GOOD DISCIPLINE BY ALLOWING A TAXI DRIVER OF SAY, 10 YEARS' GOOD STANDING, TO OBTAIN A LICENCE FREE OF PREMIUM, PROVIDED THE TAXI WAS DRIVEN BY HIM ALONE.

BY LIMITING THE DRIVING OF THESE TAXIS TO THEIR OWNERS, THE OWNERS/DRIVERS WOULD CHOOSE THEIR TIME TO TAKE THEIR TAXIS OUT ON THE ROAD WHEN DEMAND WAS HIGHEST.

HE ALSO SUGGESTED THE GOVERNMENT COULD PROVIDE MORE SELF-EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO PEOPLE SAY, OVER 50, AND TO SLIGHTLY PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED PEOPLE BY GIVING THEM TAXI LICENCES.

THEY WOULD TAKE TAXI-DRIVING AS THEIR LIFE-LONG OCCUPATION AND WOULD CARRY IT OUT WITH DIGNITY AND INTEGRITY.

THE MEASURE WOULD NOT ONLY GIVE THEM FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE BUT ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY AS USEFUL AND SERVING MEMBERS, MR. YEUNG SAID.

IN REPLY, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, SAID HE AGREED WITH THE HON. MISS LYDIA DUNN AND THE HON. S.L. CHEN IN THE IMPORTANCE THEY ATTACHED TO THE GOVERNMENT MONITORING ALL ASPECTS OF THE PACKAGE AFTER IT HAD BEEN INTRODUCED TO ENSURE THAT AN ADEQUATE REVIEW OF ITS EFFECTS COULD BE CONDUCTED LATER IN THE YEAR AND THAT, IF NECESSARY, FURTHER ADJUSTMENTS COULD BE MADE.

+I CAN ASSURE THEM THAT THE STANDING CONFERENCE ON ROAD USE, UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT, HAS ALREADY SET UP THE NECESSARY MACHINERY TO DO THIS AND THAT A SURVEY OF ALL MATTERS TO BE COVERED BY THE PACKAGE HAS BEEN CONDUCTED TO ESTABLISH A 'BEFORE' BASIS FOR COMPARISON.

+THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT HAS ALSO NOW ESTABLISHED MORE FORMAL MACHINERY TO KEEP ITSELF IN TOUCH WITH ALL SECTIONS OF THE TAXI TRADE,+ MR. JONES SAID.

+THERE IS A WORKING PARTY ON TAXI OPERATIONS WHICH ENABLES THE STAFF OF THE DEPARTMENT TO MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL THE TAXI DRIVERS' ASSOCIATIONS, INCLUDING THOSE IN THE NEW TERRITORIES,+ HE ADDED.

AS REGARDS THE CONCERN EXPRESSED BY SOME OF THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OVER THE INTRODUCTION OF THE PACKAGE, MR. JONES SAID MOST OF THE MATTERS RAISED BY THEM +ARE PROBABLY SOMEWHAT EXAGGERATED AND THAT SOME ARE, INDEED, MUTUALLY CONTRADICTORY+.

+FOR INSTANCE,+ HE SAID, +IF THE FARE INCREASES REALLY ARE AS STRINGENT AS MR. CHEONG-LEEN BELIEVES, THEN THERE OUGHT TO BE PLENTY OF TAXIS AVAILABLE FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO HIRE THEM AT THESE FARES.

+IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, COMPETITION SHOULD ENSURE THAT THOSE DRIVERS WHO TRY TO COMMIT MALPRACTICES WILL VERY SOON FIND THAT THEY HAVE NO PASSENGERS,+ MR. JONES SAID.

MR. JONES ALSO BELIEVED THAT THE NATURAL FORCES OF THE MARKET WOULD MODERATE THE BARGAINING PROCESS BETWEEN OWNERS AND DRIVERS OVER RENTALS AND THAT A LEVEL WOULD BE ESTABLISHED WHICH WOULD PROVIDE THE DRIVERS WITH SUFFICIENT INCOME TO INDUCE SUFFICIENT OF THEM TO ENGAGE IN THE TRADE.

ON THE TENDER SYSTEM, MR. JONES SAID THE PROBLEM WAS THAT, NO MATTER HOW CAREFUL THE GOVERNMENT TRIED TO DEVISE A SYSTEM OF RESTRICTED TENDERING CONFINED TO TAXI DRIVERS ONLY, OR ISSUING LICENCES FREE TO LONG SERVICE DRIVERS, THERE REMAINED THE FACT THAT THERE WAS A MARKET FOR TAXI LICENCES, QUITE APART FROM THE TENDER SYSTEM, AND THAT LICENCES WOULD STILL BE CHANGING HANDS IN THAT MARKET AT HIGH PRICES.

+SO I DOUBT WHETHER WHAT IS PROPOSED WILL TURN OUT TO BE PRACTICABLE. BUT I PROMISE THAT THIS ASPECT ALSO WILL BE EXAMINED CAREFULLY DURING THE COMING MONTHS AND WILL BE CONSIDERED AGAIN IN THE REVIEW,+ MR. JONES SAID.

HE ALSO EXPRESSED DOUBT ON WHETHER THE RAISING OF TAXI FARES WOULD HAVE VERY MUCH EFFECT ON OTHER TRANSPORT FARES, EXCEPT TO THE EXTENT THAT DEMAND WAS SHIFTED.

MR. JONES ALSO POINTED OUT THAT MR. CHEONG-LEEN WAS WRONG IN SAYING THAT THE TENDER SYSTEM NOW REQUIRED EACH TENDERER TO BID FOR A MINIMUM OF 10 NEW TAXIS.

+IT IS TRUE THAT A DEPOSIT OF \$25,000 IS NOW REQUIRED, BUT TENDERS ARE STILL ACCEPTED FOR SINGLE TAXIS OR FOR ANY NUMBER UP TO THE MAXIMUM OF 300,+ HE SAID.

FINALLY, MR. JONES SAID HE WOULD BE MOVING AN AMENDMENT DURING THE COMMITTEE STAGE OF THE BILL TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE SANCTION OF THE REMOVAL OF DRIVING LICENCES FOR TAXI MALPRACTICES WOULD BE CONFINED TO THE CULPRITS' TAXI DRIVING LICENCES AND WOULD NOT AFFECT THEIR LICENCES TO DRIVE PRIVATE CARS OR OTHER VEHICLES.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1979

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UNITED NATIONS YEAR OF THE CHILD

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THE REV. THE HON. JOYCE M. BENNETT AT THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DREW ATTENTION TO INADEQUATE HOSPITAL FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN WHEN SHE SPOKE ON THIS YEAR'S UNITED NATIONS YEAR OF THE CHILD AND THE NEED TO IMPROVE SERVICES TO CHILDREN IN HONG KONG.

SHE POINTED OUT THAT IN GOVERNMENT AND AIDED HOSPITALS, THE GOVERNMENT EXPECTED ONE NURSE TO CARE, DURING DAY TIME, FOR SEVEN AND AT NIGHT FOR 15 OR MORE PATIENTS, WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE CHILDREN OR ADULTS.

IN ENGLAND THERE WAS A MINIMUM OF ONE NURSE TO TWO CHILDREN, SHE ADDED.

