



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 1976

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AG TO MOVE AMENDMENTS TO ICAC BILL

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY, SAID TODAY HE WOULD PROPOSE AMENDMENTS TO THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976 TO +PROVIDE THE COMMISSION WITH THE NECESSARY AUTHORITY TO ENSURE ITS CONTINUED EFFECTIVE INDEPENDENT OPERATION.+

HE WAS REPLYING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS WHO HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT POTENTIAL ABUSE OF POWER DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL.

REFERRING TO THE POWER TO SEARCH PREMISES IN WHICH A PERSON IS ARRESTED, MR. HOBLEY ASSURED THE UNOFFICIALS THAT ICAC OFFICERS WOULD ACT UNDER A SEARCH WARRANT WHEREVER PRACTICABLE.

HE CONFIRMED THAT A SEARCH OF PREMISES WITH WHICH AN ARRESTED PERSON WAS NOT NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WOULD BE CONDUCTED IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE OCCUPIER, UNLESS THE OFFICERS HAD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE OCCUPIER MIGHT BE ACTING IN CONCERT WITH THE ARRESTED PERSON.

THE RIGHT TO SEARCH, HE ADDED, WAS LIMITED TO A SEARCH FOR THE PERSON TO BE ARRESTED AND AN AMENDMENT WOULD BE MOVED AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE TO CONFIRM THE INTENTION THAT THE SEARCH WAS ALSO TO BE LIMITED TO EVIDENCE OF OFFENCES FOR WHICH ICAC OFFICERS HAD POWER TO ARREST.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STRESSED THAT AN ARREST IN PREMISES WITH WHICH A PERSON WAS NOT NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WOULD BE BY CHANCE, AND NOT DESIGN, UNLESS THE PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES LEFT NO ALTERNATIVE, AS COULD BE THE CASE WHERE A PERSON WAS DELIBERATELY EVADING ARREST.

MR. HOBLEY SAID THAT AFTER MUCH DELIBERATION WITH UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, HE THOUGHT A WAY HAD BEEN FOUND OF CONFERRING A WIDER POWER OF ARREST ON COMMISSION OFFICERS WHICH WAS +NEITHER UNNECESSARILY WIDE NOR UNACCEPTABLY RESTRICTIVE.+

HE SAID AN AMENDMENT WOULD BE MOVED AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE TO CONFIRM THAT THE COMMISSION WAS NOT A SECOND POLICE FORCE.

+AN AMENDMENT WILL ALSO BE MOVED TO REQUIRE A COMMISSION OFFICER SEEKING ENTRY TO PREMISES FOR THE PURPOSE OF EFFECTING AN ARREST TO STATE HIS PURPOSE,+ HE ADDED.

REFERRING TO ANOTHER POINT ABOUT THE TERMS WHICH MIGHT BE STIPULATED BY ICAC OFFICERS FOLLOWING THE RELEASE ON BAIL OF AN ARRESTED PERSON AND THE ABSENCE OF ANY RESTRICTION ON THE PERIOD FOR WHICH A PERSON MIGHT BE KEPT ON BAIL, MR. HOBLEY SAID THE MATTER WAS UNDER CONSIDERATION.

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EARLIER, DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL, THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN SAID THERE HAD BEEN CONSIDERABLE APPREHENSION IN THE MINDS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT THE BILL WOULD CONFER ON THE COMMISSION THE POWERS OF A SECOND POLICE FORCE IN HONG KONG.

+I HOPE THAT GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE STEPS TO MAKE IT CLEAR BY COMMITTEE STAGE AMENDMENTS THAT THIS IS NOT THE INTENTION,+ HE SAID.

HE REMINDED THE COMMISSIONER OF ICAC THAT CONTINUOUS VIGILANCE AND CAUTION WAS AT ALL TIMES NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT THE POWERS GIVEN UNDER THE AMENDED BILL WOULD NOT BE ABUSED.

ALTHOUGH ONLY 22 CASES OF IMPERSONATION OF ICAC OFFICERS WERE REPORTED SINCE MAY 1974, HE SUGGESTED +WATERTIGHT PROCEDURES+ SHOULD BE DEvised TO REDUCE THE POSSIBILITY OF IMPERSONATION.

THE HON. MRS. JOYCE SYMONS REFERRED TO THE POWER OF SEARCH BY ICAC OFFICERS.

SHE SAID THAT +SINCE THE PREVENTIVE SERVICE HAS POWERS TO ARREST AND SEARCH SMUGGLERS, AND KINDRED FOLK, SURELY THE ICAC MUST ALSO HAVE ADEQUATE POWERS.+

HOWEVER, SHE SAID THAT IF ICAC OFFICERS WERE TO ARREST A SUSPECT IN PREMISES OTHER THAN HIS OWN HOME OR PLACE OF WORK, +THE INCONVENIENCE AND SLIGHT EMBARRASSMENT SO CAUSED TO THE INNOCENT OWNER OR OCCUPIER OF THE PREMISES MUST BE REDUCED TO A MINIMUM.+

MRS. SYMONS HOPED THAT SUCH SEARCHING +WOULD NOT BE MADE LIGHTLY, THROUGH LAZINESS OR LACK OF CONCERN, OR AN UNSAVOURY DESIRE TO SEARCH PROPERTY WITH A WRONG MOTIVE.+

ANOTHER UNOFFICIAL WHO SPOKE ON THE BILL WAS THE HON. LO TAK-SHING.

