



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 1976

DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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GOVERNMENT URGED TO TAKE URGENT STEPS TO MONITOR
TELEPHONE COMPANY'S OPERATIONS

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THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN TODAY URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE URGENT STEPS TO ACQUIRE THE NECESSARY STAFF TO MONITOR WITH CREDIBILITY AND RELIABILITY THE FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL OPERATIONS OF THE TELEPHONE COMPANY.

HE WAS SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE TELEPHONE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976 WHICH SEEKS TO GIVE LEGISLATIVE EFFECT TO SOME OF THE MORE PRESSING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY PENDING THE INTRODUCTION OF A MORE UP-TO-DATE TELEPHONE SERVICES BILL TO REPLACE THE PRESENT TELEPHONE ORDINANCE.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN STRESSED THAT WHATEVER STEPS WERE BEING TAKEN TO STRENGTHEN THE MONITORING MACHINERY, SUCH STEPS SHOULD BE +TIMELY AND URGENTLY IMPLEMENTED+.

WITHOUT ADEQUATE AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL WHO COULD MONITOR THE TECHNICAL AND OTHER EFFICIENCY OF THE TELEPHONE COMPANY'S OPERATIONS, HE WARNED, THE GOVERNMENT'S POWER TO REFUSE GRANTING REQUESTS FOR RENTAL INCREASES WOULD BE SEVERELY RESTRICTED BECAUSE OF VITAL INFORMATION COMING TO LIGHT ONLY WHEN IT WAS TOO LATE.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO CLARIFY WHETHER IT WAS ABLE, IF SUCH WERE THOUGHT NECESSARY, TO APPOINT FINANCIAL OR TECHNICAL CONSULTANTS WHO WERE NOT CIVIL SERVANTS TO DO AN INDEPENDENT SURVEY OF THE TELEPHONE COMPANY SO THAT EFFICIENCY WOULD BE KEPT AT A HIGH LEVEL AND PROFITABILITY MAINTAINED.

HE REFERRED TO THE NEW FORMULA WHEREBY 20 PER CENT OF THE PROFITS IN EXCESS OF THE 16 PER CENT PERMITTED RETURN WOULD BE ALLOCATED TO SHAREHOLDERS' FUNDS AND SUGGESTED THE GOVERNMENT ACQUIRE A SUITABLE LEVEL OF INTEREST IN THE TELEPHONE COMPANY BY WAY OF ORDINARY SHARES.

+ANY INCOME DERIVED FROM SUCH SHARES SHOULD HELP TO OFFSET THE COST OF MONITORING BY GOVERNMENT OF THE TELEPHONE COMPANY'S OPERATIONS, EVEN THOUGH THE INCOME WOULD NOT BE SPECIFICALLY EARMARKED FOR SUCH PURPOSE, BUT WOULD BE PUT TO USE AS SEEN FIT BY GOVERNMENT,+ HE SAID.

BY SO DOING, MR. CHEONG-LEEN BELIEVED THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD BE SEEN MORE CLEARLY IN THE PUBLIC EYE TO HAVE THAT MUCH MORE REASON TO ENSURE THAT THE COMPANY OPERATES AT A HIGH LEVEL OF EFFICIENCY AND A REASONABLE DEGREE OF PROFITABILITY.

IN REPLY, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, ASSURED THAT NO FURTHER INCREASE IN TELEPHONE RENTALS WOULD BE SANCTIONED UNTIL THE MONITORING MACHINERY HAD SHOWN THIS TO BE FULLY JUSTIFIED WITHIN THE PROVISION OF THE CONTROL SCHEME.

/HE REVEALED

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HE REVEALED THAT URGENT STEPS WERE BEING TAKEN TO ACQUIRE THE NECESSARY STAFF FOR THE FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL MONITORING OF THE OPERATIONS OF THE TELEPHONE COMPANY.

+SO, IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, I SEE NO NEED TO APPOINT EITHER FINANCIAL OR TECHNICAL CONSULTANTS FROM OUTSIDE THE CIVIL SERVICE TO CARRY OUT AN INDEPENDENT SURVEY OF THE TELEPHONE COMPANY,+ MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID.

ON THE SUGGESTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ACQUIRE ORDINARY SHARES IN THE COMPANY, HE SAID: +WHILE I AM GRATEFULL TO HIM FOR HIS RECOGNITION OF THE EFFICIENCY OF GOVERNMENT-OWNED ENTITIES SUCH AS THE POST OFFICE, THE RAILWAY AND THE AIRPORT, THE TELEPHONE COMPANY IS A DIFFERENT CASE IN THAT IT WOULD, IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, STILL OPERATE AS A PRIVATELY OWNED COMPANY.

+IN THIS INSTANCE, AS WITH THE BUS COMPANIES, THE GOVERNMENT IS SATISFIED THAT IT HAS SUFFICIENT LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER CONTROLS OVER THE COMPANY TO ENSURE THAT IT OPERATES IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST WHILE MAKING A REASONABLE PROFIT.

+THE ACQUISITION OF ORDINARY SHARES BY THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT INCREASE THAT CONTROL,+ HE SAID.

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UNNECESSARY DISPUTE UNDER RENT AMENDMENT BILL WILL BE AVOIDED
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TWO UNOFFICIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS HAVE CALLED FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976 TO AVOID DISPUTE ON THE ALLOWABLE RENT INCREASE FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PREMISES.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE OF THE BILL TODAY, DR. THE HON. S. Y. CHUNG SAID: +THE WORD 'IMPROVEMENT' INCLUDES STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS, EXTENSIONS OR ADDITIONS, AS WELL AS THE PROVISION OR REPLACEMENT OF FIXTURES AND FITTINGS, BUT IT DOES NOT INCLUDE DECORATIVE OR REPAIR WORK,+ HE POINTED OUT.

+I THINK THIS DEFINITION OF 'IMPROVEMENT' IS RATHER AMBIGUOUS AND WILL CREATE UNNECESSARY ARGUMENTS BETWEEN LANDLORDS AND TENANTS.

+THIS IS BECAUSE ON THE ONE HAND, REPAIR WORK IS NOT CONSIDERED, AND RIGHTLY SO, AS IMPROVEMENT BUT, ON THE OTHER, REPLACEMENT OF FIXTURES AND FITTINGS IS INCLUDED AS IMPROVEMENT.

