



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 1981

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PUBLIC VIEWS ON RENTS TO BE FULLY CONSIDERED

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THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON DONALD LIAO, HAS GIVEN AN ASSURANCE THAT FULL CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED ON THE PROPOSALS RELATING TO RENT CONTROLS FOR POST-WAR DOMESTIC PREMISES.

HE GAVE THE ASSURANCE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY WHEN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

MR LIAO NOTED THAT THE SUBJECT OF RENT CONTROL WAS A COMPLEX ONE ON WHICH IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT THERE WOULD EVER BE A CONSENSUS AMONG THE DIFFERENT SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY.

+THE AIM MUST BE TO STRIKE A REASONABLE BALANCE BETWEEN THE INTERESTS OF THE PARTIES CONCERNED,+ HE SAID.

OUTLINING THE BACKGROUND TO THE BILL, HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH IT HAS BEEN ACCEPTED THAT, AS SOON AS CIRCUMSTANCES PERMIT, EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO PHASE OUT RENT CONTROLS, +IT WOULD BE CLEARLY WRONG TO TAKE A DECISION TO REMOVE THEM SO RAPIDLY THAT CHAOS WOULD RESULT.+

+GOVERNMENT, AFTER CAREFUL STUDY OF ALL THE FACTORS HAS CONCLUDED THAT THE EXISTING RENT CONTROL SYSTEM, WITH MINOR MODIFICATIONS, SHOULD BE RETAINED FOR THE TIME BEING.

+HOWEVER, THE SITUATION WILL BE KEPT UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW, AND THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF GOVERNMENT POLICY WILL BE DECIDED IN THE LIGHT OF THE EFFECT OF THE MEASURES NOW PROPOSED,+ HE SAID.

THE BILL PROPOSES TO EXTEND PART II OF THE ORDINANCE FOR TWO FURTHER YEARS BEYOND THE PRESENT EXPIRY DATE OF DECEMBER 18, 1981. AT THE SAME TIME, A NUMBER OF AMENDMENTS ARE TO BE MADE ALONG THE LINES PROPOSED BY THE COMMITTEE OF REVIEW.

THESE INCLUDE, RAISING THE BIENNIAL PERCENTAGE CEILING ON RENT INCREASES FROM 21 PER CENT TO 30 PER CENT= AND, EXCLUDING FROM CONTROLS UNDER PART II OF THE ORDINANCE - PREMISES IN RESPECT OF WHICH AN OCCUPATION PERMIT IS FIRST ISSUED ON OR AFTER JUNE 19, 1981= AFTER DECEMBER 18, 1981, TENANCIES OF PREMISES WITH A CURRENT RATEABLE VALUE OF \$80 000 OR MORE= AND AFTER DECEMBER 18, 1982, TENANCIES OF PREMISES WITH A CURRENT RATEABLE VALUE OF \$60 000 OR MORE.

/MR LIAO

MR LIAO NOTED THAT THE LATEST ANALYSIS OF RENT INCREASES REPORTED TO THE RATING AND VALUATION DEPARTMENT UNDER THE ORDINANCE SHOWS THAT THE CONTROLLED RENT OF THE AVERAGE TENANCY HAD FALLEN TO ABOUT 35 PER CENT OF THE FAIR MARKET RENT -- A DROP OF ABOUT FIVE PER CENT FROM THAT NOTED BY THE COMMITTEE OF REVIEW IN EARLY 1980.

+THIS LEVEL OF CONTROLLED RENT RELATIVE TO THE FAIR MARKET RENT IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO DECLINE IF THE PRESENT RENT INCREASE CEILING IS MAINTAINED AT 21 PER CENT EVERY TWO YEARS,+ HE SAID.

+BY RAISING THE CEILING TO 30 PER CENT, IT IS HOPED THAT THE RATE AT WHICH THE CONTROLLED RENTS HAVE BEEN FALLING BEHIND MARKET RENTS WILL BE SLOWED DOWN.+

MR LIAO STRESSED THAT THE PROPOSED LIMIT OF 30 PER CENT, AS AGAINST THE EXISTING LIMIT OF 21 PER CENT, IS THE MAXIMUM BY WHICH A LANDLORD WILL BE PERMITTED TO INCREASE THE RENT OF A CONTROLLED PREMISES.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT IN CASES WHERE THE EXISTING RENT STANDS AT MORE THAN 62-1/2 PER CENT OF MARKET RENT, THE TENANT WILL CONTINUE TO BENEFIT FROM THE FACTOR SYSTEM WHICH HAS THE EFFECT OF REDUCING THE SIZE OF INCREASE PERMITTED BY LAW IN SUCH CASES TO LESS THAN 30 PER CENT.

MR LIAO SAID MOST OF THE NEW TENANCIES WHICH HAVE BEEN AGREED SINCE CONTROLS WERE LAST EXTENDED IN DECEMBER 1979 WOULD BENEFIT FROM THE FACTOR SYSTEM. +THE MAXIMUM INCREASE OF 30 PER CENT WILL APPLY MAINLY TO TENANCIES ENTERED INTO BEFORE THAT TIME AND WHICH WILL HAVE ENJOYED RENTS WELL BELOW MARKET RENTS FOR A CONSIDERABLE PERIOD -- PERHAPS SINCE 1973 WHEN THE PRESENT CONTROLS WERE INTRODUCED.+

THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM, MR LIAO SAID, LAY IN MEASURES TO INCREASE PRODUCTION OF FLATS FOR THE RENTAL MARKET, AND THIS IN TURN DEPENDED ON GREATER SUPPLY OF LAND.

+THE PROPOSED EXCLUSION FROM CONTROL OF NEW BUILDINGS AND LUXURY PREMISES IS INTENDED TO ACHIEVE THIS, BY ENCOURAGING DEVELOPERS TO BUILD MORE FLATS FOR THE RENTAL MARKET, AND TO INDUCE OWNERS TO RENT OUT THEIR FLATS INSTEAD OF HOLDING THEM VACANT FOR SPECULATIVE OR OTHER REASONS.

+BY THUS HELPING TO STIMULATE THE SUPPLY OF RENTED FLATS THESE MEASURES ARE EXPECTED TO HAVE A POSITIVE STABILISING EFFECT ON THE MOVEMENT OF RENT,+ HE SAID.