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LAW ON THERAPEUTIC ABORTION TO BE KEPT UNDER REVIEW

THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO REVIEW THE SECTION OF THE OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON ORDINANCE RELATING TO TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY FOR THERAPEUTIC REASONS AND WILL CONSIDER CAREFULLY ANY REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY, WHEN HE MOVED THE SECOND READING OF THE OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976, WHICH IS AIMED AT MAKING THE SECTION A PERMANENT PART OF THE LAW.

THE SECTION IN QUESTION PRESCRIBES THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH DOCTORS MAY PERFORM A THERAPEUTIC ABORTION IN THE INTEREST OF A PATIENT.

+IT HAS BEEN ON THE STATUTE BOOK IN TEMPORARY FORM FOR ALMOST FOUR YEARS,+ MR. HOBLEY SAID. +THIS HAS PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR AN ASSESSMENT OF ITS EFFECT WHICH THE COUNCIL THOUGHT NECESSARY WHEN PASSING THE LEGISLATION IN 1972. THE POSSIBILITY OF ABUSE WAS THEN A CAUSE OF SOME CONCERN.+

HE SAID THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE THAT THE LAW HAD BEEN ABUSED AND IT WAS NOW CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE TO MAKE IT PART OF THE PERMANENT LAW.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO REVIEW THE PROVISIONS OF THE SECTION.

+SOME REPRESENTATIONS ADVOCATING MODIFICATIONS HAVE ALREADY BEEN RECEIVED AND THESE, AND ANY FURTHER REPRESENTATIONS, WILL NATURALLY BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED.+ MR. HOBLEY SAID.

SPEAKING AGAINST THE BILL, DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG, SAID THAT THIS SECTION OF THE ORDINANCE SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN ENACTED IN THE FIRST PLACE BECAUSE +IT IS LEGALLY AMBIGUOUS, MEDICALLY UNSOUND, ETHICALLY QUESTIONABLE AND SOCIALLY UNWISE.+

HE RECALLED THAT WHEN THE SECTION WAS FIRST ADDED TO THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE IN 1972, THE THEN ATTORNEY GENERAL ASSURED THE COUNCIL THAT ITS PURPOSE WAS SIMPLY TO PROTECT MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS FROM LEGAL ACTION WHERE ABORTION WAS PERFORMED TO SAVE THE LIFE OF THE MOTHER OR TO PREVENT HER FROM BEING REDUCED TO A PHYSICAL OR MENTAL WRECK.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, THE LEGISLATION AS ENACTED SEEMED TO HAVE GONE FURTHER THAN WAS INTENDED AND DID IN FACT LEGALISE ABORTION GENERALLY.

DR. FANG URGED THE COUNCIL TO CONSIDER MOST SERIOUSLY THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE BILL.

+IF I CANNOT PERSUADE MEMBERS TO ABANDON THIS PIECE OF LEGISLATION ALTOGETHER, LET US AT THE VERY LEAST EXTEND THE PRESENT TRIAL PERIOD OF SECTION 47A SO THAT WE CAN REVIEW THE WHOLE QUESTION OF ABORTION MORE CAREFULLY,+ HE SAID.

SHOULD THE COUNCIL DECIDE TO PROCEED WITH THE BILL, DR. FANG SAID HE WOULD VOTE AGAINST IT.

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UNOFFICIALS SUPPORT COUNTRY PARKS BILL

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UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY SUPPORTED THE COUNTRY PARKS BILL WHICH AFFORDS COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION TO HONG KONG'S COUNTRYSIDE AND ENABLES ITS DEVELOPMENT FOR OPEN AIR RECREATION.

WELCOMING THE LEGISLATION, THE HON. OSWALD CHEUNG SAID THE UNOFFICIALS HAD MADE THREE MAIN PROPOSALS.

FIRSTLY, HE SAID THE COUNTRY PARKS BOARD SHOULD BE AUTHORISED, AND REQUIRED, TO CONSIDER THE POLICY AND PROGRAMMES PREPARED BY THE AUTHORITY IN RESPECT OF COUNTRY PARKS AND SPECIAL AREAS.

SECONDLY, THE UNOFFICIALS THOUGHT IT DESIRABLE THAT WHERE A DRAFT MAP HAD BEEN PREPARED BY THE COUNTRY PARKS AUTHORITY, SUCH PUBLICITY SHOULD BE GIVEN TO IT AS WAS GIVEN TO AN OUTLINE ZONING PLAN PREPARED BY THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD.

HE SAID THE PROPOSAL CONTAINED IN THE BILL TO MAKE AVAILABLE A DRAFT MAP FOR INSPECTION IN GOVERNMENT OFFICES WAS INADEQUATE, UNLESS THE NOTICE, WHICH THE BILL REQUIRES TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE GAZETTE, SHOULD ALSO BE PUBLISHED IN AN ENGLISH NEWSPAPER AND TWO CHINESE DAILY NEWSPAPERS. +IT IS NOTORIOUS THAT HARDLY ANYONE OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT READS THE GAZETTE.+

THIRDLY, PEOPLE WHOSE LEASED LAND WAS AFFECTED BY COUNTRY PARK DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE OBJECTIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS TO THE BOARD, OR APPEAL AGAINST ITS DECISIONS.