UNDER THE CHILD CARE CENTRES ORDINANCE ONE CHILD CARE WORKER WAS ALLOWED FOR SIX CHILDREN. WHILE THE ORDINANCE DID NOT APPLY TO HOSPITALS, IT WAS REASONABLE THAT SICK CHILDREN SHOULD BE CARED FOR BY MORE NURSES THAN HEALTHY CHILDREN, MISS BENNETT SAID.

MOREOVER, COTS IN HONG KONG WERE FREQUENTLY PLACED VERY CLOSE TOGETHER. +I AM NOT SURPRISED THAT NURSES COMPLAIN REGARDING THEIR WORKING CONDITIONS,+ SHE SAID.

OVERCROWDING AND UNDERSTAFFING, SHE SAID, MEANT CROSS-INFECTION COULD EASILY OCCUR. FOR A CERTAIN DISEASE THE RECOVERY RATE IN HONG KONG WAS 30 PER CENT COMPARED WITH 60 PER CENT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

+A SICK BABY OR YOUNG CHILD CAN SO EASILY CATCH DIARRHOEA FROM OTHER SICK CHILDREN. THERE ARE GROSSLY INADEQUATE FACILITIES FOR ISOLATING THESE INFECTIOUS CASES IN QUEEN MARY AND OTHER HOSPITALS,+ SHE SAID.

THE INADEQUATE SPACE IN CHILDREN'S WARDS HAD PRECLUDED THE MOTHER OR RELATIVE TO STAY WITH THE CHILD. DOCTORS AND PSYCHOLOGISTS HAD STUDIED THE EFFECT ON SIX MONTHS TO THREE YEARS OLD CHILDREN OF THIS SEPARATION AND, +THE RESULTING PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA CAUSES IRREPARABLE DAMAGE.+

EVEN IF THERE WAS LACK OF SPACE TO ENABLE THE CHILDREN TO GET OUT OF BED MORE THAN NECESSARY, THE WARDS COULD BE CHANGED IMMEDIATELY AT VERY LITTLE COST TO DISPLAY BRIGHT COLOURS WITH PICTURES AND BE PROVIDED WITH TOYS.

+IF THE MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENTS OF THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT DO NOT UNDERSTAND THIS, I SUGGEST WE ASK THE HELP OF THE DESIGN STUDENTS AT THE POLYTECHNIC OR EVEN SOME OF OUR SECONDARY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS,+ MISS BENNETT SAID.

SHE ALSO REFERRED TO THE PATHOLOGY LABORATORIES AT QUEEN MARY HOSPITAL WHERE ESSENTIAL INVESTIGATIONS REQUIRED BY THE SURGEONS COULD NOT BE CARRIED OUT, +BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT WELL-EQUIPPED FOR CARRYING OUT THE SPECIAL TECHNIQUES REQUIRED FOR THE BIOCHEMICAL INVESTIGATIONS ON SMALL CHILDREN.+

/+IF WE.....

+IF WE DO NOT BUILD A CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, THESE SPECIAL FACILITIES MUST BE PROVIDED IN ALL REGIONAL AND GENERAL HOSPITALS,+ SHE SAID.

STILL SPEAKING ON THE NEED TO IMPROVE SERVICES TO CHILDREN, MISS BENNETT DREW ATTENTION TO THE +GROSSLY INADEQUATE+ NUMBER OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN HONG KONG.

+UNTIL WE HAVE MORE TRAINED PERSONNEL WE SHALL CONTINUE, AS THIS YEAR, TO PLACE CHILDREN IN THE WRONG TYPE OF SPECIAL CLASSES OR SCHOOLS OR INDEED PLACE THEM IN SPECIAL CLASSES WHEN THEY DO NOT NEED TO BE TAKEN OUT OF THE ORDINARY CLASS OR SCHOOL,+ SHE SAID.

MISS BENNETT ALSO HOPED THE REPORT ON THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD PROMISED BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE WILL BE POSITIVE IN ITS APPROACH.

PARENTS TRYING TO GIVE THEIR CHILD A GOOD START IN LIFE FOUND +CRAM SHOPS+ NOT TRUE KINDERGARTENS OR PLAY CENTRES.

+WE HAVE FORGOTTEN IN HONG KONG THAT A KINDERGARTEN SHOULD BE A GARDEN FOR CHILDREN TO DISCOVER THE WIDER ENVIRONMENT OUTSIDE THEIR HOMES,+ SHE SAID.

DR. THE HON. HO KAM-FAI ALSO SHOWED CONCERN FOR THE INCREASING AMOUNT OF ACADEMIC LEARNING BEING GIVEN TO CHILDREN IN KINDERGARTEN.

+COMPLEX ARITHMETIC AND ENGLISH ARE NOW NORMAL PARTS OF THE SYLLABUS AND HOMEWORK IS ASSIGNED TO PLEASE PARENTS.+

A MORE ALARMING DEVELOPMENT, HE SAID, WAS THE RAISING OF THE TEACHING STANDARD IN SOME KINDERGARTENS, WITHOUT REGARD TO EACH INDIVIDUAL CHILD'S PACE OF LEARNING, PRESUMABLY TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF HIGHLY COMPETITIVE PRIMARY 1 ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS OF CERTAIN PRIMARY SCHOOLS, HE SAID.

ON THE WHOLE, DR. HO THOUGHT THE FAMILY WAS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE IN PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF THE CHILD.

+IT IS IN THE FAMILY WHERE THE CHILD RECEIVES EMOTIONAL SECURITY, LEARNS THE NORMS OF HUMAN RELATIONS AND GRADUALLY FORMS HIS OWN PERSONALITY,+ HE SAID.

YET THESE TRADITIONAL FUNCTIONS WERE BEING ERODED BY THE DEMANDS OF URBANISATION AND MODERNISATION.

THE COMMUNITY, HE SAID, SHOULD COME TO THE AID OF THE FAMILY BY PROVIDING A VARIETY OF SUPPORT SYSTEMS BUT, IN CURRENT POLICY-MAKING THESE SYSTEMS WERE PLANNED ON THE BASIS OF AGE-GROUPS OR SPECIAL NEEDS AND LITTLE EMPHASIS WAS PLACED ON PLANNING FOR THE FAMILY AS A UNIT.

HE GAVE THE EXAMPLE OF CHILD ABUSE. USUALLY THE PARENTS WERE PROSECUTED AND THE CHILD REMOVED FOR TEMPORARY PLACEMENT. VERY LIKELY THIS PROVOKED STRONG RESENTMENT IN THE CONVICTED PARENTS OR IN OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY AGAINST THE YOUNG VICTIM.

+CHILD ABUSE IS, IN FACT, SYMPTOMATIC OF A MULTITUDE OF FAMILY PROBLEMS, SUCH AS MARITAL DISCORD, PROLONGED ECONOMIC HARDSHIP, ENVIRONMENTAL FRUSTRATION, UNWANTED PREGNANCY, DRUG ADDICTION, OR UNSTABLE PERSONALITY.

+AN EFFECTIVE REMEDY MUST INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF THE FAMILY AS A WHOLE RATHER THAN THOSE OF THE VICTIMISED CHILD ALONE,+ DR. HO SAID.