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GOVERNMENT URGED TO DISCOUNT PUBLIC DONATIONS

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THE GOVERNMENT WAS TOLD TO DISCOUNT ALL UNDESIGNATED COMMUNITY CHEST ALLOCATIONS AND PUBLIC DONATIONS IN THEIR CALCULATION OF SUBVENTIONS TO VOLUNTARY WELFARE AGENCIES.

AND IT WAS ALSO URGED TO IMPLEMENT WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY THE RECOMMENDATIONS PROPOSED IN A GOVERNMENT WORKING PARTY REPORT, PUBLISHED IN JUNE LAST YEAR, TO IMPROVE THE SUBVENTION SYSTEM.

THESE SUGGESTIONS WERE MADE BY DR HARRY FANG, THE REV JOYCE BENNETT, DR HO KAM-FAI AND MR F.K. HU AT THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON SOCIAL WELFARE SUBVENTIONS POLICY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

DR FANG DESCRIBED THE CURRENT SUBVENTION SYSTEM AS +OUTDATED+ AND CALLED FOR ITS REPLACEMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BY A MORE EFFICIENT SYSTEM +WHICH WILL ENSURE THAT THE SERVICES REQUIRED BY THE COMMUNITY ARE PROVIDED AND ADEQUATELY FUNDED+.

HE SAID: +THE MAIN DEFECTS OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM ARE THAT THERE ARE NO CLEAR-CUT GUIDELINES TO FOLLOW, THE ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES' COSTS IS SUBJECTIVE, AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES CANNOT BE CERTAIN FROM YEAR TO YEAR AS TO HOW MUCH THEY WILL GET FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND THIS MAKES PLANNING OF THEIR BUDGET DIFFICULT. CERTAINTY IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE.

+AN ADDED CONTROVERSY IS WHETHER GENERAL DONATIONS RECEIVED FROM THE PUBLIC, UNDESIGNATED COMMUNITY CHEST ALLOCATIONS AND FUNDS RAISED BY VOLUNTARY AGENCIES THEMSELVES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS INCOME LEADING TO A CORRESPONDING REDUCTION IN GOVERNMENT SUBVENTION - THE SO-CALLED 'SEE-SAW EFFECT'.+

COMMENTING ON THE WORKING PARTY'S PROPOSAL TO CLASSIFY SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES INTO THREE CATEGORIES, NAMELY +ESSENTIAL+, +NECESSARY+ AND +DESIRABLE+, DR FANG FELT IT WOULD IN PRACTICE CREATE DIFFICULTIES AND BE SUBJECT TO VALUE JUDGEMENTS.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE CLASSIFICATION BE CONFINED TO TWO NEUTRAL CATEGORIES - PRIORITIES 1 AND 2 - BOTH OF WHICH SHOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR SUBVENTIONS.

+THE FIRST CATEGORY SHOULD BE SUBVENTED FULLY, CALCULATED ON ACTUAL BASIC COST, PREFERABLY WITH AGREED SETS OF CODES OF AIDS FOR DIFFERENT SERVICES, IN ORDER TO ENABLE INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES, EVEN WITHOUT ADDITIONAL INCOME, TO RUN A BASIC APPROVED SERVICE,+ HE SAID.

/+FOR THE

+FOR THE SECOND CATEGORY, THE GOVERNMENT HAVING EXAMINED AND APPROVED INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES' BUDGETS SHOULD GIVE A DISCRETIONARY GRANT OF 75 TO 80 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL COST IN A LUMP SUM AND ALLOW THE AGENCIES TO GET ON WITH THEIR WORK WITH AUTONOMY AND FLEXIBILITY.+

ALL DONATIONS RECEIVED AND INCOME RAISED BY VOLUNTARY AGENCIES FROM OTHER SOURCES SHOULD BE DISCOUNTED SO THAT THEY WOULD KNOW WHERE THEY STAND AND PLAN ACCORDINGLY, HE SAID.

DR FANG FURTHER SUGGESTED THAT THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, WITH AN UNOFFICIAL CHAIRMAN, SHOULD BE AN EFFECTIVE FORUM TO EXAMINE AND REVIEW FROM TIME TO TIME THE CLASSIFICATION OF CATEGORIES AND THE STANDARD OF EACH TYPE OF SERVICES.

HE HOPED THAT THE WORKING PARTY'S RECOMMENDATIONS COULD BE IMPLEMENTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SO THAT FUTURE FINANCING OF SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR COULD BE PUT ON A SOUND AND PERMANENT BASIS.

IN THE INTERIM PERIOD, HE ADDED, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAKE A CONCERTED EFFORT TO MINIMISE THE +SEE-SAW EFFECT+ AND TO ASSIST VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WHICH MAY BE IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES.

HE ALSO CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO PLACE MORE EMPHASIS ON EXPERIENCE, PERFORMANCE AND MOTIVATION RATHER THAN ON MERE PAPER QUALIFICATION WHEN SETTING THE STANDARDS FOR A PARTICULAR JOB.

MISS BENNETT SAID THE +SEE-SAW EFFECT+ OF CUTTING BACK GOVERNMENT SUBVENTIONS BY THE AMOUNT OF THEIR RESOURCES FROM OTHER SOURCES IS +DEBILITATING AND DISCOURAGING+.

+HAS THE GOVERNMENT EVER COSTED THE AMOUNT OF TIME GIVEN BY THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES' PAID EMPLOYEES IN FUND RAISING CAMPAIGNS?

+THAT TIME SHOULD BE SPENT ON PROVIDING THE SERVICES FOR WHICH THOSE POSTS ARE SUBVENTED.+

SHE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO SUBVENT A QUALIFIED ACCOUNTS CLERK IN EACH INSTITUTION SO THAT THEIR ACCOUNTS CAN BE PROPERLY KEPT.

IN THIS WAY, THERE CAN BE PROPER DAY-TO-DAY SUPERVISION AND CONTROL TO GIVE SATISFACTORY ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN THE INSTITUTION.

AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD THEN BE CONFIDENT THAT ITS SUBVENTIONS WERE BEING EFFICIENTLY MANAGED, SHE SAID.

MISS BENNETT ALSO TOOK ISSUE WITH THE SOCIAL SERVICES BRANCH FOR ITS SLOWNESS IN FOLLOWING UP THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE WORKING PARTY REPORT.

SHE SAID SHE WAS TOLD THE REPORT HAS NOT YET BEEN DISCUSSED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SWAC) ALTHOUGH THE OFFICIALS, IN ANSWERING HER QUESTIONS ON SOCIAL WELFARE SUBVENTIONS MANY TIMES IN FINANCE COMMITTEE, HAVE SAID THAT THEY ARE DECIDED BY SWAC.