+I THEREFORE SUGGEST THAT AMENDMENT SHOULD BE MADE TO THE NEW SUB-SECTION 55A(6) SO THAT REPLACEMENT OF FIXTURES AND FITTINGS IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE DEFINITION OF 'IMPROVEMENT',+ HE SAID.

THE HON. OSWALD CHEUNG ALSO POINTED OUT THAT MOST LETTINGS IN HONG KONG WERE IN MULTI-STOREY BUILDINGS AND OPINION AMONG THE TENANTS COULD DIFFER AS TO WHAT WAS AND WHAT WAS NOT AN IMPROVEMENT.

+I PROPOSE THAT WHERE A MAJORITY OF TWO THIRDS OF THE TENANTS CONSENT TO THE MAKING OF IMPROVEMENTS, THEY SHOULD BE DEEMED TO BE NECESSARY,+ HE SAID.

+THIS, OF COURSE, WOULD NOT PRECLUDE ANY PARTICULAR TENANT TO DISPUTE THE AMOUNT OF RENT INCREASE PAYABLE, BUT IT WOULD PRECLUDE HIM FROM CONTESTING THAT IT WAS NECESSARY,+ HE ADDED.

IN REPLY, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. IAN LIGHTBODY CONFIRMED THAT HE WOULD MOVE AN AMENDMENT AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE OF THE BILL TO DELETE THE PROVISION FOR RENT INCREASES FOR REPLACING FIXTURES AND FITTINGS.

ANOTHER AMENDMENT WILL BE PROPOSED TO PROVIDE THAT AN IMPROVEMENT IS TO BE DEEMED NECESSARY IF TWO-THIRDS OF THE TENANTS HAVE GIVEN THEIR CONSENT IN WRITING= TO ALLOW LANDLORDS TO AGGREGATE QUALIFYING EXPENDITURE OVER A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS= AND TO REQUIRE COPIES OF NOTICES IN ALL SUCH CASES TO BE SENT TO THE COMMISSIONER OF RATING AND VALUATION.

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FLATTED FACTORY BLOCKS FOR SQUATTER WORKSHOPS
CLEARED FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT
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SMALL SQUATTER WORKSHOPS WHICH ARE CLEARED FROM LAND REQUIRED FOR DEVELOPMENT IN URBAN AREAS ARE PROVIDED WITH GOVERNMENT'S FLATTED FACTORY BLOCKS CONTAINING UNITS OF ABOUT 250 SQ. FT. EACH, THE HOUSING SECRETARY, THE HON. IAN LIGHTBODY, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR. LIGHTBODY, WHO WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. JAMES WU, SAID THAT RENTS FOR THESE UNITS IN THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S LATEST BLOCKS WERE SET AT A LEVEL SLIGHTLY BELOW MARKET RENT.

HE INDICATED THAT A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF CLEARED WORKSHOP OPERATORS PREFERRED TO TAKE CASH COMPENSATION RATHER THAN ACCOMMODATION IN A FLATTED FACTORY BLOCK= AND CASH WAS ALSO PAID IF FLATTED FACTORY WAS NOT AVAILABLE OR IF THE TRADE WAS UNSUITABLE.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE QUESTION OF REHOUSING SMALL UNDERTAKINGS, FORCED TO MOVE OUT OF DOMESTIC BLOCKS, HAD BEEN DISCUSSED FROM TIME TO TIME DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS.

BUT THE TENTATIVE CONCLUSION WAS THAT, BECAUSE OF THE ECONOMICS OF THEIR OPERATIONS, THEY WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO ACCEPT ACCOMMODATION AT MARKET RENT LEVELS IN PURPOSE-BUILT FLATTED FACTORIES PARTLY BECAUSE SUCH BUILDINGS WOULD INEVITABLY BE SITED IN LESS CENTRAL AREAS.

+BUT THE QUESTION WILL BE KEPT UNDER REVIEW AND IF SUCH A DEMAND DOES EMERGE, CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO WHETHER THE EXPENDITURE OF PUBLIC FUNDS FOR THIS PURPOSE CAN BE JUSTIFIED,+ HE ADDED.

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COMMODITY EXCHANGE TO ADD A FURTHER DIMENSION TO H.K. ECONOMY
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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE SAYS IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEW THAT THE OPERATION OF A WELL REGULATED COMMODITY EXCHANGE WILL ADD A FURTHER DIMENSION TO HONG KONG'S ECONOMY AND ITS INTERNATIONAL PROFILE.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE COMMODITIES (TRADING) BILL 1976 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THE GOVERNMENT SOUGHT IN THE BILL, ONLY TO LAY DOWN THE BASIC RULES WITHIN WHICH THE COMMODITY MARKET MUST WORK IF IT WAS TO BE FAIR TO ALL PARTICIPANTS.

HE NOTED THAT THE BILL, TO BE SUPPLEMENTED BY REGULATIONS AND BY RULES OF THE EXCHANGE COMPANY, ACHIEVED THE AIM OF BALANCING THE FREEDOM WITH AN ADEQUATE DEGREE OF REGULATION.

+BUT, TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE,+ MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID, +THE GOVERNMENT HAS RETAINED TO ITSELF CERTAIN POWERS WHICH IT WILL INVOKE IF AND WHEN IT IS SEEN THAT THE MARKET ITSELF IS NOT BEHAVING, OR HAS NOT BEHAVED, IN A RATIONAL AND ORDERLY MANNER.

+I VERY MUCH DOUBT, HOWEVER, WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WILL EVER NEED TO HAVE RECOURSE TO THESE POWERS IN THE CASE OF THE HONG KONG COMMODITY EXCHANGE,+ HE ADDED.

MR. HADDON-CAVE NOTED THAT IT WAS NOT EASY TO DEVISE ABSOLUTE AND FOOLPROOF SAFEGUARDS, EITHER ADMINISTRATIVE OR LEGISLATIVE, AGAINST SPECULATION AND POSSIBLE LOSS BY THOSE WITH LESS THAN ADEQUATE MEANS, WHILST ENSURING THAT THE MARKET CONCERNED CONTINUED TO OPERATE SMOOTHLY AND ADEQUATELY REFLECTED THE FORCES OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND.