AS FOR CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF THEIR FAMILIES, EITHER TEMPORARILY OR PERMANENTLY, DR. HO SAID THE TRADITIONAL REMEDY OF PLACING THEM IN AN ORPHANAGE OR CHILDREN'S CENTRE WAS NOT CONDUCIVE TO THEIR WHOLESOME DEVELOPMENT.

SUBSTITUTE HOMES, SUCH AS ADOPTIVE HOMES AND FOSTER HOMES, WERE MORE APPROPRIATE BUT AT PRESENT THERE WERE ONLY TWO SUBVENTED VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS RENDERING SUCH SERVICES.

HE HOPED THE PROGRAMME COULD BE EXPANDED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY WITH GREATER INVOLVEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT.

THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING SPOKE OF THE NEED TO PROVIDE MORE CHILD CARE CENTRES AND CONNECTED SERVICES TO THE LOWER-INCOME GROUP, PARTICULARLY IN AND AROUND THE NEW INDUSTRIAL TOWNS.

HE SAID MANY YOUNG COUPLES WERE OBLIGED TO WORK AND THERE WAS A NEED TO PROVIDE A SPECIALISED SERVICE TO LOOK AFTER THEIR CHILDREN OF PRE-SCHOOL AGE WHILE THEY WERE AT WORK.

MANY VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WERE PREPARED TO CO-OPERATE BY ESTABLISHING CHILD CARE CENTRES BUT WERE OFTEN DETERRED BY THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CHILD CARE CENTRES REGULATIONS WHICH WERE OFTEN MUCH TOO RIGID AND DIFFICULT TO COMPLY WITH WITHOUT EXTRANEIOUS COST AND TIME-CONSUMING EFFORTS.

IN PARTICULAR, HE SAID, THE TIME IT TOOK TO COMPLY WITH FIRE SERVICE REQUIREMENTS WAS A MATTER OF GREAT CONCERN, AND ANY DELAY IN OBTAINING THE NECESSARY CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION WAS USUALLY CAUSED BY THESE REQUIREMENTS.

HE WAS SURE THAT IF THE REGULATIONS WERE MADE MORE FLEXIBLE AND LESS TIME-CONSUMING TO COMPLY WITH, MORE VOLUNTARY BODIES WILL BE GLAD TO FURTHER THE GOVERNMENT'S AIM TO PROVIDE THIS SERVICE FOR CHILDREN.

THE GROWTH IN ALL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN RECENT YEARS HAS BEEN PHENOMENAL, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON. E.P. HO SAID IN REPLY TO THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS.

HE SAID THREE OF THEM --- MISS BENNETT, DR. HO AND MR. LEUNG HAD DRAWN ATTENTION TO SOME OF THE AREAS IN WHICH PROVISIONS FELL SHORT OF THE IDEAL.

HONG KONG NEED NOT BE ASHAMED OF WHAT HAD BEEN ACHIEVED SO FAR IN THE WAY IN WHICH IT IMPROVED THE LOT OF THE CHILDREN, MR. HO SAID.

+I THINK I CAN SAFELY STATE WITHOUT FEAR OF CONTRADICTION THAT THE GROWTH ACHIEVED IN ALL OUR SERVICES FOR OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN RECENT YEARS -- IN THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH, LABOUR, SOCIAL WELFARE, EDUCATION AS WELL AS RECREATION AND SPORTS FIELDS -- HAS BEEN PHENOMENAL,+ SAID MR. HO.

PLANS FOR THE COMING DECADE WERE EVEN MORE AMBITIOUS, HE STATED.

REPLYING TO SOME OF THE POINTS RAISED BY MISS BENNETT, WHO TOOK THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES TO TASK, MR. HO SAID CLINICAL PAEDIATRIC SERVICES WERE ONLY ONE ASPECT OF THE TOTAL CHILD CARE FACILITIES IN HONG KONG AND THE PAEDIATRIC WARDS IN QUEEN MARY HOSPITAL WERE BUT ONE OF THE UNITS OF THE OVERALL PAEDIATRIC SERVICES.

+QUEEN MARY HOSPITAL WAS COMPLETED IN 1937 AND THE DEPARTMENT OF PAEDIATRICS ONLY ESTABLISHED IN THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG IN 1962. SINCE THEN THERE HAS BEEN CONTINUOUS GROWTH IN THE PAEDIATRIC SERVICES DESPITE THE RESTRICTED ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE,+ HE SAID.

MR. HO SAID A FEASIBILITY STUDY WAS CURRENTLY UNDER WAY TO EXAMINE THE POSSIBLE RE-LOCATION OF CERTAIN FACILITIES AND THE BUILDING OF NEW ACCOMMODATION FOR THE HOSPITAL TO INCORPORATE UP-TO-DATE PAEDIATRIC WARDS.

MR. HO SAID: +THE DETAILS OF THE PROPOSALS WILL BE PUT VERY SHORTLY TO THE MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR CONSIDERATION, AND IF ENDORSED, WILL BE PROCESSED FOR INCLUSION IN THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME.+

THE DESIRABILITY OF ALLOWING MOTHERS TO LIVE IN WITH THEIR YOUNG CHILDREN WHEREVER POSSIBLE, OR AT LEAST GIVING THEM UNRESTRICTED VISITING RIGHTS, WAS AGREED, PROVIDED IN THE OPINION OF THE ATTENDING PHYSICIAN THERE WERE NO PROFESSIONAL REASONS FOR A DECISION TO THE CONTRARY IN ANY INDIVIDUAL CASE.

SUITABLE OVERNIGHT FACILITIES FOR MOTHERS WERE BEING INCORPORATED IN THE PAEDIATRIC UNITS BEING PLANNED FOR SHA TIN HOSPITAL AND OTHER NEW DEVELOPMENTS.

ON SPECIALISED CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS, MR. HO SAID: +OUR POLICY AIM IS TO PROVIDE SPECIALIST UNITS IN GENERAL HOSPITALS ON A REGIONAL BASIS, AS IS THE TREND IN THE MORE ADVANCED COUNTRIES LIKE ENGLAND. IN THIS WAY RESOURCES, BOTH STAFFING AND EQUIPMENT, ARE BETTER UTILISED AND ALSO BROUGHT TO THE PUBLIC RATHER THAN HAVE THE PUBLIC SUFFER THE INCONVENIENCE OF ATTENDING ONE CENTRE FAR FROM THEIR HOMES.+

ON NURSE TO PATIENT RATIO, MR. HO SAID IT WOULD BE MISLEADING TO DRAW COMPARISONS WITH SELECTED PAEDIATRIC SERVICES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND WITH CHILD CARE SERVICES IN HONG KONG.

IT WAS NECESSARY TO CONSIDER ALL THE RELEVANT FACTORS, THE ACTUAL DUTIES OF NURSES, THE FUNCTIONS OF OTHER SUPPORTING STAFF AVAILABLE IN THE HOSPITALS AND THE DIFFERING ATTENTION REQUIREMENTS OF HEALTHY AND SICK CHILDREN, HE SAID.

IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT NURSING ESTABLISHMENTS AND MANNING SCALES SHOULD BE REVIEWED FROM TIME TO TIME, AND SUCH AN EXERCISE WAS RECENTLY COMPLETED IN THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT WITH A VIEW TO FORMULATING PROPOSALS FOR ADVICE BY THE MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

MR. HO SAID IT WAS ENCOURAGING THAT HONG KONG'S INFANT MORTALITY RATE HAD FALLEN FROM 92 PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS IN 1951 TO 13.9 IN 1977.

+AS MISS BENNETT HAS MADE NUMEROUS COMPARISONS WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM, I AM PLEASED TO INFORM HER THAT THIS INFANT MORTALITY RATE COMPARES FAVOURABLY WITH THE LATEST UNITED KINGDOM'S FIGURE AVAILABLE TO US,+ HE ADDED.

ON THE NEED TO RAPIDLY IMPROVE FACILITIES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN AS SUGGESTED BY MISS BENNETT, MR. HO SAID DURING THIS YEAR THE NUMBER OF SPECIAL SCHOOL PLACES WOULD INCREASE BY 3,700 TO A TOTAL OF 23,500. OF THESE NEW PLACES, 1,420 WOULD REPRESENT A VERY SIGNIFICANT INCREASE OVER THE CURRENT PROVISION OF 2,000 PLACES FOR THIS GROUP.

OF EVEN GREATER SIGNIFICANCE WOULD BE A PROPOSAL TO BE PUT TO THE COUNCIL'S FINANCE COMMITTEE TO EXPAND THE SCOPE OF THE CODE OF AID FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION TO ENABLE A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY RANGE OF SERVICES TO BE AVAILABLE WITHIN THESE SCHOOLS.

THE NUMBER OF PLACES IN ORDINARY CHILD CARE CENTRES RESERVED FOR DISABLED CHILDREN AND HOSPITAL BEDS, AND RESIDENTIAL AND DAY CARE PLACES FOR THE SEVERELY MENTALLY HANDICAPPED WOULD ALSO BE INCREASED, MR. HO SAID.

TURNING TO THE CARE AND EDUCATION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN THE PRE-PRIMARY AGE GROUP, MR. HO SAID IT WAS ESTIMATED THAT OVER 80 PER CENT OF FOUR-YEAR-OLDS AND OVER 95 PER CENT OF FIVE-YEAR-OLDS WERE ATTENDING KINDERGARTENS OR CHILD CARE CENTRES.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAD SO FAR PROVIDED ONLY LIMITED ASSISTANCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF KINDERGARTENS, MR. HO SAID, BECAUSE ITS PRIORITY HAD BEEN TO EXPAND OTHER SECTORS OF EDUCATION, SUCH AS PRIMARY AND, MORE RECENTLY, SECONDARY EDUCATION.

+HOWEVER, THE NEED TO GIVE GREATER ATTENTION TO THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD HAS BEEN RECOGNISED FOR SOME TIME AND I AM NOW ABLE TO REPORT THAT THE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL WORKING PARTY APPOINTED BY ME TO REVIEW OUR POLICY IN THIS AREA HAS GOOD PROGRESS AND EXPECTS TO COMPLETE ITS REPORT SHORTLY,+ SAID MR. HO.

HE ALSO MENTIONED THAT DURING THE CURRENT SESSION THE GOVERNMENT WOULD INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO EXTEND THE AGE OF COMPULSORY SCHOOLING TO 14 FROM THIS SEPTEMBER AND 15 FROM SEPTEMBER NEXT YEAR.

AT THE SAME TIME IT WOULD ALSO EXTEND THE CURRENT AGE LIMITATIONS ON INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT TO ALL EMPLOYMENT FROM THIS SEPTEMBER, WITH A FURTHER EXTENSION IN THE AGE LIMIT FOR ALL EMPLOYMENT TO 15 OR THE COMPLETION OF FROM 111 A YEAR LATER.

DIRECTOR OF AUDIT, PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE REPORTS Tabled
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THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT ON THE GOVERNMENT'S ACCOUNTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1977/78 AND THE FIRST REPORT OF THE RECENTLY CONSTITUTED PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WERE Tabled AT THE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE HON. MISS LYDIA DUNN, NOMINATED TO SPEAK IN THE ABSENCE ABROAD OF THE COMMITTEE'S CHAIRMAN, THE HON. LI FOOK-WO, SAID MUCH OF THE VALUE OF THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT DEPENDED ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH ITS RECOMMENDATIONS WERE FOLLOWED UP AND IMPLEMENTED.

+WE HOPE THE GOVERNMENT MINUTE TO BE PREPARED BY THE FINANCE BRANCH, AFTER CONSIDERING THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN OUR REPORT, WILL INDICATE --- AND IN SPECIFIC TERMS --- WHAT ACTION THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSES TO TAKE TO RECTIFY THE IRREGULARITIES BROUGHT TO NOTICE BY THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT AND THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE AND, IF APPROPRIATE, EXPLAIN WHY IT IS NOT INTENDED TO TAKE ACTION ON ANY PARTICULAR MATTER,+ MISS DUNN SAID.

SHE ALSO SAID THE COMMENTS BY THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT ON CERTAIN SHORTCOMINGS IN VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS AND BRANCHES OF THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT SHOULD BE VIEWED IN A PROPER PERSPECTIVE --- BY VIEWING THEM AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE TOTAL VOLUME OF GOVERNMENT TRANSACTIONS, THE BULK OF WHICH DOES NOT ATTRACT ADVERSE COMMENTS.

SHE SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS +ARE NOT ONLY SUBJECT TO A VALUE-FOR-MONEY AUDIT BY THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT AND HIS STAFF, WHOSE INDEPENDENCE IS SECURED BY STATUTE, BUT THEY ARE NOW ALSO SUBJECT TO FURTHER SCRUTINY BY A COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO ENSURE THE FUNDS PROVIDED THROUGH THE APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE HAVE BEEN SPENT IN THE WAY INTENDED+.

MISS DUNN NOTED THAT THE COMMITTEE'S MAIN AIM WAS TO ESTABLISH THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE MATTERS REPORTED ON BY THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT AND TO CONSIDER WHAT REMEDIAL ACTION HAS BEEN, OR SHOULD BE, TAKEN.

SHE SAID THE COMMITTEE DID NOT CONSIDER IT NECESSARY TO INVESTIGATE IN DETAIL EVERY OBSERVATION CONTAINED IN THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT'S REPORT AND THEREFORE IT CONCENTRATED ITS EFFORT ON THE MORE SERIOUS IRREGULARITIES OR SHORTCOMINGS.

MISS DUNN ALSO APPRECIATED THE CO-OPERATION OF ALL BRANCH SECRETARIES AND HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS WHO GAVE EVIDENCE AT THE COMMITTEE'S MEETINGS AND THE ASSISTANCE GIVEN BY THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT, THE DEPUTY FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND THE CLERK OF COUNCIL WHO WAS THE COMMITTEE'S OFFICIAL SECRETARY.

SHE SAID THE COMMITTEE AT NO TIME DETECTED ANY RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF CIVIL SERVANTS, WHO APPEARED BEFORE IT OR ASSISTED IT IN ITS DELIBERATIONS, TO BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE.