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+IF IT IS TRUE THAT THESE NEW PROPOSALS HAVE NOT YET BEEN TO SWAC, I FIND IT VERY STRANGE,+ SHE SAID.

+THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG WORK HARD TO IMPROVE THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING.

+THEY DO NOT TAKE KINDLY TO THE DELAYS PRODUCED BY THE DEPARTMENTS WITHIN THE SOCIAL SERVICES BRANCH.+

DR HO SAID THE PRESENT SUBVENTIONS POLICY, CHARACTERISED BY DISCRETIONARY GRANTS, FALLS SHORT OF FULFILLING THE GOVERNMENT'S DECLARED COMMITMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR SOCIAL WELFARE.

+THIS IS BECAUSE IT STILL OPERATES ON THE OUTDATED NOTION OF REQUIRING THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR TO RELY ON PRIVATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES, INCLUDING PERSONAL DONATIONS, COMMUNITY CHEST ALLOCATIONS, AND CHARITABLE TRUST FUNDS BEFORE CONSIDERATION OF SUBSIDIES FROM THE PUBLIC COFFERS.

+IN THE LIGHT OF AN EXPANDING PROGRAMME OF WELFARE SERVICES TO MEET THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY, THIS ARCHAIC SUBVENTION METHOD IS INAPPROPRIATE AND A REVISION IS OVERDUE.+

HE THOUGHT THE BASIC PROPOSALS MADE BY THE WORKING PARTY OFFER A MUCH-PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE AND WARRANT PROMPT IMPLEMENTATION.

REFERRING TO THE PROPOSED BASIC COST SUBVENTION SYSTEM, DR HO SAID IT REPRESENTS A GREAT STRIDE FORWARD BECAUSE IT COMMITS THE GOVERNMENT TO MEET THE FULL COSTS OF PROVIDING SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES IN THE +ESSENTIAL+ AND +NECESSARY+ CATEGORIES AT PREDETERMINED STANDARDS.

INCOME FROM OTHER SOURCES RAISED BY THE VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS CAN BE UTILISED FREELY FOR WHATEVER PURPOSES THEY SEE FIT, HE SAID.

+HOWEVER, IN CONSIDERING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF SERVICES OUTSIDE THESE TWO CATEGORIES, I WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE GOVERNMENT MAKE A DISCRETIONARY LUMP SUM GRANT WITHOUT REGARD TO THE SPONSORING AGENCY'S SOURCES OF PRIVATE FUNDING, INCLUDING COMMUNITY CHEST ALLOCATIONS.

+MY ARGUMENTS ARE THAT SOME OF THE 'DESIRABLE' SERVICES, THOUGH LOW IN THE GOVERNMENT'S OVERALL PRIORITIES, ARE VERY SOCIALLY DESERVING AND ARE JUDICIOUSLY ALLEVIATING THE HARDSHIP AND DISTRESS OF CERTAIN GROUPS OF THE POPULATION.

+VOLUNTARY AGENCIES MAY, IN ADDITION, RUN EXPERIMENTAL PROJECTS TO MEET SOCIAL NEEDS OF SELECTED MINORITY SOCIAL GROUPS OR TO TEST THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CERTAIN METHODS OF INTERVENTION.+

DR HO NOTED THAT THE PRESENT MODEL SYSTEM, ADOPTED SINCE 1979 AS AN INTERIM MEASURE TO PROCESS SUBVENTION APPLICATIONS, HAS RESULTED IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES IN A NUMBER OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES.

/AS THE

AS THE BASIC COST SUBVENTION SYSTEM WOULD PROBABLY TAKE SOME YEARS TO BE FULLY IMPLEMENTED, HE CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO LOOK AT THEIR FINANCIAL PROBLEM WITH PARTICULAR SYMPATHY AND CONSIDER WAYS AND MEANS TO REMEDY IT.

+A SIMPLE SOLUTION IS FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO DISREGARD A CERTAIN PERCENTAGE OF THE AGENCIES' OTHER INCOME IN THE CALCULATION OF SUBVENTIONS.

+THE RATE OF DISCOUNT FOR EACH AGENCY CAN BE DETERMINED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS FINANCIAL STATUS,+ DR HO SAID.

MR HU OPINED THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR MUST REMAIN PARTNERS IN THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES.

IT IS THROUGH THE SPIRIT OF PARTNERSHIP AND SINCERE CO-OPERATION AND WITH THE KEEN SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY THAT WE CAN HOPE TO ACHIEVE THE BEST RESULTS, HE POINTED OUT.

+IF THE RIGHT SPIRIT IS LACKING, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE PROBLEMS AND ARGUMENTS WHATEVER SUBVENTION SYSTEM IS TO BE ADOPTED.+

MR HU WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED WITH THE DAMAGE WHICH THE RECENT CONTROVERSY OVER THE EXISTING SUBVENTIONS POLICY MIGHT DO TO THE FUND RAISING EFFORTS AND THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE COMMUNITY TO HELP THE UNDER-PRIVILEGED.

HE NOTED THAT HONG KONG IS FAMOUS FOR THE PHILANTHROPY OF ITS CITIZENS.

THIS CAN BE SEEN FROM THE ENTHUSIASM DISPLAYED BY THE LARGE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN SUCH CAMPAIGNS AS +WALK FOR A MILLION+, THE RESPONSE OF TELEVISION VIEWERS TO APPEALS FOR FUNDS BY CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS OR AFTER A MAJOR NATURAL DISASTER, AS WELL AS THE VERY LARGE AMOUNTS RAISED THROUGH VARIOUS PROGRAMMES, HE SAID.

+NO ONE WILL ARGUE THAT IT WOULD BE A GREAT PITY TO SEE SUCH ENTHUSIASM AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION DISAPPEAR ONCE IT HAS BECOME POLICY FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO PICK UP THE ENTIRE BILL OF FINANCING VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, IMPLYING THAT IT IS NO LONGER NECESSARY FOR THE COMMUNITY TO RAISE FUNDS.+

HE HOPED THAT WHATEVER NEW POLICY IS TO BE FORMULATED, IT SHOULD NOT HAVE THE SIDE EFFECT OF DISCOURAGING VOLUNTARY AGENCIES FROM RAISING FUNDS NOR THE COMMUNITY FROM GIVING TO CHARITY.