THESE PROCEDURES, MR. CHEUNG ADDED, SHOULD BE SIMILAR TO THOSE UNDER THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE.

IN CONCLUSION, MR. CHEUNG ACKNOWLEDGED THE STEPS TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO PRESERVE THE COUNTRYSIDE AND TO IMPROVE ITS AMENITIES.

+MEMBERS MAY BE GRATIFIED TO HEAR THAT BENCHES AND TABLES IN PICNIC AREAS HAVE BEEN MADE BY PRISONERS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PRISONS, AND VERY STURDY AND HANDSOME THEY ARE,+ HE ADDED.

AMENDMENTS TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE UNOFFICIALS' PROPOSALS WERE MADE AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE.

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ALSO SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL WAS THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN WHO SAID THAT THE SPECIAL AREAS WOULD IN TIME BE MOST VALUABLE TO NATURE EDUCATION CLASSES ORGANISED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT, THE MUSEUM OF HISTORY, INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS, AND SPECIALIST VOLUNTARY SOCIETIES.

HE HOPED THAT THE FINANCE BRANCH WOULD RESPOND WITH ENTHUSIASM TO REQUESTS FOR PROVISION FOR A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT OF THE NECESSARY RESOURCES, INCLUDING QUALIFIED STAFF AND SUFFICIENT FUNDS.

HE SUGGESTED A NUMBER OF PROJECTS WHICH THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT COULD UNDERTAKE, INCLUDING DEER PARKS, +WHERE THE DIFFERENT SPECIES OF LOCAL DEER WHICH HAVE BEEN FRIGHTENED AWAY BY URBAN ENCROACHMENT CAN BE COAXED OUT ONCE AGAIN INTO THE OPEN AND BE SEEN AT CLOSE QUARTERS BY THE PUBLIC.+

AS TO THE EGRET SANCTUARY NEAR SHA TAU KOK, +PERHAPS VIEWING STANDS AT RESPECTABLE DISTANCE COULD BE ESTABLISHED FOR THE PUBLIC TO WATCH AND LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT THESE ANNUAL VISITORS TO OUR SHORES,+ HE SAID.

HE ALSO SUGGESTED THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING A YOUTH LODGE OR HOSTEL IN ONE OR MORE OF THE LARGER COUNTRY PARKS, AND IMAGINATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPECIAL AREAS, +BY WAY OF PLANNED SELECTION OF THEIR FLORISTIC CONTENT AND THEIR CAPACITY FOR WILD BIRDS AND ANIMALS.+

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APPRENTICESHIP REGULATIONS ADOPTED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED REGULATIONS MADE BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR TO ENSURE THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE APPRENTICESHIP ORDINANCE 1976.

IN MOVING THE MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE APPRENTICESHIP REGULATIONS 1976, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, MR. IAN PRICE, SAID THEY PROVIDED FOR MATTERS WHICH NEEDED TO BE PRESCRIBED TO ACHIEVE THE PURPOSES OF THE ORDINANCE.

HE SAID: +IN RESPECT OF APPRENTICESHIP CONTRACTS, THEY PROVIDE FOR THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS WHICH MUST BE SET OUT IN THE CONTRACTS.+

INCLUDED IN THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS MUST BE DETAILS OF APPRENTICESHIP AND PROBATION PERIODS= WAGES= SICK ALLOWANCE, SICK LEAVE AND PAID HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT= AND THE GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION OF APPRENTICESHIP OR TERMINATION OF A CONTRACT OF APPRENTICESHIP.

THE REGULATIONS PROVIDE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, MAXIMUM HOURS OF EMPLOYMENT INCLUDING OVERTIME, THE KEEPING OF A REGISTER OF APPRENTICESHIP CONTRACTS BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR AND THE KEEPING OF RECORDS BY EMPLOYERS IN RESPECT OF THEIR APPRENTICES.

MR. PRICE SAID THAT THE REGULATIONS HAD THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE HONG KONG TRAINING COUNCIL AND ITS COMMITTEE ON APPRENTICESHIP.

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT, DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG DESCRIBED THE APPRENTICESHIP REGULATIONS AS +GENERALLY SPEAKING, REASONABLE AND FAIR.+

HE DREW ATTENTION HOWEVER TO TWO +IMPORTANT BUT NOT NECESSARILY URGENT+ POINTS.

THE FIRST CONCERNS THE SEX OF APPRENTICES. HE BELIEVED THE REGULATIONS WERE DRAFTED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT ALL APPRENTICES WERE MALE.

DR. CHUNG'S SECOND POINT RELATES TO A REGULATION STIPULATING THAT THE PERIOD OF APPRENTICESHIP IN A DESIGNATED TRADE SHOULD NOT BE LESS THAN THREE YEARS.