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WHOLESOME READING MATERIAL FOR CHILDREN

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THERE IS NO NEED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIAL FUND AT PRESENT TO ENCOURAGE AND SUBSIDISE ORGANISATIONS WHICH PUBLISH READING MATERIAL FOR CHILDREN AGED BETWEEN FOUR AND 12 YEARS, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON. F.K. LI, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR. LI WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. ANDREW SO.

+ALTHOUGH A FAIR AMOUNT OF WHOLESOME READING MATERIAL FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUR TO 12 YEAR AGE GROUP ALREADY EXISTS, I AGREE WITH MR. SO THAT MORE SUCH MATERIAL WOULD ALWAYS BE WELCOME,+ MR. LI SAID.

ABOUT 10 VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS WERE ALREADY RECEIVING SUBVENTIONS FROM THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT TO BUY BOOKS FOR THEIR CHILDREN LIBRARIES AND THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS FROM THESE OR OTHER VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS TO ASSIST THEM IN A WORTHWHILE SCHEME LEADING TO THE PUBLICATION OF MORE WHOLESOME READING MATERIAL FOR CHILDREN.

IN ADDITION, FUNDS WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE FROM ONE OR TWO TRUST FUNDS ADMINISTERED BY GOVERNMENT, HE NOTED.

MR. LI SAID: +I ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT THE URBAN COUNCIL IS CONSIDERING SPECIAL PROJECTS AIMED TO ENCOURAGE LOCAL AUTHORS AND TEACHERS TO WRITE CHILDREN'S BOOKS. FOR ALL THESE REASONS, THERE IS NO NEED TO ESTABLISH A SPECIAL FUND AT THE PRESENT TIME FOR THE SAME PURPOSE.+

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WORK IN HAND TO TIGHTEN CONTROL OVER INSHORE POLLUTION

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WORK IS NOW WELL IN HAND TO TIGHTEN CONTROLS OVER THE POLLUTION OF INSHORE WATERS AND STREAMS AND TO IMPROVE THEIR EFFECTIVENESS, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. WONG LAM, MR. JONES SAID TWO BILLS WERE BEING DRAFTED TO DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM AND FUNDS SOUGHT TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL STAFF AND EQUIPMENT NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT NEW LEGISLATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AS WELL AS FOR PLANNING, RESEARCH, AND MONITORING WORK ESSENTIAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WATER POLLUTION CONTROL STRATEGY.

HE SAID THE FIRST ITEM OF NEW LEGISLATION, A NEW WATER POLLUTION CONTROL BILL TO LIMIT AND CONTROL THE DISCHARGE OF LIQUID EFFLUENTS, WAS AT AN ADVANCED STAGE OF DRAFTING AND EXPECTED TO BE TABLED IN THE COUNCIL WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.

THE OTHER NEW LEGISLATION, A WASTE DISPOSAL BILL, WOULD DEAL, AMONG OTHER THINGS, WITH THE DISPOSAL OF AGRICULTURAL WASTES WHICH WERE ONE OF THE MAIN CAUSES OF STREAM POLLUTION.

MR. JONES SAID WITH ALL THIS, HE EXPECTED TO SEE A CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE IN THE SITUATION WHICH AT PRESENT WAS NOT ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY.

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SMOKE POLLUTION PROSECUTIONS

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THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. NEIL HENDERSON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THERE WERE 14 PROSECUTIONS AGAINST FACTORIES FOR EXCEEDING PERMITTED LIMITS FOR EMITTING SMOKE AND RELATED OFFENCES LAST YEAR.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE REV. THE HON. JOYCE M. BENNETT, MR. HENDERSON SAID THESE WERE AMONG THE 50 PROSECUTIONS TAKEN UNDER THE CLEAN AIR ORDINANCE AND ITS SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION DURING THE YEAR.

+THERE WERE ALSO 17 PROSECUTIONS TAKEN OUT AGAINST FACTORIES FOR UNAUTHORISED INSTALLATION OR ALTERATIONS OF FURNACES, OVENS, OR CHIMNEYS,+ HE SAID.

+THE REMAINING 19 SIMILAR OFFENCES WERE COMMITTED MAINLY BY HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS,+ HE ADDED.

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MORE RESTRICTIVE APPROACH ON CIGARETTE COMMERCIALS

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THE TELEVISION AUTHORITY INTENDS TO ADOPT A MORE RESTRICTIVE INTERPRETATION OF ITS CODES OF PRACTICE IN RESPECT OF CIGARETTE ADVERTISING AS PART OF THE MEASURES TO DISCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE FROM SMOKING.

THIS WAS REVEALED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON. E.P. HO, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR. HO SAID IN THE LIGHT OF THE MORE RESTRICTIVE APPROACH TO BE ADOPTED, A NUMBER OF CURRENT CIGARETTE COMMERCIALS WOULD BE REVIEWED.

HE ALSO NOTED THAT APART FROM A VOLUNTARY CODE OF ADVERTISING PRACTICE BY THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY, A NUMBER OF MEASURES HAD ALSO BEEN TAKEN TO DISCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE FROM SMOKING.

THESE INCLUDE THE INCLUSION OF THE SUBJECT OF +SMOKING AND HEALTH+ IN THE HEALTH SOCIAL STUDIES AND BIOLOGY CURRICULUM FOR STUDENTS IN PRIMARY 6 AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS- THE SHOWING OF EDUCATIONAL TV FILMS ON ANTI-SMOKING- A COMPETITION FOR THE BEST ANTI-SMOKING TEACHING KIT PREPARED BY TEACHERS AND STUDENTS, AND AN EXHIBITION ON THE DANGERS OF SMOKING AND DRINKING LAST SEPTEMBER.

MR. HO SAID THE COMPETITION ORGANISED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IN COLLABORATION WITH THE INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT WAS USEFUL IN EDUCATING YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT THE DANGERS OF SMOKING AND THE EXHIBITION WAS ARRANGED BY STUDENTS AND THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF HONG KONG UNIVERSITY WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1979

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PASSAGE OF CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF DANGEROUS
GOODS PROHIBITED THROUGH CROSS-HARBOUR TUNNEL
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL (AMENDMENT) BY-LAWS 1979 TO PROHIBIT THE PASSAGE OF CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF DANGEROUS GOODS THROUGH THE CROSS-HARBOUR TUNNEL.

MOVING THE BY-LAWS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES SAID THE PURPOSE OF THE PROHIBITION WAS TO SERVE AS A PRECAUTION IN VIEW OF RECENT TRAGIC INCIDENTS OVERSEAS INVOLVING SUCH SUBSTANCES.

+THE AMENDMENTS, THEREFORE, PROVIDE FOR ALL VEHICLES CARRYING COMPRESSED GASES TO BE PROHIBITED FROM USING THE TUNNEL AS FROM JANUARY 15, 1979,+ HE SAID.

FOR VEHICLES CARRYING PETROLEUM AND OTHER SUBSTANCES GIVING OFF AN INFLAMMABLE VAPOUR, HE ADDED, THE PROHIBITION WOULD BE DEFERRED UNTIL JULY 1 TO GIVE THE OIL COMPANIES, THE HONGKONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY AND THE GOVERNMENT SUFFICIENT TIME TO MAKE ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TRANSPORT OF THESE PRODUCTS ACROSS THE HARBOUR.