+EVEN IF THE GOVERNMENT HAS COMMITTED ITSELF TO FINANCING 100 PER CENT OF THE BASIC WELFARE SERVICES, WAYS AND MEANS MUST BE FOUND TO MAINTAIN THE INCENTIVE FOR THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES TO RAISE FUNDS AND THE COMMUNITY TO CONTINUE GIVING TO CHARITY.

+THIS, I THINK, IS A FAR MORE IMPORTANT ISSUE TO BE RESOLVED,+ MR HU SAID.

REVISED SUBVENTION SYSTEM PROPOSED

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THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON E.P. HO TODAY (WEDNESDAY) OUTLINED A PROPOSED REVISED SUBVENTION SYSTEM WHICH SEEKS TO PROVIDE MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY AND FREEDOM OF ACTION FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR.

SPEAKING AT THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON SOCIAL WELFARE SUBVENTION SYSTEM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR HO SAID THE NEW SYSTEM WOULD ALSO ENSURE THAT SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES WERE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH APPROVED STANDARDS AND TARGETS AND THAT THERE WAS A DEGREE OF ACCOUNTABILITY ON THE PART OF THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES COMMENSURATE WITH THE INCREASED LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT SUPPORT.

THE PROPOSED CHANGES, WHICH REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT STEP FORWARD IN HONG KONG'S SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES, ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- (1) A RANKING ORDER SHOULD BE INTRODUCED FOR FUNDING PURPOSES. SERVICES IN PRIORITY I WILL BE SUBVENTED IN FULL IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDARD COSTS TO BE DETERMINED ON THE ADVICE OF THE RELEVANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE. PRIORITY II WILL ATTRACT LESS THAN 100 PER CENT SUPPORT, SUCH SUPPORT TO VARY WITH DIFFERENT PROGRAMMES. HOWEVER, AGENCIES PROVIDING SUCH SERVICES WILL BE NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE OF THE PRECISE LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT SUPPORT.
- (2) ALL INCOME RAISED BY VOLUNTARY AGENCIES THROUGH FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES, WHETHER UNDERTAKEN ON THEIR OWN, OR ON THEIR BEHALF BY THE COMMUNITY CHEST, OR FROM UNSOLICITED DONATIONS, WILL BE DISREGARDED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CALCULATING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT.
- (3) STANDARD COSTS WILL BE ASSESSED ON THE BASIS OF THE NUMBERS AND LEVELS OF STAFF REQUIRED TO PROVIDE A PARTICULAR SERVICE AND ON OTHER NECESSARY ITEMS OF EXPENDITURE SUCH AS FUEL, LIGHT, MINOR STAFF COST OR PROGRAMME EXPENSES. THESE COSTS WILL BE REVIEWED REGULARLY. HAVING DETERMINED THE STANDARD COSTS AND PROVIDED THE FUNDS, AGENCIES WILL HAVE MAXIMUM FREEDOM IN DEPLOYING THE RESOURCES TO THEIR BEST ADVANTAGE WITHIN BROAD GUIDELINES TO BE ADVISED BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE. THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT SEEK TO CONTROL RIGIDLY THE INPUTS BUT WILL BE CONCERNED TO ENSURE THAT THE FUNDS ALLOCATED ARE EFFECTIVELY SPENT.

- (4) AGENCIES WILL BE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE THE SERVICES REQUIRED WITHIN THE SUMS ALLOCATED. THERE WILL BE NO +TOPPING UP+ OR +CLAWING BACK+ OF SAVINGS. HOWEVER, ANY SAVINGS THAT MIGHT ACCRUE FOR WHATEVER REASON MUST BE KEPT IN A SEPARATE ACCOUNT AND SUCH FUNDS MAY NOT BE USED WITHOUT THE SPECIFIC APPROVAL OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE.

MR HO SAID THE NEW SYSTEM WAS A ROUGH AND READY MEASURE NOT SUSCEPTIBLE TO FINE-TUNING WITHOUT THE INTRODUCTION OF RIGID CONTROLS.

+THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT SUCH CONTROLS ARE IN THE INTEREST OF THE COMMUNITY OR THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES PROVIDING THE SERVICES.

+I MUST, HOWEVER, STRESS THAT VERY CLOSE MONITORING OF THE SERVICES SO FUNDED AND PROVIDED BY THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WILL BE REQUIRED AND THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT WILL NEED TO BE STRENGTHENED TO ACHIEVE THIS AIM.+

MR HO HAD EARLIER GIVEN A CATEGORICAL ASSURANCE THAT SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMMES WERE NOT BEING AFFECTED +BY ANY ALLEGED FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES FACED BY VOLUNTARY AGENCIES+, AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT ALLOW SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMMES TO BE UNDERMINED IN THIS MANNER.

HE SAID A FEW AGENCIES HAD SUBMITTED REQUESTS TO THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE FOR SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS AND THESE WOULD BE PUT TO THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THEIR ADVICE.

+THIS AVENUE OF APPEAL IS WELL KNOWN TO AGENCIES AND I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THEY WILL USE IT IF THEY FEEL THE NEED,+ HE ADDED.

MR HO ALSO OUTLINED THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES AND THE SUBVENTION SYSTEM.

OVER THE YEARS, HE SAID, THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT HAS COME TO ACCEPT, IN THE MAIN, AGENCIES' OWN DECLARATION OF WHAT INCOME IS AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT APPROVED SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES AND HAS ENTIRELY DISCOUNTED GRANTS DESIGNATED BY DONORS FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES.

THERE IS ALSO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE COMMUNITY CHEST TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ONLY THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S ALLOCATIONS SO THAT AGENCIES CAN KEEP A PORTION OF THE GRANTS TO SPEND AS THEY SEE FIT.

THESE ARRANGEMENTS HAVE ALLOWED AGENCIES SCOPE TO PIONEER AND TO FINANCE NEW SERVICES, MANY OF WHICH HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN DEEMED WORTHY OF GOVERNMENT SUPPORT.

/+UNDOUBTEDLY

+UNDOUBTEDLY, FUNDING FROM ALL SOURCES, WHETHER FROM THE GOVERNMENT, THE COMMUNITY CHEST, THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB OR FROM PRIVATE DONORS HAVE TOGETHER ENABLED THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES TO GROW AND EXPAND AT A MUCH QUICKER PACE THAN WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE HAD THEY BEEN ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON GOVERNMENT SUBVENTIONS.