HE NOTED THAT MANY TRADES DID NOT NEED A MINIMUM PERIOD OF THREE YEARS FOR TRAINING, AND ALTHOUGH THERE WAS PROVISION IN THE REGULATIONS FOR THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR TO REDUCE THE PERIOD OF APPRENTICESHIP IN ANY CASE OR CLASS OF CASES, HE DOUBTED WHETHER IT WAS FOR THE PURPOSE HE MENTIONED.

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HE DID NOT THINK THE MINIMUM PERIOD OF APPRENTICESHIP SHOULD BE DECIDED BY THE COMMISSIONER ALONE.

WHEN THE HONG KONG TRAINING COUNCIL RECOMMENDS THAT A PARTICULAR TRADE SHOULD BE DESIGNATED, +THE TRAINING COUNCIL ITSELF SHOULD ALSO RECOMMEND THE MINIMUM PERIOD OF APPRENTICESHIP FOR THAT PARTICULAR TRADE,+ DR. CHUNG SAID.

IN REPLY, MR. PRICE SAID THE REGULATIONS AND INDEED THE APPRENTICESHIP ORDINANCE ITSELF APPLIED EQUALLY TO MALE AND FEMALE APPRENTICES.

REFERRING TO DR. CHUNG'S SECOND POINT, HE SAID THAT FROM ALL THE JOB STANDARDS PREPARED BY THE TEN TRAINING BOARDS, HE WAS AWARE OF NO SKILLED CRAFT LIKELY TO BE A DESIGNATED TRADE WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE ORDINANCE AND WHICH REQUIRED LESS THAN A MINIMUM OF THREE YEARS APPRENTICESHIP.

+SHOULD ANY PROBLEMS ARISE LATER I SHALL CERTAINLY RECONSIDER THE MATTER,+ MR. PRICE SAID.

HE GAVE AN ASSURANCE THAT HE HAD +NO INTENTION OF TAKING ANY IMPORTANT DECISION REGARDING APPRENTICESHIP WITHOUT THE ADVICE OF THE HONG KONG TRAINING COUNCIL.+

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FULL SUPPORT TO KWONG WAH OVER STAFF
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THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, DR. THE HON. GERALD CHOA, TODAY GAVE AN ASSURANCE THAT HIS DEPARTMENT WOULD +GIVE EVERY SUPPORT TO THE KWONG WAH HOSPITAL+ TO TIDE OVER ITS CURRENT DOCTOR SHORTAGE PROBLEM.

DR. CHOA WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD STEP IN TO HELP THE HOSPITAL MAINTAIN ADEQUATE SERVICES FOLLOWING THE RECENT RESIGNATION OF A NUMBER OF DOCTORS.

DR. CHOA SAID HIS DEPARTMENT WAS INFORMED LAST WEEK THAT 10 MEDICAL OFFICERS IN THE MEDICAL UNIT OF THE KWONG WAH HOSPITAL HAD RESIGNED.

SINCE IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE REMAINING STAFF TO DEAL WITH THE TOTAL NUMBER OF 420 BEDS IN THE UNIT, IT WAS DECIDED THAT 120 BEDS SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR CASES TRANSFERRED FROM MEDICAL UNITS OF THE QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL, WHICH WOULD REMAIN RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR TREATMENT AND CARE.

DR. CHOA STRESSED THAT THIS WOULD +MAINTAIN MAXIMUM UTILISATION OF THE BEDS+ IN THE MEDICAL UNIT OF KWONG WAH.

IN ADDITION, MEDICAL EMERGENCY CASES WERE DIVERTED TO QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL BETWEEN 9 A.M. AND 10 P.M. BECAUSE THE DEPLETED MEDICAL STAFF IN THE KWONG WAH HOSPITAL COULD NOT DEAL WITH A 24-HOUR SERVICE. THESE ARRANGEMENTS TOOK EFFECT FROM MARCH 2.

TO COPE WITH THE EXTRA LOAD ON QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL, THE MEDICAL UNITS HAD BEEN AUGMENTED BY THREE MEDICAL OFFICERS, HE SAID.

+ADEQUATE SERVICES HAVE BEEN MAINTAINED IN THE MEDICAL UNIT OF THE KWONG WAH HOSPITAL IN THE WAY I HAVE DESCRIBED AND OTHER UNITS HAVE NOT BEEN AFFECTED.

+IT IS HOPED THAT THE SITUATION IN THE KWONG WAH HOSPITAL WILL RETURN TO NORMAL SOON WHEN THE VACANCIES ARE FILLED BY RECRUITMENT,+ DR. CHOA SAID.

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FIRE RISKS IN MUSIC PARLOURS

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STATISTICS SUGGEST THAT THE USE OF PREMISES AS A MUSIC PARLOUR DOES NOT REPRESENT A GREATER FIRE RISK THAN ITS USE FOR OTHER PURPOSES, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES, SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. ALEX WU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

+ACCORDING TO FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT STATISTICS, THERE HAVE ONLY BEEN 12 FIRES REPORTED IN MUSIC PARLOURS IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS, OUT OF A TOTAL OF 29,600 FIRES REPORTED IN DOMESTIC BUILDINGS, IN WHICH MUSIC PARLOURS ARE GENERALLY ESTABLISHED,+ HE SAID.

APART FROM THE RECENT FIRE IN MONG KOK IN WHICH FIVE DIED AND 20 OTHERS WERE INJURED, THE TOTAL CASUALTIES IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS IN MUSIC PARLOURS WAS NINE INJURIES.