BUT HE ASSURED THAT THE PROVISIONS IN THE BILL AND THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE EXCHANGE WOULD, AS A GENERAL RULE, EFFECTIVELY EXCLUDE THE SMALL INVESTORS.

+THE BILL ENSHRINES IN THE LAW CONTROLS WHICH HAVE BEEN BUILT UP IN OLDER COMMODITY MARKETS, SUCH AS LONDON AND NEW YORK, BY CONVENTION AS WELL AS BY STATUTE.

+BUT THE BILL HAS ALSO BEEN DRAFTED WITH HONG KONG'S NEEDS SPECIFICALLY IN MIND AND, IN AT LEAST TWO RESPECTS, IS UNIQUE IN CONTAINING PROVISIONS WHICH ARE NOT REQUIRED IN ANY OTHER COMMODITY MARKET,+ HE SAID.

THE MOST IMPORTANT PROVISIONS OF THE BILL, ACCORDING TO THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, ARE IN PART II WHICH DEALS WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMODITIES TRADING COMMISSION AND A COMMISSIONER FOR COMMODITIES TRADING.

/THESE WILL

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THESE WILL BE THE REGULATORY AUTHORITIES FOR THE OPERATIONS OF THE COMMODITY EXCHANGE AND TRADING IN COMMODITY FUTURES GENERALLY.

THE COMMISSIONER WILL HAVE STATUTORY POWERS TO REGISTER DEALERS, ADVISERS, AND REPRESENTATIVES TO SUPERVISE THE AUDITING OF THE ACCOUNTS OF REGISTERED DEALERS, AND TO INSPECT AND INVESTIGATE THE ACTIVITIES OF ALL ENGAGED IN TRADING IN COMMODITY FUTURES, AS WELL AS THE COMMODITY EXCHANGE ITSELF, THE CLEARING HOUSE AND THE GUARANTEE CORPORATION.

IN SUMMING UP WITH THE REMARK THAT IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEW THE OPERATION OF A WELL REGULATED COMMODITY EXCHANGE WILL ADD A FURTHER DIMENSION TO HONG KONG'S ECONOMY AND ITS INTERNATIONAL PROFILE, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID, +I SAY THIS WITHOUT WISHING TO EXAGGERATE THE POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF A COMMODITY EXCHANGE.

+I AM WELL AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR OF OUR ECONOMY: EXPORTS OF HONG KONG MADE GOODS ARE NOW RUNNING AT AN ANNUAL RATE OF ABOUT \$28 BILLION AND I AM WELL AWARE ALSO THAT OUR FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR ALREADY ACCOUNTS FOR NEARLY A QUARTER OF THE GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT,+ HE SAID.

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FLEXIBILITY FOR ONE STATUTORY HOLIDAY PROPOSED

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DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG SAID TODAY HE SUPPORTED INCREASING THE NUMBER OF PAID STATUTORY HOLIDAYS FOR WORKERS FROM SIX TO TEN AND SUGGESTED THAT THE TIMING OF ONE OF THE FOUR ADDITIONAL HOLIDAYS COULD BE FLEXIBLE FOR DIFFERENT TRADES.

SPEAKING ON THE EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, DR. CHUNG SAID IT WAS DESIRABLE THAT THE CHOICE OF PAID STATUTORY HOLIDAYS SHOULD BE MEANINGFUL AND USEFUL TO THE MAJORITY OF INDUSTRIAL WORKERS, WHILE THE TWO ALTERNATIVE HOLIDAYS PROPOSED IN THE BILL -- THE FIRST WEEKDAY IN JULY OR THE FIRST MONDAY IN AUGUST -- HAD LITTLE MEANING IN INDUSTRY.

+IF IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO FIND A COMMON MEANINGFUL HOLIDAY FOR ALL INDUSTRIAL WORKERS, WE SHOULD AT LEAST TRY TO ACHIEVE FLEXIBILITY FOR DIFFERENT TRADES.

+I THEREFORE SUGGEST THAT WE SHOULD HAVE ONE FLOATING PAID STATUTORY HOLIDAY TO BE DESIGNATED BY THE INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYERS IN ADVANCE,+ HE SAID.

EMPLOYERS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, FOR EXAMPLE, COULD CHOOSE THE LU PAN FESTIVAL, THOSE IN THE FISHING INDUSTRY THE JIEN HAU FESTIVAL, THOSE IN THE ELECTRONIC INDUSTRY WITH A LARGE WORKFORCE OF YOUNG GIRLS THE SEVEN SISTERS FESTIVAL WHILE MANY OF THE EMPLOYERS IN MEN-DOMINATED INDUSTRIES OPT FOR INTERNATIONAL LABOUR DAY.

DR. CHUNG NOTED THAT THE ADDITIONAL FOUR PAID STATUTORY HOLIDAYS SHOULD NOT HAVE ANY ADVERSE EFFECT ON INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION PROVIDED THAT THEY WERE PROPERLY CHOSEN.

HE SAID, +THE ONLY CONSEQUENCE IS THE INCREASE OF WAGE BILLS BY ABOUT 1.3 PER CENT.+

DR. CHUNG SAID WHILE MOST EMPLOYERS WERE ALREADY GRANTING MORE THAN SIX HOLIDAYS A YEAR, APART FROM ONE REST DAY EVERY WEEK, NOT MOST OF THE INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYERS WERE PAYING THEIR HOURLY-RATED, DAILY-RATED OR PIECE-RATED EMPLOYEES FOR MORE THAN THE PRESENT SIX PAID STATUTORY HOLIDAYS.

THE NUMBER OF PAID HOLIDAYS FOR THESE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS IN HONG KONG WAS LESS THAN THAT IN SOME COUNTRIES OF THIS REGION, HE ADDED.

IN REPLY, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. NEIL HENDERSON SAID HE HAD NO REAL OBJECTION IN PRINCIPLE TO THE CONCEPT OF A FLOATING HOLIDAY IF THE GENERAL FEELING WAS THAT IT WOULD BE MORE USEFUL TO HAVE A HOLIDAY THAT WAS MEANINGFUL TO PARTICULAR GROUPS AND INDUSTRIES RATHER THAN TO ESCAPE THE SUMMER HUMIDITY, WHICH WAS HIS ORIGINAL INTENTION.