MR HO SAID THAT THIS COLLECTIVE EFFORT APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN TOTALLY OVERLOOKED, OR POSSIBLY DELIBERATELY DENIGRATED, IN THE RECENT OUTCRY.

IN CONCLUSION, MR HO SAID: +I ENTIRELY AGREE THAT WE MUST CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE A VIGOROUS, PROGRESSIVE AND RESPONSIBLE VOLUNTARY SECTOR. BUT I AM BOUND TO OBSERVE THAT WITH THE RAPID EXPANSION OF SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES AND THE GREATER RELIANCE ON GOVERNMENT SUPPORT, THE QUESTION TO WHICH WE MUST ADDRESS OURSELVES IS WHETHER MORE SERVICES, PARTICULARLY IN THE MORE DIFFICULT AREAS, SHOULD NOT BE RUN BY THE GOVERNMENT DIRECT.+

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124 DEATH SENTENCES COMMUTED TO JAIL TERMS
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DEATH SENTENCES IMPOSED ON 124 PERSONS SINCE NOVEMBER 16, 1966 HAVE BEEN COMMUTED TO TERMS OF IMPRISONMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES SAID IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHAN KAM-CHUEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

FIFTEEN OF THE 124 PERSONS HAVE SINCE BEEN RELEASED FROM JAIL, HE SAID.

MR DAVIES POINTED OUT THAT NOVEMBER 16, 1966 WAS THE DAY THE LAST CONVICTED MURDERER WAS EXECUTED IN HONG KONG.

STATISTICS ON HOMICIDE CASES REPORTED IN THE LAST 35 YEARS WERE ALSO SUBMITTED TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THE HIGHEST FIGURE OF 115 HOMICIDE CASES WAS REPORTED IN 1972, REPRESENTING A RATE OF 2.8 PER 100 000 POPULATION, WHILE THE LOWEST FIGURE OF 17 CASES IN 1957, REPRESENTED A RATE OF 0.6 PER 100 000 POPULATION.

UP TILL JUNE 19 THIS YEAR, THERE WERE 49 HOMICIDE CASES, HE REPORTED.

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FERRY FARES GO UP NEXT MONTH
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED A GENERAL INCREASE IN FARES ON FERRY SERVICES OF THE +STAR+ FERRY COMPANY AND THE HONG KONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY, EFFECTIVE FROM JULY 1, 1981.

PASSENGER FARES ON THE MAIN +STAR+ FERRY SERVICE FROM EDINBURGH PLACE TO TSIM SHA TSUI WILL BE INCREASED.

FIRST CLASS FARES WILL BE RAISED FROM 50 CENTS TO 60 CENTS FOR ADULTS AND FROM 30 CENTS TO 40 CENTS FOR CHILDREN, AND SECOND CLASS FARES FOR BOTH ADULTS AND CHILDREN FROM 30 CENTS TO 40 CENTS.

MONTHLY TICKET CHARGES WILL RISE FROM \$22.50 TO \$27 FOR ADULTS, AND FROM \$11.30 TO \$15 FOR CHILDREN.

THE FARES AND CHARGES ON MOST FERRY SERVICES OF THE HONG KONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY WILL ALSO BE RAISED.

FOR CROSS-HARBOUR SERVICES, THE INCREASES ARE FROM 60 CENTS TO 80 CENTS FOR ADULTS, AND 30 CENTS TO 40 CENTS FOR CHILDREN. FOR OUTLYING DISTRICTS AND TOLO HARBOUR SERVICES, THE INCREASES ARE GENERALLY 20 TO 33 PER CENT. THUS A \$1 FARE WILL BECOME \$1.30 AND A \$4 FARE BECOMES \$5.

INCREASES IN FREIGHT CHARGES WILL BE OF THE SAME PERCENTAGE -- A CHARGE OF 40 CENTS WILL BECOME 50 CENTS, AND A CHARGE OF \$2.50 BECOMES \$3.20.

FOR PRIVATE CARS AND TAXIS USING THE VEHICULAR FERRY SERVICE, THE CHARGES WILL BE INCREASED FROM \$3 TO \$4, AND GOODS VEHICLES FROM \$10 AND \$15 TO \$11 AND \$16 ACCORDING TO WEIGHT.

IN MOVING THE MOTION THAT THE +STAR+ FERRY COMPANY (SERVICES) ORDINANCE BE AMENDED, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON JOHN TODD POINTED OUT THE MAIN REASON FOR THE INCREASES IS TO OFFSET RISING COSTS, PARTICULARLY WAGES AND FUEL COSTS, AND TO ENSURE A REASONABLE LEVEL OF PROFITABILITY IN 1981 AND 1982.

HE ESTIMATED THAT POST-TAX PROFITS OF THE COMPANY IN 1981 AND 1982 WOULD BE ABOUT \$3.6 MILLION AND \$5.1 MILLION, COMPARED WITH AN AVERAGE OVER THE PREVIOUS THREE YEARS OF ABOUT \$4 MILLION.

+IT IS HOPED THAT NO FURTHER INCREASE IN FARES WILL BE NECESSARY UNTIL 1983 OR EVEN EARLY 1984,+ HE ADDED.

/EXPLAINING THE

EXPLAINING THE INCREASES IN PASSENGER FARES AND FREIGHT CHARGES ON FERRY SERVICES OF THE HONG KONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY, MR TODD SAID THE PROFIT OF THE COMPANY IN 1980 WAS SLIGHTLY MORE THAN THREE PER CENT, WHICH WAS LESS THAN THAT EXPECTED.

+THE EFFECT OF THE INCREASES WILL SIMPLY BE TO ENABLE THE COMPANY TO MAINTAIN A RETURN OF THREE PER CENT IN 1981,+ SAID MR TODD.

HE NOTED THAT A FURTHER INCREASE MIGHT BECOME NECESSARY IN 1982.

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STUDENT GUIDANCE, COUNSELLING SERVICES TO BE EXPANDED

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THE HON COLVYN HAYE, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT STUDENT GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES PLAY A ROLE IN AVERTING TRAGEDIES, BUT EMPHASISED THAT IT IS TOO EASY TO ASSUME THESE SERVICES ARE THE ONLY ANSWER TO SUCH TRAGEDY.

MR HAYE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER INCREASING THE PROVISION OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN VIEW OF THE RECENT SPATE OF SUICIDES AND ATTEMPTED SUICIDES AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN.