MR. DAVIES SAID: +THERE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE A NEED FOR SPECIAL EFFORTS BY THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT, IN ADDITION TO ITS NORMAL COVERAGE OF MULTI-STOREY BUILDINGS, WHERE MOST MUSIC PARLOURS ARE TO BE FOUND.

+OF COURSE, THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES WILL INVESTIGATE ANY COMPLAINT THAT A FIRE RISK EXISTS IN ANY PREMISES AND WILL TAKE ACTION TO ABATE IT, IF NECESSARY.+

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A COURSE IN PHARMACY FOR H.K.

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THE UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNIC GRANTS COMMITTEE WILL BE ASKED TO CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF INTRODUCING A COURSE IN PHARMACY AT AN EARLY DATE, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON. LI FOOK-KOW, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR. LI WAS ANSWERING A QUESTION BY THE HON. ROGER LOBO ON WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ESTABLISH A RECOGNISED PHARMACY COURSE WHICH COULD BE TAKEN LOCALLY.

MR. LI SAID HE BELIEVED THAT +IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO HAVE A COURSE IN PHARMACY LOCALLY, IN ORDER TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY, PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE POISONS REGULATIONS.+

ACCORDINGLY, HE SAID HE WOULD ASK THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER WHETHER SUCH A COURSE COULD BE INTRODUCED AT AN EARLY DATE IN VIEW OF OTHER PRIORITIES AND WHETHER IT SHOULD BE PROVIDED IN ONE OF THE UNIVERSITIES OR THE POLYTECHNIC.

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ETV PROGRAMMES CONTINUALLY IMPROVED

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EDUCATION TELEVISION PROGRAMMES ARE BEING CONTINUALLY IMPROVED IN THE LIGHT OF FEEDBACK FROM SCHOOLS AND THEIR WIDE COVERAGE IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE CO-OPERATION OF THE COMMERCIAL TV STATIONS, THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE HON. KENNETH TOPLEY, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO QUESTIONS BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, WHO ASKED WHAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS DOING TO MAKE EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION MORE INTERESTING AND TO ENCOURAGE AND FOLLOW A CO-ORDINATED APPROACH TOGETHER WITH THE TV STATIONS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SCHOOL CHILDREN VIEWERS.

MR. TOPLEY SAID HE HAD BEEN ASSURED THAT ETV WAS STILL BEING ENTHUSIASTICALLY RECEIVED. HE EMPHATICALLY DENIED THAT IT WAS DULL.

+HOWEVER, IF THE QUESTION MEANS THAT A VERY GOOD ETV SERVICE CAN BE IMPROVED, THEN I DO AGREE,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID EACH YEAR ABOUT 30 PER CENT OF THE PROGRAMMES WERE RE-MADE, AND THIS YEAR THERE WAS A COMPLETE OVERHAUL OF ALL THE FIRST-YEAR PROGRAMMES.

HE DISCLOSED THAT ETV, WHICH HAS BEEN OPERATING SINCE 1971, NOW COVERED MORE THAN 400,000 CHILDREN IN PRIMARY THREE TO SIX. THE COMMERCIAL STATIONS EACH PROVIDE FOUR HOURS AIR-TIME DAILY DURING A 32-WEEK BROADCAST YEAR.

HE ADDED THAT FROM TIME TO TIME HE WAS APPROACHED BY THE COMMERCIAL COMPANIES FOR VIEWS ON EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES LIKE +SESAME STREET+, AND THE +BIG BLUE MARBLE+. +THESE VIEWS I AM HAPPY TO GIVE,+ HE SAID.

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DRAFT BILL ON NO-FAULT INSURANCE SCHEME

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LEGISLATION FOR THE PROPOSED NO-FAULT SCHEME FOR COMPENSATING VICTIMS OF TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS IS UNDER PREPARATION AND IS EXPECTED TO BE PLACED BEFORE THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL SHORTLY.

THIS WAS DISCLOSED BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. JAMES ROBSON, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. J.H. BREMRIDGE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR. ROBSON SAID THE COST OF THE SCHEME HAD BEEN RE-ASSESSED AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS ANALYSED.

THE NEW LEGISLATION WILL BE KNOWN AS THE TRAFFIC ACCIDENT VICTIMS (COMPENSATION FUND) BILL.

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MINOR TRAFFIC OFFENCES INVOLVING CONSULAR OFFICERS

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THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY, TODAY APOLOGISED ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT TO THE CONSULAR CORPS IN HONG KONG OVER CERTAIN INACCURACIES IN THE NUMBER OF ALLEGED MINOR TRAFFIC OFFENCES INVOLVING CONSULAR OFFICERS AND OFFICERS OF COMMISSIONS.

IN A STATEMENT TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. HOBLEY RECALLED HE ANSWERED A QUESTION LAST MONTH ABOUT THE NUMBER OF CASES IN WHICH PROCEEDINGS WERE NOT BROUGHT AGAINST THESE OFFICERS FOR THE ALLEGED OFFENCES.

PRIOR TO ANSWERING THAT QUESTION, HE TABLED A DETAILED LIST OF THE CASES AND THOSE INVOLVED.