+MY PROBLEM HOWEVER WOULD BE TO ENSURE THAT A FLOATING HOLIDAY DOES NOT FLOAT AWAY ENTIRELY FROM THE EMPLOYEES' CALENDAR,+ HE SAID.

THE PROBLEMS ARE LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE AND INITIALLY THE PRINCIPLE SAFEGUARDS WOULD NEED TO BE --

- (I) THAT EMPLOYER MUST INFORM HIS EMPLOYEES THE DATE TO BE DESIGNATED, AND THE WISE EMPLOYER WOULD CONSULT HIS EMPLOYEES BEFORE SO DOING.
- (II) THAT EMPLOYEES MUST BE INFORMED BEFORE OR AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CALENDAR YEAR THE DATE TO BE DESIGNATED.
- (III) THAT ALL NEW EMPLOYEES COMING INTO THE UNDERTAKING DURING THE CALENDAR YEAR MUST BE INFORMED OF THE DATE THAT HAS BEEN DESIGNATED.
- (IV) THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO ALLOW THE NORMAL SUBSTITUTION ARRANGEMENT TO APPLY TO THE FLOATING HOLIDAY.
- (V) THAT THERE MUST BE A FALL-BACK POSITION, IN CASES WHERE EMPLOYERS FAIL TO DESIGNATE A HOLIDAY EITHER THROUGH OMISSION, OR BECAUSE THERE IS NO STRONG FEELING ABOUT A PARTICULAR DAY, OR NO AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED ON WHICH DAY SHOULD BE DESIGNATED.

+SUCH CONDITIONS MAY REQUIRE SOME RATHER CAREFUL AND DIFFICULT DRAFTING AND I AM HOPEFUL THAT MY HONOURABLE COLLEAGUE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND HIS STAFF WILL BE EQUAL TO THE TASK,+ MR. HENDERSON SAID.

HE SAID HE WOULD CONSIDER PROPOSING THE APPROPRIATE AMENDMENTS AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE IF THE FLOATING HOLIDAY COULD BE MADE LEGALLY BINDING AND ENFORCEABLE= IF NOT, HE FELT THE BILL SHOULD BE PASSED IN ITS PRESENT FORM, WHICH HAD GENERAL SUPPORT EXCEPT THE DIFFERING VIEWS ON ONE OF THE PARTICULAR HOLIDAYS PROPOSED.

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DUTY ON METHYL ALCOHOL

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DUTY ON METHYL ALCOHOL WILL BE LEVIED AT \$9.90 A GALLON WITH AN ADDITIONAL 40 CENTS FOR EVERY ONE PER CENT BY WHICH THE ALCOHOLIC STRENGTH BY VOLUME EXCEEDS 25 PER CENT.

MOVING A RESOLUTION IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY TO GIVE EFFECT TO THIS, THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, THE HON. BILL DORWARD EXPLAINED THAT THE DUTY WAS SET TO CREATE A FINANCIAL DISINCENTIVE TO THE MISUSE OF METHYL ALCOHOL, AS FOR ADULTERATED LIQUOR WHICH CAUSED A NUMBER OF DEATHS IN LATE 1975.

THE DUTY IS SLIGHTLY HIGHER THAN THAT CURRENTLY LEVIED ON NON-EUROPEAN TYPE SPIRITS AND INDUSTRIAL TYPE ETHYL ALCOHOL.

+IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THIS RATE WILL PROVIDE THE NECESSARY DISINCENTIVE,+ HE SAID.

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LONG TERM RE-DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
FOR OLDER PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES
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THE HOUSING AUTHORITY HAS A LONG TERM PROGRAMME FOR RE-DEVELOPING OLDER ESTATE BLOCKS WITH THE AIM OF SOLVING THE OVERCROWDING PROBLEM THERE.

THIS WAS REVEALED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. IAN LIGHTBODY IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. JAMES WU.

HE SAID THE PROBLEM OF OVERCROWDING WOULD DISAPPEAR AS FAMILIES IN THESE ESTATES WERE ALLOCATED FLATS IN NEW ESTATES AT A MUCH MORE GENEROUS SPACE STANDARD.

HE NOTED THAT THE RE-DEVELOPMENT PROCESS HAD ALREADY BEGUN IN 18 ESTATE BLOCKS AND WOULD TAKE ABOUT 15 YEARS TO COMPLETE.

+APART FROM RE-DEVELOPMENT, THE HOUSING AUTHORITY IS VIGOROUSLY ATTACKING THE OVERCROWDING PROBLEM BY EARMARKING SOME OF ITS NEW ACCOMMODATION, AS WELL AS ALMOST ALL FLATS WHICH FALL VACANT IN THE OLDER ESTATES, FOR THIS PURPOSE,+ MR. LIGHTBODY ADDED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT SINCE 1973, THE VOLUNTARY REMOVAL OF OVERCROWDED FAMILIES TO LARGER FLATS IN NEW ESTATES HAD BEEN ACTIVELY ENCOURAGED.

HOWEVER, THE RESPONSE UNDER THIS PLAN HAD NOT BEEN VERY GREAT SO FAR AND MANY FAMILIES APPARENTLY PREFERRED TO STAY IN OVERCROWDED CONDITIONS IN CENTRALLY LOCATED OLD ESTATES RATHER THAN MOVE OUT TO MUCH BETTER ACCOMMODATION IN THE MORE DISTANT ESTATES.

+DURING 1975/76, A TOTAL OF 6,700 FAMILIES MOVED TO MORE SPACIOUS PUBLIC HOUSING ACCOMMODATION. IT IS EXPECTED THAT EVEN MORE FAMILIES WILL OBTAIN RELIEF FROM OVERCROWDING DURING 1976/77 BECAUSE OF THE QUICKENED PACE OF REDEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFERS WITHIN ESTATES.+

MR. LIGHTBODY SAID THE OVERCROWDING OFTEN RESULTED NOT ONLY FROM THE ADDITION OF CHILDREN TO THE FAMILY BUT FROM THEIR DECISION TO HAVE OTHER RELATIVES STAY WITH THEM, OR BY THEIR OWN CHILDREN MARRYING AND HAVING THEIR FAMILIES IN THE ORIGINAL UNITS.