OF THE RECENT TRAGEDIES CONCERNING CHILDREN, THE DIRECTOR POINTED OUT, THREE HAD ACCESS TO GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES IN THEIR SCHOOLS AND IN THE FOURTH AS IN THE OTHERS, TEACHERS WERE COMPLETELY AT A LOSS TO UNDERSTAND THE MOTIVATION.

+HAVING SAID THIS, LET ME ADD THAT GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN ARE BEING EXPANDED AND THAT TEACHERS IN TRAINING AND IN SCHOOL ARE OFTEN REMINDED OF THEIR VITAL ROLE AS FIRST-LINE GUIDES AND COUNSELLORS,+ MR HAYE SAID.

THERE ARE NOW 132 STUDENT GUIDANCE OFFICERS COVERING 665 PRIMARY SCHOOL SESSIONS (67 PER CENT OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL POPULATION) AND IT IS INTENDED TO INCREASE THE TOTAL NUMBER OF SGOS TO COVER ALL PRIMARY SCHOOLS BY MARCH 1982.

NINETY-ONE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS FROM VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT ARE WORKING ON A PART-TIME BASIS COVERING 297 SECONDARY SCHOOLS (75 PER CENT OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL POPULATION). THIS NUMBER IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE IN SEPTEMBER 1981.

+THERE ARE DIFFICULTIES IN PROVIDING FULL-TIME COVERAGE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS BECAUSE OF A SHORTAGE OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS, BUT THIS ISSUE IS NOW UNDER REVIEW. INDEED, THE ENTIRE PROGRAMME PLAN FOR PERSONAL SOCIAL WORK AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE WILL BE EXAMINED IN DEPTH LATER THIS YEAR,+ MR HAYE SAID.

THE DIRECTOR SAID HE CANNOT EMPHASISE TOO STRONGLY THE IMPORTANT ROLE CLASSROOM TEACHERS HAVE TO PLAY IN THE PROVISION OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN.

A CLASS TEACHER, NEXT TO THE PARENT, IS IN CLOSEST CONTACT WITH CHILDREN AND IS USUALLY QUICK TO NOTICE EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS.

HOWEVER, MR HAYE SAID HE RECOGNISES THAT CLASS TEACHERS ARE VERY BUSY PEOPLE AND CLASSES ARE LARGE.

+AS THOUGHTFUL OBSERVERS AND PRACTISING TEACHERS HAVE RECENTLY COMMENTED, MORE TEACHERS ARE NEEDED IN SCHOOLS TO LIGHTEN THE LOAD AND TO PROVIDE GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHERS TO GET TO KNOW THEIR PUPILS' PROBLEMS.

+AN IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER TO CLASS RATIO WILL THEREFORE BE AN IMPORTANT FEATURE OF THE FORTHCOMING WHITE PAPER ON PRIMARY EDUCATION AND PRE-PRIMARY SERVICES, AND THE TEACHER TO CLASS RATIO FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IS ALSO BEING REVIEWED.

+I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT IN THE NEAR FUTURE MORE TEACHERS WILL BE ABLE TO GIVE INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION TO THEIR PUPILS AND THEIR PROBLEMS WILL BE NIPPED IN THE BUD,+ MR HAYE SAID.

THE DIRECTOR ALSO TURNED TO THE VALUABLE WORK OF CAREERS MASTERS AND MISTRESSES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN WHICH SOME 300 DEDICATED MEN AND WOMEN, IN ADDITION TO THEIR MANY TEACHING DUTIES, ARE PROVIDING CAREERS ADVICE TO SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVERS.

+MORE TEACHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS WILL ASSIST THIS VALUABLE ELEMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING, AND A RE-ALLOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE SENIOR SCHOOL STAFF IN THE CONTEXT OF RECENT IMPROVEMENTS OF THE SALARY AND CONDITIONS OF SENIOR GRADUATE TEACHERS SHOULD HELP,+ THE DIRECTOR SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT WAS VERY CONCERNED WITH THE STRESSES AND STRAINS WHICH SEEMED TO BESET SOME YOUNG PEOPLE AT HOME AND IN SCHOOL AND THIS CONCERN HAD BEEN UNDERLINED IN RECENT SEMINARS FOR HEADS OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS, AND IN DISCUSSION IN THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

+WE ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE PRESSURE OF OUR SOCIETY, ABOUT THE EROSION OF FAMILIAR SOCIAL VALUES, ABOUT GROWING INDISCIPLINE AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY.

+THIS IS AN ONGOING AND COMPLEX PROBLEM FOR WHICH THERE IS NO SIMPLE SNAP SOLUTION- BUT WE ARE GRAPPLING WITH IT AT ALL LEVELS AND WE THINK THE EXPANSION OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES WITH MORE TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS WILL GO SOME WAY TOWARDS EASING THE PRESSURE ON OUR CHILDREN,+ MR HAYE SAID.

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GOVERNMENT EFFORT 'WIDE-RANGING'

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THE GOVERNMENT IS ENGAGED IN WIDE-RANGING AND CONTINUING EFFORTS TO PROMOTE FAMILY, SCHOOL AND SOCIAL LIFE EDUCATION, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON E.P. HO SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

DESCRIBING THESE EFFORTS IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ANDREW SO, MR HO SAID THE FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAMME CONDUCTED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AIMS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF FAMILY LIFE BY ENHANCING UNDERSTANDING OF OTHERS AND OF RELATIONSHIP WITHIN THE FAMILY.

+IT IS COMPLEMENTARY TO THE PERSONAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY INDIVIDUALS THROUGH SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK AND COUNSELLING BY FAMILY SERVICES,+ HE ADDED.

APART FROM THAT, THE SCHOOLS ALSO PLAY THEIR PART IN EDUCATING THE YOUNG FOR LIFE IN SOCIETY.

SYLLABUS MATERIAL AND SUBJECTS, SUCH AS SOCIAL STUDIES, HEALTH EDUCATION, ECONOMIC AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND HOME ECONOMICS HELP DEVELOP ATTITUDES, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO ENABLE THEM TO BECOME USEFUL AND CONCERNED MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY, AWARE OF THEIR FAMILY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, HE SAID.

+THEY ARE ALSO INTENDED TO EDUCATE PUPILS ABOUT THEIR COMMUNITY AND ITS PLACE IN THE WORLD,+ MR HO SAID.

AND WITH THE SETTING UP OF MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES, DISTRICT BOARDS AND COMMUNITY AND YOUTH CENTRES PROMOTED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, COHESION WITHIN THE COMMUNITY IS STRENGTHENED, HE SAID.