+UNFORTUNATELY THE LIST WAS SERIOUSLY INACCURATE IN A NUMBER OF CASES AND WAS INACCURATE IN OTHERS.

+ALTHOUGH THE COLONIAL SECRETARY HAD ALREADY WRITTEN TO THE DOYEN OF THE CONSULAR CORPS EXPRESSING THE GOVERNMENT'S DEEP REGRET, IT IS RIGHT THAT I SHOULD BRING THE MATTER BEFORE THE COUNCIL AGAIN AND AT THE SAME TIME SAY PUBLICLY HOW MUCH THE GOVERNMENT REGRETS THE ANNOYANCE AND EMBARRASSMENT WHICH THE INACCURATE INFORMATION HAS NATURALLY CAUSED MEMBERS OF THE CORPS,+ HE SAID.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ADDED THAT A CORRECT LIST HAD BEEN LAID ON THE TABLE TODAY AND ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE TO ENSURE ITS WIDE DISTRIBUTION.

HE EXPLAINED THAT +THE ERROR AROSE FROM A COMBINATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES AND STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT IT WILL NOT BE REPEATED.+

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OVER 120 FIREMEN RECOGNISED FOR LONG SERVICE
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THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR. L.M. DAVIES, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PRESENTED COLONIAL FIRE BRIGADES LONG SERVICE MEDALS AND CLASPS TO OVER 120 SERVING AND RETIRED MEMBERS OF THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

SPEAKING AT THE PRESENTATION CEREMONY WHICH WAS HELD AT THE HARBOUR ROAD FIRE STATION, MR. DAVIES NOTED THAT A DAY NEVER WENT BY WITHOUT MANY CALLS FOR HELP TO THE FIRE SERVICES.

HE TOLD THE FIREMEN : +YOU HAVE TO RESPOND TO THESE IMMEDIATELY AND BE READY TO MEET ALL SORTS OF SITUATIONS, ALMOST ALL OF WHICH ARE UNNERVING AND MANY OF THEM DANGEROUS. YOU ARE JUDGED BY THE PUBLIC FOR THE SPEED WITH WHICH YOU ARRIVE ON THE SCENE, THE EFFICIENCY WITH WHICH YOU COPE WITH ALL MANNER OF ACCIDENTS AND SITUATIONS, THE COMPASSION WHICH YOU SHOW TO THE VICTIMS AND FOR THE WAY IN WHICH EACH OF YOU REACTS TO THE DEMANDS MADE ON YOU.+

+TOO OFTEN BY OUR OWN CARELESSNESS WE PUT YOU AT RISK AND IT IS A HUMBLING EXPERIENCE TO SEE YOU ON PARADE, SO SMARTLY TURNED OUT, SO WELL DISCIPLINED AND OBVIOUSLY SO READY TO DO YOUR DUTY,+ HE ADDED.

HE PAID TRIBUTE TO THE RECIPIENTS FOR THEIR DEVOTED AND LOYAL SERVICE.

AT TODAY'S PRESENTATION, 77 OF THE MEN WERE AWARDED LONG SERVICE MEDALS IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR 18 YEARS OF SERVICE WHILE THE OTHER 48 RECEIVED FIRST CLASPS TO THEIR MEDALS IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR 25 YEARS OF SERVICE.

THE RECIPIENTS INCLUDED SIX DIVISIONAL OFFICERS, FIVE ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL OFFICERS, 35 PRINCIPAL FIREMEN, 57 SENIOR FIREMEN, 16 FIREMEN, A PRINCIPAL AMBULANCEMAN, A SENIOR AMBULANCEMAN AND FOUR AMBULANCEMEN.

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SOCIAL WELFARE SUBVENTION ALLOCATION.

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A SPOKESMAN FOR THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT TODAY POINTED OUT THAT VOLUNTARY WELFARE AGENCIES WERE ALL AWARE OF HOW THE AMOUNTS OF SUBVENTION WERE ARRIVED AT.

HE WAS COMMENTING ON PRESS REPORTS THIS MORNING ABOUT THE LACK OF CRITERIA BY WHICH SUBVENTIONS ARE ALLOCATED TO VOLUNTARY WELFARE AGENCIES.

+IN FACT, THEY HAVE BEEN SHOWN COPIES OF THE PAPERS CONTAINING RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE WHICH DETERMINES THE AMOUNTS TO BE ALLOCATED.+

+IN ABOUT JUNE EACH YEAR,+ THE SPOKESMAN SAID, AGENCIES ARE INVITED TO PUT IN THEIR REQUESTS FOR SUBVENTION FOR THE FOLLOWING FINANCIAL YEAR. AFTER THEY HAVE SUBMITTED THEIR APPLICATIONS, THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE SUGGESTS A WORKING FIGURE AS A TENTATIVE PROVISION FOR SOCIAL WELFARE SUBVENTION.+

THE WORKING FIGURE FOR 1976-77 HAS TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION THE APPROVED SUBVENTION FOR THE CURRENT YEAR, ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS TO COVER SALARY INCREMENTS, INCREASED RENT AND RATES IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES AND THE REDUCTION IN OVERSEAS AID.