HE STRESSED THAT THE HOUSING AUTHORITY TRIED TO KEEP OVERCROWDING FROM THESE CAUSES DOWN TO THE MINIMUM BY ALLOWING ONLY ONE OF THE ORIGINAL TENANT'S CHILDREN TO REMAIN IN THE FLAT WITH HIS OR HER SPOUSE.

/IN REPLY

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IN REPLY TO ANOTHER QUESTION FROM MR. JAMES WU, HE SAID THERE WERE ABOUT 35,000 FAMILIES LIVING IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES AT A STANDARD OF LESS THAN 20 SQ. FT. PER PERSON, EXCLUDING ANY SERVICE AREAS SUCH AS VERANDAHs, KITCHENS OR TOILETS. OF THESE, 20,000 OUT OF THE 196,000 FAMILIES LIVING IN MARK I AND II ESTATES HAVE NO PRIVATE SERVICE AREAS.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY DOUBTS, WE WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT THE 35,000 FAMILIES LIVING AT A STANDARD OF LESS THAN 20 SQ. FT. PER PERSON, AS MENTIONED BY MR. IAN LIGHTBODY, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING. IN REPLY TO MR. JAMES WU, INCLUDE THE 20,000 FAMILIES IN THE MARK I AND II ESTATES. THESE TWO FIGURES, THEREFORE, SHOULD NOT BE ADDED TOGETHER AS A TOTAL.

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BILLS PASSED
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NINE BILLS PASSED THEIR COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THEY ARE THE WIDOWS AND ORPHANS PENSION (INCREASE) BILL 1976, THE CREDIT UNIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976, THE TELEPHONE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976, THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD (VALIDATION) BILL 1976, THE HOUSING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976, THE HONG KONG AIRPORT (REGULATIONS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976, THE WILD ANIMALS PROTECTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976, THE ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976 AND AN UNOFFICIAL MEMBER'S BILL, THE HONG KONG GENERAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (AMENDMENT OF MEMORANDUM) BILL 1976.

TEN BILLS WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST READING. THEY INCLUDE THE COMMODITIES TRADING BILL 1976, THE METRICATION BILL 1976, THE COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976, AND THE SUPREME COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976.

DEBATE ON THEIR SECOND READING HAS BEEN ADJOURNED.

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RESTRICTIONS ON UNDESIRABLE DEVELOPMENT
OF GARDEN ESTATES UNDER CONSIDERATION

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THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING A PROPOSAL TO ENACT LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD PROVIDE THE IMPOSITION OF APPROPRIATE LEASE RESTRICTIONS ON GARDEN ESTATE BUILDING SCHEMES, SUCH AS CONVERTED MOTELS IN KOWLOON TONG.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. P.G. WILLIAMS, THE ACTING ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY, THE HON. ALAN ARMSTRONG-WRIGHT, SAID THE VAGUENESS OF LEASE CONDITIONS THAT APPLIED AND THE DIFFICULTIES IN MODIFYING THEM HAD HINDERED THE GOVERNMENT FROM TAKING EFFECTIVE ACTION TO CONTROL UNDESIRABLE DEVELOPMENT.

HE SAID, +UNLESS AN OWNER OF A LOT IN THE KOWLOON TONG ESTATE FAILS TO FOLLOW THE PRESCRIBED PROCEDURES IN THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE, THERE IS LITTLE WHICH CAN BE DONE BY GOVERNMENT EITHER UNDER THE LAW OR LEASE, TO PREVENT CONVERTING HIS PREMISES INTO A SO-CALLED MOTEL.

+BECAUSE THIS ESTATE IS CONSIDERED TO BE WHAT IS KNOWN LEGALLY AS A +BUILDING SCHEME+, OWNERS OF OTHER LOTS IN THE ESTATE MIGHT BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE SOMETHING BY CIVIL ACTION AGAINST HIM, BUT, AS FAR AS I KNOW, NONE HAS YET TRIED TO DO SO,+ HE ADDED.

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NO EVIDENCE OF PUBLIC CONCERN OVER HIRE-PURCHASE PRACTICES

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS STILL RECEIVED NO EVIDENCE OF PUBLIC CONCERN OVER THE PRACTICES OF FIRMS ENGAGED IN THE HIRE PURCHASE BUSINESS, SAYS THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. LI FOOK-WOO, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID IT WAS UNDERSTOOD HOWEVER THAT THE CONSUMER COUNCIL HAD RECEIVED COMPLAINTS AND IT WAS CONSIDERING WHETHER TO MAKE FORMAL REPRESENTATION TO THE GOVERNMENT.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT THE HON. P.C. WOO ASKED THE SAME QUESTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN 1970 AND 1974.

IN THE FIRST INSTANCE THE THEN ATTORNEY GENERAL INDICATED THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF EVIDENCE SHOWING THE PUBLIC NEEDED PROTECTION FROM MALPRACTICES OR EXPLOITATIONS, SUCH LEGISLATION WAS NOT JUSTIFIED.

ON THE SECOND OCCASION THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY REPLIED THAT THE POSITION HAD NOT CHANGED AND ADDED THAT SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT RECEIVE EVIDENCE THE MATTER WOULD BE RECONSIDERED.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 1976

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LIAISON WITH U.K. CHINESE COMMUNITIES UNDER REVIEW

THE HONG KONG COMMISSIONER FOR LONDON IS REVIEWING HIS ARRANGEMENTS FOR LIAISON WITH BRITISH LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND WITH HONG KONG CHINESE COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE UNITED KINGDOM, AND IS EXPECTED TO MAKE PROPOSALS ON THESE SHORTLY.

THIS FOLLOWED RECENT UNFAVOURABLE PUBLICITY IN BRITAIN ABOUT CERTAIN ELEMENTS IN THE HONG KONG CHINESE COMMUNITY IN DRUGS AND TRIAD ACTIVITIES, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON. F.K. LI SAID IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN WHO ASKED WHAT WAS BEING DONE AND WHAT MORE COULD BE DONE TO ASSIST HONG KONG CHINESE FAMILIES THERE TO PRESERVE AND KEEP ALIVE THEIR TRADITIONAL CULTURE AND TO FOSTER MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT BETWEEN THEM AND OTHERS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMUNITIES.