EXEMPTIONS WERE ALSO EXTENDED TO THE FIRE SERVICES, AMBULANCE, POLICE AND CIVIL DEFENCE VEHICLES AND OTHER VEHICLES PERMITTED BY THE TUNNEL MANAGER TO USE THE TUNNEL IN AN EMERGENCY.

THE BY-LAWS WERE MADE BY THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL COMPANY LIMITED ON JANUARY 4.

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CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO SERVICING AND TRANSPORTATION
NEEDS OF TEMPORARY HOUSING RESIDENTS
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THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, MR. DAVID MCDONALD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT AT THE PLANNING STAGE OF TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS CONSIDERATION WAS GIVEN TO THE SERVICING AND TRANSPORTATION NEEDS OF THE FUTURE RESIDENTS.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR. THE HON. HO KAM-FAI AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING.

+AN ASSESSMENT IS MADE OF THE PEDESTRIAN ROUTES RESIDENTS ARE LIKELY TO ADOPT IN ORDER TO REACH PUBLIC TRANSPORT, MARKETS AND OTHER FACILITIES AND, DEPENDENT ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF EACH CASE, FOOTPATHS, ZEBRA OR SIGNAL-CONTROLLED CROSSINGS OR TEMPORARY FOOTBRIDGES MAY BE PLANNED FOR INSTALLATION TO PHASE IN WITH THE COMPLETION AND OCCUPATION OF THE TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS,+ HE SAID.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS PRACTICE, MR. MCDONALD SAID, TEMPORARY FOOTBRIDGES WERE PROVIDED AT THE CORNWALL STREET AND MA CHAI HANG TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS AND A SIGNAL-CONTROLLED CROSSING WAS INSTALLED IN KOWLOON BAY.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1979

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PLAN TO EXPAND VISION SCREENING PROGRAMME
TO COVER 60,000 PRIMARY 1 CHILDREN
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THE SPECIAL EDUCATION SECTION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IS PLANNING TO EXPAND THE VISION SCREENING PROGRAMME THIS ACADEMIC YEAR TO COVER 60,000 PRIMARY 1 CHILDREN IN GOVERNMENT AND AIDED SCHOOLS.

THIS WAS STATED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE HON. KENNETH TOPLEY IN REPLY TO THE QUESTION FROM THE HON. ANDREW SO IN RELATION TO VISUAL PROBLEMS OF STUDENTS.

MR. TOPLEY POINTED OUT THAT THE SPECIAL EDUCATION SECTION HAD BEEN CONDUCTING VISION SCREENING IN GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS SINCE SEPTEMBER 1973.

+IT IS FOUND THAT ABOUT 10 PER CENT OF THE CHILDREN HAVE VISUAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS MYOPIA, HYPERMETROPIA, ASTIGMATISM AND SQUINTING. BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THESE SCREENING TESTS, THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS SUFFERING FROM MYOPIA AND OTHER EYE DEFECTS DOES NOT PRESENT A SERIOUS PROBLEM,+ HE SAID.

ON EYE CARE, MR. TOPLEY SAID A PAMPHLET WAS NOW BEING JOINTLY PRODUCED BY THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND THE JAYCEES AND WOULD BE ISSUED TO ALL SCHOOLS WHEN READY.

HE SAID THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAD INCLUDED, IN BOTH THE PRIMARY HEALTH EDUCATION SYLLABUS AND THE JUNIOR SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM, ESSENTIAL TOPICS ON EYE CARE AND PREVENTION OF INJURIES TO EYES.

EVERY YEAR IN OCTOBER, HE SAID, A CIRCULAR WAS SENT ADVISING HEADS OF SCHOOLS TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ENSURE PUPILS ARE NOT SUBJECTED TO ANY UNDUE EYE STRAIN.

+ADVICE IS GIVEN ON LIGHTING AT SCHOOL AND AT HOME, ON PERSONAL HYGIENE AND ON THE PREVENTION OF EYE ACCIDENTS,+ HE SAID.

+THE DEPARTMENT ALSO ISSUES GUIDELINES, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT PRINTER, TO SPECIFY THE SIZE OF PRINT AND THE TYPE OF PAPER TO BE USED FOR TEXTBOOKS,+ MR. TOPLEY ADDED.

HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE +PROTECT YOUR EYE SIGHT CAMPAIGN+ JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND THE JAYCEES LAST AUGUST WAS WELL SUPPORTED.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1979

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SITE INVESTIGATION WORK ON PROPOSED LANTAU FIXED
CROSSING VIRTUALLY COMPLETE

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SITE INVESTIGATION WORK ON THE PROPOSED LANTAU FIXED CROSSING, THE LARGEST AND MOST AMBITIOUS HIGHWAY PROJECT IN HONG KONG, IS VIRTUALLY COMPLETE.

DR. Y. L. CHOI, CHIEF ENGINEER OF THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT'S HIGHWAYS OFFICE, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT ONE OF THE TWO SITE INVESTIGATIONS HAD BEEN COMPLETED AND THE CONTRACTORS HAD REPORTED THEIR FINDINGS TO THE CONSULTANT FIRM, THE ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS GROUP OF HONG KONG.

THE GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATION AIMS TO ASCERTAIN THE LEVEL OF THE NATURE OF ROCK BETWEEN TSING YI AND THE NORTHERN TIP OF LANTAU.

DR. CHOI SAID ANOTHER HYDROGRAPHIC AND GEOPHYSICAL INVESTIGATION IN THE SAME AREA WAS SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLETE AND THE CONTRACTORS WERE EXPECTED TO SUBMIT THEIR REPORT TO THE CONSULTANTS SHORTLY.

THE INVESTIGATION COMPRISES A COMPREHENSIVE CURRENT, HYDROGRAPHIC AND MARINE GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY AND A LIMITED LAND SEISMIC SURVEY.

+THE RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATIONS WILL PROVIDE THE CONSULTANTS WITH INFORMATION TO ENABLE OTHER SPECIALIST STUDIES SUCH AS MATHEMATICAL HYDRAULIC MODEL STUDIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN,+ HE SAID.

+THESE STUDIES AND OTHER LINES OF RESEARCH WILL ENABLE THE CONSULTANTS TO RECOMMEND TO GOVERNMENT WHETHER THE MAIN CROSSING BETWEEN TSING YI AND MA WAN SHOULD BE A BRIDGE, AN IMMersed TUBE TUNNEL OR A BORED TUNNEL.+

DR. CHOI SAID THE CONSULTANTS WOULD SUBMIT THEIR FINAL PRELIMINARY REPORT TO THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT IN MARCH.

THIS REPORT WOULD TAKE DUE CONSIDERATION OF THE FINDINGS OF THESE INVESTIGATIONS AS WELL AS THE RESULTS OF A NUMBER OF OTHER INVESTIGATIONS AND STUDIES BEING CARRIED OUT IN HONG KONG AND THE UNITED KINGDOM.

THE REPORT WILL INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE ALIGNMENT OF THE LANTAU FIXED CROSSING, INCLUDING TYPES OF CROSSING IN ADDITION TO DETAILS OF FULL COSTS AND CONSTRUCTION PHASING.