+APPLICATIONS FROM AGENCIES, WHEN RECEIVED, ARE THEN PROCESSED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND PRESENTED TO THE SUBVENTION SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, WHICH IN TURN ADVISES THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE ON THE AMOUNT OF SUBVENTION TO BE ALLOCATED,+ THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

IF THE AGENCIES ARE DISSATISFIED WITH THE RECOMMENDATION, THEY MAY SUBMIT WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS TO THE SUBVENTION SUB-COMMITTEE WHICH WILL CAREFULLY CONSIDER THEIR APPEAL.

+IF REQUESTS FOR MORE FUNDS CAN BE JUSTIFIED, ADDITIONAL SUBVENTION WILL BE RECOMMENDED.+

TURNING TO THE SUBVENTION ALLOCATED TO THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES FOR 1976-77, THE SPOKESMAN SAID: +THE PROVISION OF \$52 MILLION ALLOWS ABOUT \$50 MILLION TO COVER THE COST OF MAINTAINING EXISTING SUBVENTED SERVICES, SALARY INCREMENT AND INCREASED RENT AND RATE FOR ACCOMMODATION IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES. IT ALSO MAKES PROVISIONS FOR REDUCTION IN AID FROM OVERSEAS AND FOR EXTRA HELP IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND CONTINGENCIES.

+AN ADDITIONAL \$2 MILLION IS PROVIDED TO COVER NEW SERVICES IN PRIORITY AREAS INCLUDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHILD CARE CENTRES ORDINANCE.

+ON THIS BASIS, THE OVERALL AMOUNT IS ADEQUATE IN MEETING THE IMMEDIATE NEED.+

MAXIMUM LOAN GUARANTEES FOR MTR INCREASED
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY APPROVED A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE COUNCIL'S RESOLUTION OF OCTOBER 23, 1975 DEALING WITH LOAN ARRANGEMENTS TO BE GUARANTEED BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT ON BEHALF OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION.

IN MOVING THE MOTION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, SAID THAT ON MARCH 1, THE METRO LET A FURTHER SEVEN MAJOR INTERNATIONAL CIVIL ENGINEERING CONTRACTS WORTH ALMOST \$2,000 MILLION.

HE EMPHASISED THAT THE TOTAL VALUE OF THE CONTRACTS JUST LET WAS WITHIN THE ESTIMATE ASSUMED LAST AUTUMN FOR THE TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COSTS OF THE MODIFIED INITIAL SYSTEM.

THE AMENDMENTS HE PROPOSED SIMPLY SOUGHT +TO COVER THE RELATED BORROWINGS THAT WILL BE MADE BY THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION IN THE CURRENCIES OF THE COUNTRIES WHOSE COMPANIES HAVE BEEN AWARDED THE CONTRACTS.+

TO THIS END, HE SAID THE MOTION SOUGHT TO INCREASE THE MAXIMUM GUARANTEES IN RESPECT OF THE VALUE OF EXPORT CREDITS TO FINANCE CONTRACTS PLACED IN :-

- * JAPAN FROM 10,000 MILLION YEN TO 34,000 MILLION YEN,
- * IN WEST GERMANY FROM 20.5 MILLION DEUTSCHE MARKS TO 41.5 MILLION DEUTSCHE MARKS,
- * IN SWEDEN FROM 24 MILLION SWEDISH KRONER TO 56 MILLION SWEDISH KRONER, AS WELL AS
- * TO INCREASE THE MAXIMUM SUMS WHICH THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY MAY GUARANTEE UNDER LOANS ARRANGED BY WARDLEY LIMITED, TO FINANCE LOCAL CONTRACTS, FROM HK\$470 MILLION TO HK\$570 MILLION.

HE ADDED THAT NO AMENDMENTS WERE REQUIRED IN RESPECT OF FRANCE AND THE UNITED KINGDOM AS, OF COURSE, THESE WERE LINES OF BUYERS' CREDITS.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID THAT ADDITIONAL GUARANTEES WOULD ALSO BE REQUIRED FOR THE REMAINING SIX LOCAL CIVIL ENGINEERING CONTRACTS STILL REMAINING TO BE LET. +IT IS EXPECTED THAT ALL BUT ONE OF THESE WILL BE LET BY JUNE.+

THE CORPORATION AT THE END OF JUNE, INTENDS TO LET ALL TEN CONTRACTS FOR THE ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERING PART OF THE WORKS.

IN THIS CONNECTION, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID HE INTENDED TO INTRODUCE ON JULY 7 A FURTHER AND FINAL MOTION TO COVER ANY FURTHER MODIFICATIONS TO THE GUARANTEES THAT WOULD BE NECESSITATED BY THESE CONTRACTS.

+IT WILL, OF COURSE, STILL BE NECESSARY TO COME BACK FROM TIME TO TIME FOR GUARANTEES IN RESPECT OF RESIDUAL FINANCE SUCH AS BOND ISSUES,+ HE SAID.

NEW REGULATIONS ON SPRAYING OF
FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS
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NEW REGULATIONS TO CONTROL THE SPRAYING OF FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS IN WORK PLACES WILL COME INTO FORCE ON JULY 1 THIS YEAR.