MR. LI SAID: +THE INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT PUBLISHES A FORTNIGHTLY CHINESE NEWSPAPER CALLED THE HONG KONG NEWS DIGEST FOR THE HONG KONG CHINESE COMMUNITY OVERSEAS- OVER 13,000 COPIES OF EACH ISSUE ARE DISTRIBUTED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT OFFICE IN LONDON.

+THIS NEWSPAPER PROVIDES BOTH HONG KONG AND UNITED KINGDOM NEWS AS WELL AS A SUPPLEMENT CONTAINING SERIALIZED FICTION AND VARIOUS ARTICLES OF POPULAR INTEREST.

+THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT OFFICE IN LONDON AND ITS SUB-OFFICE IN LIVERPOOL ENCOURAGE AND ASSIST THE FORMATION OF CHINESE ASSOCIATIONS IN THE MAIN CENTRES OF POPULATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM. WHERE NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE, ASSISTANCE IS GIVEN TO THESE ASSOCIATIONS IN PLANNING AND ORGANISING CELEBRATIONS OF THE MAIN CHINESE FESTIVALS.+

CHINESE CLASSES ARE ORGANISED BY THESE ASSOCIATIONS AND OTHER SUITABLE GROUPS WITH ASSISTANCE FROM THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BY WAY OF SUBSIDIES OR THE SUPPLY OF TEXT BOOKS FROM HONG KONG, WHILE HELP IS GIVEN TO THESE ASSOCIATIONS AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM IN ORGANISING ENGLISH CLASSES.

FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT ATTEND CLASSES, A +HOME STUDY+ LIBRARY SERVICE OF CHINESE AND ENGLISH LESSONS ON TAPE AND RECORD IS AVAILABLE.

+THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT OFFICE ALSO HELP THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH THE CHINESE COMMUNITIES IN THEIR AREA,+ MR. LI CONTINUED.

STAFF OF OUR OFFICE ATTEND REGULAR CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS FOR TEACHERS AND COMMUNITY WORKERS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN HONG KONG AS WELL AS CHINESE CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS AND THIS IS SUPPLEMENTED, WHERE APPROPRIATE, BY PAMPHLETS AND DOCUMENTARY FILMS, HE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 1976

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BILL TO PROTECT ENDANGERED ANIMALS AND PLANTS

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A BILL, WHICH PROPOSES TO EXTEND CONTROLS ON THE TRADING OF ANIMALS AND PLANTS IN DANGER OF EXTINCTION, RECEIVED ITS SECOND READING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE ANIMALS AND PLANTS (PROTECTION OF ENDANGERED SPECIES) BILL 1976, CONFORMS WITH THE PROVISION OF THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA, REFERRED TO IN BRIEF AT THE WASHINGTON CONVENTION.

IN MOVING THE READING, THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, MR. BILL DORWARD, POINTED OUT THAT THE WASHINGTON CONVENTION SEEKS TO REGULATE RATHER THAN PROHIBIT TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA, AND THAT IT WOULD BE ASSUMED THAT +SUCH REGULATION WOULD GENERALLY BE COMMENSURATE WITH AN ENLIGHTENED ASSESSMENT OF THE NEED.+

THE BILL, IF APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, WILL REPEAL AND REPLACE THE PRESENT ANIMALS AND BIRDS (RESTRICTION OF IMPORTATION AND POSSESSION) ORDINANCE.

THE MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE BILL AND EXISTING LEGISLATION IS THAT THE BILL WILL EXTEND CONTROLS TO ENDANGERED SPECIES OF PLANTS, MOLLUSCS, REPTILES AND ANIMAL PARTS. THE LIST OF LIVE ANIMALS TO BE PROTECTED IS EXTENDED, AND WILL ALSO INCLUDE ANY PROTECTED ANIMAL WHICH IS BORN IN HONG KONG. CULTIVATED PLANTS WILL NOT BE SUBJECT TO CONTROLS.

MR. DORWARD SAID THAT AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE WILL BE SET UP TO ADVISE THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES WHO WILL BE THE RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PROVISIONS OF THE BILL.

THE EXISTING SYSTEM OF CONTROLLING THE IMPORT AND POSSESSION OF ENDANGERED SPECIES BY LICENCE WILL CONTINUE, BUT EXPORTS WILL ALSO REQUIRE LICENCES. IN GENERAL, LICENCES TO IMPORT WILL ONLY BE ISSUED WHEN THE EXPORTING COUNTRY ISSUES AN EXPORT LICENCE.

AS FAR AS THE SKINS OF CROCODILES, SNAKES AND LIZARDS ARE CONCERNED ALTHOUGH THEY ARE INCLUDED IN THE SCHEDULE, AN ORDER WILL BE MADE UNDER THE LEGISLATION EXCLUDING THESE ITEMS FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE BILL. THERE IS A SUBSTANTIAL TRADE CONCERNED WITH THESE ITEMS AND IT WOULD BE TOO DIFFICULT TO BRING THEM UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE ORDINANCE FOR THE TIME BEING.

THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT, WHICH IS THE MAIN SOURCE OF UNMANUFACTURED IVORY, IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE SCHEDULE DRAWN UP UNDER THE CONVENTION, AND TRADE IN IVORY WILL NOT, THEREFORE, BE AFFECTED BY THE BILL.

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ONE ANIMAL WHICH IS INCLUDED IN THE PROTECTED LIST IS THE PANGOLIN. IN ANY CASE, THERE HAS BEEN A REDUCTION IN THE IMPORTS OF ENDANGERED SPECIES, INCLUDING THE PANGOLIN, FROM CHINA AND IN 1975 ONLY SEVEN PANGOLINS WERE IMPORTED INTO HONG KONG. UNDER THE NEW LEGISLATION, OTHER PROTECTED SPECIES INCLUDE TIGER, LEOPARD AND SIMILAR FELINE (SPOTTED CAT) SPECIES AND THEIR FURS.

FUR SKINS OF ANIMALS ON THE PROTECTED LIST WHICH ARE BROUGHT IN AS PERSONAL OR HOUSEHOLD EFFECTS, SUCH AS FUR COATS OR RUGS, WILL BE EXEMPT FROM LICENSING REQUIREMENTS.