+AFTER RECEIPT OF THE REPORT AND DUE CONSIDERATION BY THE RELEVANT GOVERNMENT BODIES, A DECISION WILL BE MADE ON WHETHER OR NOT TO PROCEED WITH THE DETAILED DESIGN OF THE PROJECT,+ DR. CHOI SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1979

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PLANS LAUNCHED TO IMPROVE LANTAU TRANSPORT FACILITIES

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS LAUNCHED A PROGRAMME OF ROAD IMPROVEMENT AND PROVISION OF NEW TRANSPORT FACILITIES TO ALLEVIATE THE INADEQUACY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT ON LANTAU DURING WEEKENDS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE HON. DAVID AKERS-JONES TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

A \$35 MILLION FIVE-YEAR ROAD IMPROVEMENT SCHEME STARTED IN 1976 TO PROVIDE A TWO-LANE HIGHWAY FROM MUI WO TO TAI O AND A NEW FERRY PIER AND BUS CONCOURSE, COSTING ABOUT \$12.5 MILLION WERE CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION, AND WOULD BE IN OPERATION AT THE END OF THIS YEAR, HE SAID.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. CHARLES YEUNG, MR. AKERS-JONES SAID PUBLIC TRANSPORT ON LANTAU DURING WEEKENDS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS WAS NEITHER ADEQUATE FOR VILLAGERS NOR FOR PICNICKERS.

+THIS IS BECAUSE SOME 15,000 PICNICKERS GO TO LANTAU BY FERRY ON A NORMAL SUNDAY AND CREATE A DEMAND FOR TRANSPORT THAT CANNOT BE MET BY A WEEKDAY BUS FLEET WHICH SERVES A RESIDENT POPULATION OF APPROXIMATELY 15,000,+ HE SAID.

MR. AKERS-JONES ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE EXISTING SOUTH LANTAU ROAD -- THE ONLY TRANSPORT CORRIDOR ON THE ISLAND -- COULD ONLY CARRY A LIMITED NUMBER OF VEHICLES, WHICH ALSO RESTRICTED BUS SERVICES.

TO ALLEVIATE THE SITUATION, MR. AKERS-JONES SAID, THE GOVERNMENT IN 1976 HAD STARTED WORK TO IMPROVE THE ROAD TO MAKE POSSIBLE THE OPERATION OF MORE BUSES AND THE INTRODUCTION OF DOUBLE DECKERS.

+THE BUS COMPANY HOPES TO OPERATE ITS FIRST DOUBLE-DECKERS NEXT YEAR, AND I HOPE THAT THE STANDARD OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES ON THE ISLAND WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED THEREAFTER,+ HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1979

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NEW TERRITORIES DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY EXPLAINED

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BROAD PLANNING STRATEGY IN THE NEW TERRITORIES IS GENERALLY LAID DOWN IN OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLANS OR PLANNING GUIDES, THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE HON. DAVID AKERS-JONES SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

USING THESE AS GUIDES, AREAS WERE DETERMINED BY PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DISTRICT OFFICER AS SUITABLE FOR MINOR LAYOUTS FOR RESIDENTIAL OR OTHER USES, HE SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. CHARLES YEUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

+DETAILED LAYOUT PLANS ARE THEN PREPARED BY THE TOWN PLANNING OFFICE SHOWING INDIVIDUAL SITES, ROAD SYSTEMS AND OTHER FEATURES,+ HE SAID.

MR. AKERS-JONES ADDED THAT THESE PLANS WERE CIRCULATED TO GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS FOR COMMENTS, AND DISCUSSED BETWEEN THE DISTRICT OFFICERS AND THE RURAL COMMITTEES AND DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARDS BEFORE APPROVAL WAS GIVEN.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1979

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INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979

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A BILL WAS INTRODUCED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PROPOSING TO EXEMPT FROM PROPERTY TAX ANY PROPERTY OWNED AND OCCUPIED BY CLUBS, TRADE ASSOCIATIONS AND CLANS, FAMILIES OR T'ONGS.

SPEAKING AT THE SECOND READING OF THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, SAID THE EXEMPTION WAS ONE OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THIRD INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE THAT CLUBS OR SIMILAR INSTITUTIONS, NOT DEEMED TO BE CARRYING ON A BUSINESS, SHOULD BE TREATED ON A SIMILAR BASIS AS OWNERS OF PRIVATE RESIDENCES, AND SHOULD BE EXEMPT FROM PROPERTY TAX IN RESPECT OF PREMISES NOT EXPLOITED COMMERCIALY.

ON TRADE OR PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THE VAST MAJORITY OF THEM WERE CHARGEABLE TO PROFITS TAX AND, LIKE THOSE CLUBS WHICH WERE SO CHARGEABLE, THESE ASSOCIATIONS EFFECTIVELY ESCAPED LIABILITY TO PROPERTY TAX.

+EXCEPTIONALLY, HOWEVER, A FEW SUCH ASSOCIATIONS, WHICH DO NOT MEET THE CRITERIA WHICH DEEM A BUSINESS TO BE CARRIED ON, REMAIN FULLY LIABLE TO PROPERTY TAX,+ MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID.

ON PROPERTIES OWNED BY CLANS, FAMILIES OR T'ONGS SUCH AS CHI TONGS (ANCESTRAL HALLS) AND SHUE SHATS (STUDY LIBRARIES), MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THAT TO QUALIFY FOR EXEMPTION, THESE PROPERTIES WOULD NEED TO BE CERTIFIED, BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS OR BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES AS APPROPRIATE, TO BE THE ANCESTRAL PROPERTY OF THE CLAN OR FAMILY OR THE PROPERTY OF THE T'ONG.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THE BILL SOUGHT TO BRING THE PROPOSED EXEMPTIONS INTO EFFECT FROM APRIL 1, 1979, FOR THE YEAR OF ASSESSMENT 1979-80, WHICH MEANT THAT THE CURRENT YEAR 1978-79 WOULD BE THE LAST YEAR FOR WHICH CLUBS OR SIMILAR INSTITUTIONS WOULD BE LIABLE TO PROPERTY TAX, UNLESS THEIR PREMISES WERE EXPLOITED COMMERCIALY.

+THE ANNUAL LOSS OF REVENUE INVOLVED FROM 1979-80 ONWARDS WILL BE OF THE ORDER OF \$2 MILLION,+ HE SAID.

MR. HADDON-CAVE ADDED THAT THE BILL ALSO CONTAINED A QUITE SEPARATE AND MINOR AMENDMENT TO A SECTION OF THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE DESIGNED TO CLARIFY THE APPLICATION OF THAT SECTION TO THE CONCEPT OF NET ASSESSABLE VALUES FOR PROPERTY TAX PURPOSES.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1979

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PARTITION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978
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THE PARTITION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978 WAS PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AFTER BEING AMENDED.

AT THE DEBATE BEFORE IT WAS PASSED, THE HON. PETER C. WONG SAID HE WAS PLEASED TO LEARN THE GOVERNMENT HAD DROPPED ONE OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS WHICH WOULD ENABLE COURT PROCEEDING TO BE INSTITUTED IN RESPECT OF A PROPERTY WITHOUT THE CONCURRENCE OF THE MORTGAGEE.