IN MOVING THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (SPRAYING OF FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS) REGULATIONS 1976 TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, MR. IAN PRICE, SAID THE CONTROLS SET OUT IN THEM WOULD HELP PROVIDE A SAFER WORKING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE WORKERS.

HE SAID THAT THE REGULATIONS COVERED NOT ONLY THE SPRAYING OF PAINT BUT ALSO THE SPRAYING OF OTHER FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS SUCH AS THINNERS, VARNISHES, LACQUERS, SEALING COMPOUNDS AND PETROLEUM BASED ADHESIVES.

MR. PRICE POINTED OUT THAT THE RAPID VAPOURISATION OF A FLAMMABLE LIQUID IN THE SPRAYING PROCESS COULD CREATE A CONCENTRATION OF GASES IN THE ATMOSPHERE WHICH WAS POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE.

MR. PRICE SAID THAT UNCONTROLLED SPRAYING OF SUCH LIQUIDS CAUSED ABOUT 300 ACCIDENTS INVOLVING EXPLOSIONS OR FIRES DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS. TWENTY-TWO OF THEM WERE FATAL.

+ IN ADDITION, THERE WERE FIVE LARGE FIRES RESULTING FROM SPRAYING OF FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS DURING THE LAST FIVE MONTHS OF 1975, + HE SAID.

MR. PRICE SAID CONTROLS INCLUDED :

- * THE SEGREGATION OF THE SPRAYING AREA FROM OTHER PARTS OF AN INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKING-
- * THE PROVISION OF AN EFFICIENT VENTILATION SYSTEM TO REDUCE THE CONCENTRATION OF FLAMMABLE VAPOURS IN THE SPRAYING AREA-
- * THE PROHIBITION OF SMOKING OR THE USE OF A NAKED FLAME WITHIN 20 FEET OF ANY SPRAYING AREA- AND
- * THE IMPOSITION OF STANDARDS OF ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT TO AVOID SPARKS IGNITING A FLAMMABLE ATMOSPHERE.

THERE WERE ALSO PROVISIONS GOVERNING CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS COULD BE STORED.

MR. PRICE SAID THE PRINCIPLES OF THESE REGULATIONS WERE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD AND WERE SUPPORTED BY THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES. HE HAD ALSO CONSULTED WITH THE CHINESE MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION AND THE FEDERATION OF HONG KONG INDUSTRIES.

AN EXPLANATORY BOOKLET WILL SOON BE MADE AVAILABLE FREE TO AFFECTED PROPRIETORS TO ASSIST THEM TO MEET THEIR NEW OBLIGATIONS.

THEY COULD ALSO SEEK ADVICE FROM THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT'S FACTORY INSPECTORATE, HE SAID.

SECURITY PROBLEMS DURING METRO WORKS : POLICE TO HELP
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PROPRIETORS OF PREMISES AFFECTED BY HOARDINGS DURING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE METRO WILL BE VISITED BY THE POLICE COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICERS IN THEIR DISTRICTS WHO WILL GIVE ADVICE AND ANSWER QUESTIONS ON SECURITY MATTERS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THE HON. Q.W. LEE HAD ASKED WHAT MEASURES THE GOVERNMENT WAS TAKING TO ENSURE THE SECURITY OF PROPERTY AND PERSONS IN BUILDINGS WHICH HAD TO BE BOARDED UP, AND THE PROTECTION AND SAFETY OF THE MOVEMENT OF VALUABLES IN AREAS AFFECTED BY TRAFFIC DIVERSIONS.

MR. DAVIES SAID THE EXACT SITING AND DESIGN OF HOARDINGS WAS TO A CERTAIN EXTENT DEPENDENT ON THE CONTRACTORS AND THE PRECISE DETAILS WOULD NOT BE KNOWN UNTIL THEY HAD SUBMITTED THEIR PLANS.

AS PLANS BECAME AVAILABLE, HE SAID, THE POLICE COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICERS IN EACH POLICE DIVISION WOULD CONTACT THE PROPRIETORS AND THE ASSISTANCE OF THE POLICE SPECIALIST UNITS SUCH AS THE CID CRIME PREVENTION OFFICE WOULD BE CALLED ON TO DEAL WITH SECURITY PROBLEMS AS THEY AROSE.

+WITH REGARD TO THE PROTECTION AND SAFETY OF THE MOVEMENT OF VALUABLES IN AREAS AFFECTED BY TRAFFIC DIVERSIONS, THE POLICE WILL, WHENEVER NECESSARY, TRY TO MAKE SUITABLE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THOSE CONCERNED TO REDUCE RISK TO THE MINIMUM,+ HE SAID.

+THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE RECOGNISES THE POTENTIAL SECURITY PROBLEMS INVOLVED DURING THE PERIOD OF CONSTRUCTION OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY,+ MR. DAVIES SAID.

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BILLS PASSED
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THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND URBAN SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976 AND THE COUNTRY PARKS BILL PASSED THEIR COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

FIVE BILLS WERE INTRODUCED : THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976, THE MAGISTRATES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976, THE MARRIAGE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976, THE OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976 AND THE POLICE FORCE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976. DEBATE ON THEIR SECOND READING WAS ADJOURNED.

DEBATE RESUMED ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976 AND THE PREVENTION OF BRIBERY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976.

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