MR. DORWARD SAYS THAT IF THE BILL IS PASSED, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WILL BE ASKED TO EXTEND TO HONG KONG ITS OWN IMPENDING RATIFICATION OF THE WASHINGTON CONVENTION.

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REVIEW OF LEGISLATION ON SEVERANCE PAY
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A REVIEW OF THE LEGISLATION ON SEVERANCE PAY HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT IN THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT AND PROPOSALS ARE BEING FORMULATED FOR CONSIDERATION, THE ACTING COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. NEIL HENDERSON TOLD LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE SAID, +IT IS MY INTENTION THAT SUCH IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SEVERANCE PAY SCHEME THAT ARE AGREED AFTER CONSULTATION SHOULD BE PUT TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING ITS NEXT SESSION 1976-77.+

MR. HENDERSON WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG WHO ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER THE NEED FOR IMPROVING SEVERANCE PAY TERMS IN THE LIGHT OF THE OVERSEAS TEXTILES LTD. LABOUR DISPUTE.

MR. HENDERSON DID NOT ELABORATE ON DETAILS OF THE PROPOSALS AS IT WOULD BE 'INAPPROPRIATE' AT THIS STAGE.

+BUT THE MAIN ONE WILL CONCERN THE QUANTUM OF SEVERANCE PAY WITH WHICH I AM ON RECORD AS SAYING I AM NOT ENTIRELY SATISFIED, AND MORE GENEROUS TREATMENT OF LONG SERVING EMPLOYEES,+ HE SAID.

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CONTROLS ON OVERHEAD WELDING OPERATIONS BEING CONSIDERED
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THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD, SAID TODAY HIS DEPARTMENT WAS CONSIDERING POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS TO THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE TO INCORPORATE SAFETY MEASURES FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC DURING MINOR ALTERATION AND REPAIR WORKS.

BUT, HE SAID, THIS STUDY WOULD ALSO HAVE TO COVER THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT ANY SCHEME OF CONTROL COULD BE EFFECTIVELY ENFORCED.

MR. MCDONALD WAS SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. ROGER LOBO WHO ASKED IF STEPS COULD BE TAKEN TO PREVENT FLUX AND DEBRIS FROM FALLING ON PEDESTRIANS DURING WELDING OPERATIONS ON BUILDINGS.

MR. MCDONALD SAID THAT WHEN A BUILDING OWNER WISHED TO ERECT, ALTER OR DEMOLISH A BUILDING, OR CARRY OUT ANY BUILDING OPERATION COVERED BY THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE, HE COULD BE REQUIRED TO ERECT HOARDINGS AND COVERED WALKWAYS TO PROTECT PEDESTRIANS FROM FALLING MATERIALS.

HOWEVER, MANY MINOR ALTERATION AND REPAIR WORKS -- INCLUDING SOME WELDING OPERATIONS -- WERE NOT AT PRESENT CONTROLLED BY THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE.

+CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN TO THE INCLUSION IN THE ORDINANCE OF SUITABLE PROVISIONS TO ENSURE THE PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC DURING THE EXECUTION OF SUCH OPERATIONS,+ HE SAID. +CLEARLY, ONE ASPECT OF THIS CONSIDERATION MUST BE WHETHER ANY SCHEME OF CONTROL DEVISED CAN BE EFFECTIVELY ENFORCED.+

MR. MCDONALD POINTED OUT THAT PEDESTRIANS DID ALREADY HAVE RECOURSE TO LEGAL ACTION FOR DAMAGES IN RESPECT OF INJURIES SUFFERED, AND COULD ALSO CONTACT THE POLICE TO INITIATE A PROSECUTION UNDER THE SUMMARY OFFENCES ORDINANCE, WHICH PROVIDED FOR A FINE OF \$500 OR THREE-MONTH IMPRISONMENT FOR DROPPING BUILDING MATERIALS OR OTHER THINGS TO THE DAMAGE OR DANGER OF ANY PERSON.

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STRICTER CONTROL ON USE OF MOTORCYCLES
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THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. ALAN ARMSTRONG-WRIGHT, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT THE INCREASING USE OF MOTOR CYCLES ON FOOTPATHS AND TRACKS AND OVER THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE WAS CAUSING NUISANCE AND DANGER BOTH TO LOCAL RESIDENTS AND PEOPLE WHO WANTED TO ENJOY THE COUNTRYSIDE.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS A DANGER OF EROSION BEING CAUSED, PARTICULARLY WHERE MOTOR CYCLES WERE RIDDEN ACROSS OPEN COUNTRY.

MR. ARMSTRONG-WRIGHT WAS MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1976 WHICH SEEKS TO PROHIBIT THE USE OF MOTOR CYCLES BOTH ON UNLEASED CROWN LAND OTHER THAN ROADS, AND ON PEDESTRIAN ROADS.

THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE BILL, HE SAID, WAS TO BRING THIS SITUATION UNDER CONTROL BEFORE IT GOT OUT OF HAND.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, PUBLIC SERVANTS ON DUTY AND PEOPLE ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, CONSTRUCTION WORK OR SIMILAR ACTIVITY, WHO HAD A LEGITIMATE NEED TO RIDE MOTOR CYCLES ON PEDESTRIAN ROADS AND ON UNLEASED CROWN LAND, WOULD BE EXEMPTED FROM THE PROVISION OF THIS BILL.

+ALSO THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT MAY ISSUE PERMITS TO OTHER LEGITIMATE USERS AND MAY EXEMPT CERTAIN PEDESTRIAN ROADS FROM THE PROVISION OF THIS BILL, FOR EXAMPLE, TO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL ACCESS TO VILLAGES,+ MR. ARMSTRONG-WRIGHT ADDED.

HE SUGGESTED THAT MOTOR CYCLISTS WHO ENJOYED ROUGH RIDING AS A PASTIME COULD JOIN THE SCRAMBLES ORGANISED BY THE MOTOR SPORTS CLUB AT SUITABLE LOCATIONS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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LAW RELATING TO GAMBLING WILL BE AMENDED
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THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY, TODAY SAID THAT A BILL TO AMEND THE LAW RELATING TO GAMBLING WOULD BE INTRODUCED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT SESSION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN ON WHEN THE GAMBLING ORDINANCE WOULD BE AMENDED TO ENABLE THE COURTS TO TERMINATE THE TENANCY OF THE PREMISES WHERE A GAMBLING OFFENCE HAD BEEN PERSISTENTLY COMMITTED.