HOWEVER, FAMILY, SCHOOL AND SOCIAL LIFE EDUCATION WAS ALSO THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY PARENT AND EVERY CITIZEN, MR HO CONCLUDED.

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MOVE TO STOP SPEEDBOATS CARRYING ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS
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A BILL WHICH SEEKS TO PROVIDE FOR THE MORE EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF VESSELS REQUIRED TO BE LICENSED WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE SHIPPING AND PORT CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1981, IF PASSED, WILL ALSO ENABLE EFFECTIVE ACTION TO BE TAKEN TO RESTRICT THE USE OF UNLICENSED MOTORISED PLEASURE CRAFT, INCLUDING THOSE EASILY REMOVED FROM THE WATER AND TRANSPORTED OR STORED ON LAND.

IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES SAID THE MARINE DEPARTMENT HAD PARTICULARS OF SOME 6 000 PLEASURE CRAFT AND THEIR OWNERS ON THEIR FILES. MANY OF THESE WERE OUT OF DATE.

HOWEVER, HE SAID THERE WERE BELIEVED TO BE ANOTHER 3 000 PLEASURE VESSELS WHICH HAD NEVER BEEN LICENSED.

+THIS SITUATION HAS ARISEN MOSTLY DUE TO IGNORANCE AND FORGETFULNESS BUT ALSO DUE TO THE INADEQUACY OF THE SANCTIONS FOR FAILING TO COMPLY WITH THE LICENSING PROVISIONS IN THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (PLEASURE VESSELS) REGULATIONS MADE UNDER THE SHIPPING AND PORT CONTROL ORDINANCE,+ HE SAID.

+IN OUR SITUATION THIS IS UNSATISFACTORY AND UNACCEPTABLE ESPECIALLY AS SOME PLEASURE VESSELS, ESPECIALLY SPEEDBOATS, HAVE BEEN AND ARE BEING USED TO BRING ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS FROM CHINA AND MACAU.+

MR DAVIES SAID THE SECURITY FORCES HAD HAD SOME NOTABLE SUCCESS IN ARRESTING VESSELS INVOLVED IN THIS TRADE. SINCE THE ACTIVITY STARTED, 79 SPEEDBOATS HAVE BEEN DETAINED IN SECURITY FORCE OPERATIONS, 24 CASES HAVE BEEN BROUGHT BEFORE THE COURTS AND 250 PERSONS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED.

+HOWEVER ON OCCASIONS, THESE VESSELS HAVE EVADED ARREST OR HAVE BEEN ABANDONED AFTER DETECTION. IN SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATIONS, IT HAS BEEN DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY THE OWNERS BECAUSE THE VESSELS HAVE NOT BEEN LICENSED.+

AS PART OF ITS CONTINUING OPERATIONS TO PREVENT ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION, THE GOVERNMENT WAS DETERMINED TO TAKE ALL POSSIBLE STEPS TO PUT AN END TO THIS TRAFFIC, MR DAVIES SAID.

/HE ALSO

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HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT, SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS APART, IT WAS VERY MUCH IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST THAT ALL PLEASURE CRAFT SHOULD BE LICENSED, SINCE A PRE-CONDITION FOR THE ISSUE OF LICENCE WAS THAT VESSEL OWNERS SHOULD HOLD THIRD PARTY INSURANCE.

THE PROPOSALS IN THE BILL ARE ALSO DESIGNED TO ASSIST IN THE ENFORCEMENT OF SPEED LIMITS RECENTLY INTRODUCED IN CERTAIN WATERS IN HONG KONG.

+IN SOME FLAGRANT VIOLATIONS OF THESE LIMITS, THE OFFENDING PLEASURE BOATS HAVE NOT BEEN IDENTIFIED BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT BEEN LICENSED,+ MR DAVIES SAID.

TO THIS END, THE BILL WILL ENABLE REGULATIONS TO BE MADE FOR THE SEIZURE AND IMPOUNDING OF ANY UNLICENSED VESSELS, BOTH IN AND OUT OF THE WATERS OF HONG KONG FROM THE TIME THAT THEY ARE FIRST LAUNCHED.

IT WILL ALSO INCREASE THE MAXIMUM PENALTY WHICH MAY BE IMPOSED UPON THE MASTER AND OWNER OF AN UNLICENSED VESSEL TO A FINE OF \$20 000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR ONE YEAR.

TO ASSIST IN THE FINDING AND REMOVAL OF UNLICENSED PLEASURE VESSELS OUT OF WATER, THE BILL INCLUDES NEW POWERS TO ENTER PREMISES, BUT SETS LIMITS ON THE EXERCISE OF THESE POWERS.

MR DAVIES SAID IT WAS PROPOSED THAT DOMESTIC PREMISES SHOULD ONLY BE ENTERED BY DAY AND WITH A WARRANT, AND THAT NON DOMESTIC PREMISES SHOULD BE ENTERED BY DAY WITHOUT A WARRANT AND BY NIGHT WITH WARRANT.

+I REALISE THAT SOME OF THE CHANGES PROPOSED IN THESE AMENDMENTS WILL BE REGARDED BY SOME AS BURDENSOME AND A BIT INCONVENIENT BUT I BELIEVE THAT THEY REPRESENT THE MINIMUM REQUIRED TO COUNTER THE ARRIVAL OF THE HIGH-SPEED MOTOR BOAT INTO THE ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION TRADE,+ HE SAID.

+I HOPE THEREFORE THAT THE BOATING AND SAILING COMMUNITY WILL RESPOND TO THESE NEW REQUIREMENTS RESPONSIBLY AND IN THIS WAY CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE SECURITY OF HONG KONG.+

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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THREE MAIN AIMS OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION SPELLED OUT
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BETTER COORDINATION OF SERVICES, SUBSTANTIAL UNOFFICIAL PARTICIPATION, AND THE HOLDING OF ELECTIONS WERE THE THREE AIMS OF GOVERNMENT IN THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION SCHEME, THE HON DENIS BRAY, SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR BRAY WAS SPEAKING AS HE MOVED THE SECOND READING OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS BILL 1981, WHICH WILL GIVE EFFECT TO THE DECISIONS ANNOUNCED IN THE WHITE PAPER ON DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION.