MR. WONG SAID HE SUGGESTED THIS BECAUSE A SECTION OF THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE DEFINING THE PARTIES WHO MAY INSTITUTE PROCEEDINGS WAS QUITE ADEQUATE.

IN REPLY THE SOLICITOR GENERAL, THE HON. GARTH THORNTON SAID HE HAD THE BENEFIT OF CONSULTATION WITH MR. WONG AND PROPOSED TO MOVE AN AMENDMENT TO GIVE EFFECT TO HIS SUGGESTION.

MR. THORNTON SAID THE SECTION WILL REMAIN IN THE STATUE BOOK AS AN APPLICATION FOR PARTITION +MAY BE MADE BY ANY 'PERSON INTERESTED' IN THE PROPERTY.+

AND IN CASE OF A DISPUTE IT WOULD BE FOR THE COURTS TO DETERMINE WHO WOULD BE A +PERSON INTERESTED+ FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE SECTION.

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SIX BILLS PASSED
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SIX BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY WERE THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979, THE SHIPPING AND PORT CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979, THE IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979, THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979, THE ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO. 4) BILL 1978 AND THE PARTITION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978.

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BUS SERVICES ON HK ISLAND
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THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT SATISFIED WITH THE EXISTING BUS SERVICES PROVIDED FOR CHAI WAN, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, MR. JONES SAID THE CHINA MOTOR BUS COMPANY WAS NOT ALWAYS PROVIDING SUFFICIENT BUSES TO MEET THE OFFICIAL SCHEDULES AGREED WITH THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT.

AS A RESULT, HE NOTED, PASSENGERS HAD TO WAIT LONGER AT BUS STOPS AND TRAVEL IN MORE CROWDED CONDITIONS.

THE ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY POINTED OUT THE GOVERNMENT HAD BROUGHT THESE CIRCUMSTANCES TO THE ATTENTION OF THE BUS COMPANY, WHO HAD SINCE MADE SOME IMPROVEMENTS.

+FUNDAMENTALLY, HOWEVER,+ HE STRESSED, +MORE FREQUENT SERVICES CAN BE PROVIDED ONLY BY ADDING TO THE TOTAL FLEET OF BUSES.+

LAST DECEMBER THE BUS COMPANY HAD DECIDED TO ORDER ADDITIONAL BUSES, MR. JONES SAID.

WHEN THESE NEW HIGH-CAPACITY VEHICLES WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE SERVICE, THERE SHOULD BE A GRADUAL IMPROVEMENT IN BUS SERVICES GENERALLY ON HONG KONG ISLAND, INCLUDING SERVICES TO CHAI WAN.

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GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL TO CONSIDER
PROPOSALS ON HOUSING OF CIVIL SERVANTS
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THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON. MARTIN ROWLANDS SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BARRING UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES, IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO PUT PROPOSALS ON HOUSING OF CIVIL SERVANTS TO THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL FOR BROAD AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. ROWLANDS SAID STAFF ASSOCIATIONS WOULD BE CONSULTED AFTER THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL AGREED TO THESE PROPOSALS.

BUT HE WARNED THAT THE INITIAL FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF ANY SCHEME COULD BE COSTLY AND TIMING OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION WOULD NEED TO HAVE REGARD TO THE ECONOMIC AND BUDGETARY SITUATION AT THE TIME.

HOWEVER, HE ASSURED THAT EVERYTHING POSSIBLE WAS BEING DONE TO BRING ABOUT AN EARLY CONCLUSION TO +THIS IMPORTANT BUT COMPLEX ISSUE+.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1979

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NO NECESSITY TO CONTROL GOLD AND SILVER MARKET

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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT SO FAR CONSIDERED IT NECESSARY TO EXERCISE CONTROL OVER THE CHINESE GOLD AND SILVER EXCHANGE SOCIETY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. PETER C. WONG, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID: +THE CHINESE GOLD AND SILVER EXCHANGE SOCIETY HAS A LONG HISTORY OF WELL CONDUCTED OPERATIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT SO FAR CONSIDERED IT NECESSARY TO EXERCISE CONTROL OVER IT.+

HE ADDED: +I AM, HOWEVER, A LITTLE UNEASY ABOUT THE EFFECT WHICH GOLD TRANSACTIONS MAY HAVE ON THE EXCHANGE VALUE OF THE HONG KONG DOLLAR FROM TIME TO TIME AND HAVE THIS ASPECT CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION.+

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HK YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA TO PERFORM AT OCEAN PARK

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THE MUSIC ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE AND OCEAN PARK WILL JOINTLY PRESENT A CONCERT BY THE HONG KONG YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AT 2.45 P.M. ON SATURDAY AT THE OCEAN THEATRE, OCEAN PARK.

THE ORCHESTRA, FORMED IN JULY 1978, HAS ALREADY GIVEN THREE CONCERTS AT THE CITY HALL AND THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY HALL LAST YEAR.

IT ALSO PERFORMED WITH THE VISITING AVON SCHOOLS ORCHESTRA LAST AUGUST.

THE ORCHESTRA WILL VISIT THE UNITED KINGDOM AND TAKE PART AT THE 1979 INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF YOUTH ORCHESTRAS IN AUGUST.

THE PROGRAMME ON SATURDAY INCLUDES BEETHOVEN'S EGMONT OVERTURE, CARMEN SUITE BY BIZET, RADESKY MARCH BY STRAUSS AND OTHER WELL-KNOWN CHINESE WORKS.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1979

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WATER CUT
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WATER SUPPLY TO A NUMBER OF PREMISES IN TSZ WAN SHAN WILL BE TURNED OFF FOR SIX HOURS FROM MIDNIGHT TO 6 A.M. ON FRIDAY FOR NIGHT LEAKAGE TEST.

THE AFFECTED AREA IS BOUNDED BY TSZ WAN SHAN ROAD, HONG WAH STREET, YUK WAH STREET, PO FUNG LANE, PO KWONG VILLAGE ROAD AND PO MING LANE AND TSZ WAN SHAN ESTATE BLOCKS 57-60.

ON THE SAME NIGHT, SUPPLY TO A NUMBER OF HOUSES IN WAN CHAI WILL ALSO BE CUT FOR SEVEN HOURS FROM 11 P.M. TO 6 A.M. THE FOLLOWING DAY (SATURDAY) TO FACILITATE LEAKAGE TEST.

THE HOUSES AFFECTED ARE BOUNDED BY WAN CHAI ROAD, SOUTH SIDE OF JOHNSTON ROAD, LEE TUNG STREET, NORTH SIDE OF QUEEN'S ROAD EAST, INCLUDING SPRING GARDEN LANE, TAI YUEN STREET, STONE NULLAH LANE, TAI WO STREET AND CROSS STREET.

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENT
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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ANNOUNCED THAT FROM 10 A.M. ON SATURDAY THE SECTION OF WAH HON STREET IN KWUN TONG FROM THE EASTERN JUNCTION OF NGAN YUET LANE AND WAN HON STREET TO SHUI WO STREET WILL BE ROUTED TWO-WAY FOR VEHICULAR TRAFFIC TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE TELEPHONE TECHNICAL TRAINING SCHOOL.

TRAFFIC SIGNS WILL BE SET UP TO GUIDE MOTORISTS.

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