MR. HOBLEY SAID THE PRESENT INTENTION WAS THAT THE BILL SHOULD INCLUDE A PROVISION ALONG THE LINES TO WHICH MR. CHEONG-LEEN REFERRED.

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MAJOR CHANGES IN KOWLOON BUS SERVICES

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A MAJOR RE-ORGANISATION OF BUS SERVICES IN CENTRAL KOWLOON WILL BE INTRODUCED NEXT MONTH, A TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN REVEALED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE CHANGES WHICH WILL COME INTO EFFECT ON JULY 1, AIM TO IMPROVE BUS SERVICES THROUGH ROUTE EXTENSIONS AND ADDITIONAL CARRYING CAPACITY BY THE ALLOCATION OF EXTRA LARGE CAPACITY BUSES.

THE AREAS AFFECTED BY THE CHANGES ARE OI MAN, KOWLOON TONG, LOK FU AND WANG TAU HOM.

AT THE SAME TIME, A TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEME WILL BE INTRODUCED AT OI MAN ESTATE TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC CIRCULATION IN THE AREA.

UNDER THE SCHEME, HAU MAN STREET WILL BE RE-ROUTED ONE WAY NORTHBOUND AND PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES WILL BE PROHIBITED FROM THE SECTION OF CHUNG HAU STREET IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ESTATE. A PLB STAND WILL BE PROVIDED IN HAU MAN STREET.

K.M.B. ROUTE 1 WILL BE EXTENDED BEYOND LOK FU BY WAY OF TUNG TAU TSUEN ROAD AND FUNG MO STREET TO WANG TAU HOM AND THE BASIC FREQUENCY INCREASED FROM EVERY SIX MINUTES TO EVERY FIVE MINUTES.

ON ROUTE 7 BETWEEN STAR FERRY AND KOWLOON TONG, THE BASIC FREQUENCY WILL BE INCREASED FROM EVERY SIX TO SEVEN MINUTES TO EVERY FIVE MINUTES IN ASSOCIATION WITH A MAJOR RE-ROUTING OF ROUTE 7A WHICH WILL OPERATE BETWEEN HUNG HOM RAILWAY STATION AND LOK FU AT A BASIC 10 MINUTES FREQUENCY VIA CHATHAM ROAD, NATHAN ROAD, WATERLOO ROAD AND JUNCTION ROAD.

ROUTE 7B WILL BE DIVERTED VIA CHUNG HAU STREET TO SERVE OI MAN ESTATE AND ROUTE 8 WILL BE EXTENDED BEYOND HUNG HOM TO STAR FERRY SO AS TO PROVIDE DIRECT SERVICES BETWEEN OI MAN ESTATE AND TSIM SHA TSUI AT A 30-CENT FARE.

ROUTE 20 WILL OMIT HAU MAN STREET ON SOUTHBOUND JOURNEYS FROM OI MAN ESTATE IN CONNECTION WITH THE ONE-WAY TRAFFIC ROUTING OF THIS ROAD NORTHBOUND.

THE SCHEME, DRAWN UP BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT IN CONSULTATION WITH K.M.B., IS DESIGNED TO IMPROVE BUS FACILITIES AT VARIOUS ESTATES IN THE CENTRAL KOWLOON AREA, PARTICULARLY AT OI MAN, LOK FU, WANG TAU HOM AND TUNG TAU TSUEN.

NOT ONLY WILL DIRECT SERVICES BE AVAILABLE BETWEEN OI MAN AND TSIM SHA TSUI BUT ALSO PASSENGERS WISHING TO REACH THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC AND HUNG HOM RAILWAY STATION WILL HAVE DIRECT FACILITIES FROM NATHAN ROAD, SOUTH OF WATERLOO ROAD.

NOTICES GIVING FULL DETAILS OF THE REVISED ROUTES AND TIMETABLES WILL BE POSTED AT ALL BUS STOPS AND TERMINAL POINTS AFFECTED.

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COURTESY CALL ON DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE

NEW MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE LOK SIN TONG BENEVOLENT SOCIETY PAID A COURTESY CALL ON THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MR. THOMAS LEE, THIS (WEDNESDAY) MORNING.

THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS, LED BY THEIR CHAIRMAN, MR. LAU SAI-YAN, HELD TALKS WITH MR. LEE ON THE SOCIETY'S WORK IN THE WELFARE FIELD.

THEY ALSO EXCHANGED VIEWS ON THE SOCIETY'S PROPOSAL TO BUILD AN OLD PEOPLE'S HOME IN TAI PO.

THE HOME, CAPABLE OF HOUSING 230 ELDERLY RESIDENTS, IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED IN 1978.

DURING THE TALKS THE DIRECTOR ASSURED THE VISITORS THAT THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE LOK SIN TONG IN ITS ENDEAVOURS IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL WELFARE WORK.

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WATER CUT

WATER SUPPLY TO A NUMBER OF PREMISES IN HUNG HOM, KOWLOON, WILL BE INTERRUPTED FOR FIVE HOURS FROM 1 A.M. ON FRIDAY (JUNE 25).

THIS IS TO ENABLE THE WATERWORKS OFFICE TO CARRY OUT LEAKAGE TESTS IN THE AREA.

THE PREMISES TO BE AFFECTED ARE BOUNDED BY FAT KWONG STREET, SHUN YUNG STREET, KO SHAN ROAD, KIANG HSI STREET, KAU PUI LUNG ROAD, LOK SHAN ROAD, KOWLOON CITY ROAD, MA TAU WEI ROAD, BAILEY STREET, SUNG KIT STREET, HOK YUEN STREET, AND CHATHAM ROAD.

PREMISES ON PAK KUNG STREET, SAN WEI STREET, SAN LAU STREET, SHEK TONG STREET, GILLIES AVENUE, ANHUI STREET, CHI KIANG STREET, KIANG SU STREET, MAIDSTONE ROAD, CHUN TIN STREET, SUNG CHI STREET AND SUNG KIT STREET WILL ALSO BE AFFECTED.

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