OF +THE THREE TARGETS+ WHICH GOVERNMENT IS AIMING FOR, MR BRAY SAID THAT THERE WAS SUFFICIENT EXPERIENCE TO DEAL WITH THE FIRST TWO BUT WITH REGARD TO THE THIRD TARGET, WHICH IS THE CONDUCTING OF ELECTIONS, ALTHOUGH THIS HAS NOT BEEN TACKLED BEFORE, PLANS ARE BEING CAREFULLY DRAWN UP BY ABLE ADMINISTRATORS TO DEAL WITH IT.

ASSISTED BY THE PUBLICITY WHICH WILL BE GIVEN TO OPPORTUNITIES THAT THE PUBLIC CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF, THE ELECTION TARGET WILL BE SUCCESSFUL IF ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE REGISTRATION OF VOTERS AND THE CASTING OF VOTES IS SIMPLE AND PUBLICITY IS SUFFICIENT, HE SAID.

+WE SHALL FAIL IF WE FAIL TO CONDUCT THE ELECTIONS COMPETENTLY, HONESTLY AND SIMPLY,+ MR BRAY SAID.

THE QUESTION OF ELECTION TURNOUT WAS NOT A MATTER FOR THE GOVERNMENT= IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S FUNCTION TO CREATE THE OPPORTUNITY - TO CONDUCT THE ELECTIONS.

+THE PEOPLE MUST DECIDE TO USE THE OPPORTUNITY OR NOT. THIS IS A MATTER OF CHOICE FOR THE ELECTORATE. NOBODY WILL BE FORCED TO REGISTER. NOBODY WILL BE FORCED TO VOTE. WHETHER PEOPLE VOTE OR NOT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO ENJOY PUBLIC SERVICES AND CONTINUE TO PAY TAXES,+ HE SAID.

MR BRAY SAID IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO FORECAST THE RESPONSE OF THE PUBLIC TO THE OPPORTUNITY OF ELECTING LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES. BUT HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE PEOPLE WILL USE THIS +NEW OPPORTUNITY+, OR A GOOD DEAL OF EFFORT WILL HAVE BEEN WASTED.

+THE CHOICE IS THEIRS; NOT THE GOVERNMENT'S,+ HE SAID.

IN EXPLAINING WHAT THE GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO ACHIEVE IN DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION REFORMS, MR BRAY SAID THE BILL IN MANY RESPECTS DOES NO MORE THAN FORMALISE WHAT IS HAPPENING ALREADY.

+WE KNOW THAT HONG KONG IS NOW SO BIG THAT BETTER COORDINATION FOLLOWS FROM REGIONALISATION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE. WE KNOW THAT IN ALL DISTRICTS THERE ARE MEN AND WOMEN OF GOOD SENSE WHO ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT INVITATIONS TO SERVE ON DISTRICT COMMITTEES.

/+WHAT IS

+WHAT IS QUITE NEW IS THAT FORMAL DIRECT ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD FOR AT LEAST HALF THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS,+ MR BRAY SAID.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THERE WILL BE 122 CONSTITUENCIES -- 76 IN THE URBAN AREAS AND 46 IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

+EVERYONE IN HONG KONG WILL LIVE IN ONE OF THESE CONSTITUENCIES. PRACTICALLY ALL ADULTS WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO VOTE IN THE ELECTIONS.

MR BRAY EXPLAINED THAT THE BOARDS COVER DISTRICTS, WITH BOUNDARIES DRAWN UP WITHOUT FORMAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT WANTED TO GET THE BOARDS +WORKING QUICKLY+.

THESE BOUNDARIES ARE NOW TRADITIONAL, BUT A BOUNDARIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MAY BE LATER SET UP TO DEAL WITH ADJUSTMENTS IF NECESSARY.

+THE QUESTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARDS WAS 'LEFT INDETERMINATE', IN THE WHITE PAPER AND THE BILL PROVIDES THAT THE CHAIRMEN OF THE FIRST BOARDS, UP TO MARCH 1985, WILL BE OFFICIALS. AFTER THAT DATE, THE CHAIRMEN WILL BE ELECTED BY THE BOARD MEMBERS FROM AMONG THEIR NUMBER,+ HE SAID.

THE TWO OTHER BILLS WHICH MR BRAY INTRODUCED ARE THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS BILL, WHICH OUTLINES THE PROCEDURES FOR ELECTIONS TO THE DISTRICT BOARDS AND THE URBAN COUNCIL, AND THE URBAN COUNCIL (AMENDMENT)(NO. 2) BILL, WHICH CHANGES THE URBAN COUNCIL ORDINANCE BY REMOVING THE ELECTION PROVISIONS.

ON THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS BILL, MR BRAY SAID ALL THAT MOST PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE BILL IS:

- * PRACTICALLY EVERYONE OVER 21 WHO HAS BEEN HERE SEVEN YEARS MAY VOTE,
- * TO BECOME ENTITLED TO VOTE YOU HAVE TO REGISTER, AND
- * ON ELECTION DAY YOU GO TO A POLLING STATION TO VOTE.

+THE WHOLE THING WILL BE MADE VERY SIMPLE,+ HE SAID.

WITH REGARD TO THE URBAN COUNCIL (AMENDMENT)(NO. 2) BILL, HE SAID IT CHANGES THE URBAN COUNCIL ORDINANCE BY TAKING OUT THE PROVISIONS FOR ELECTIONS (NOW CONTAINED IN THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS BILL, WHICH DEALS WITH ELECTIONS TO BOTH THE COUNCIL AND THE DISTRICT BOARDS) AND IT CHANGES THE COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL ITSELF.

DEBATE ON THE THREE BILLS WAS ADJOURNED.

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PLANS IN HAND TO EASE TUNNEL TRAFFIC
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POSITIVE STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN FOR PLANS TO BE MADE TO RELIEVE THE SERIOUS TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON JOHN TODD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON PETER WONG, MR TODD SAID THE CONSULTANTS COMMISSIONED LAST YEAR HAD EXAMINED THE LONG TERM FEASIBILITY OF ADDITIONAL HARBOUR CROSSINGS AND SHORT TERM MEANS OF BETTER UTILISATION OF THE EXISTING CAPACITY OF THE CROSS HARBOUR FACILITIES.

THE CONSULTANTS HAVE ALREADY REPORTED ON THE SHORT TERM MEANS AND WILL BE SUBMITTING A DRAFT REPORT ON THE LONG TERM MEASURES WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS.

+ON SHORT TERM MEASURES, THE CONSULTANTS HAVE SUGGESTED AN IMPROVEMENT TO THE VEHICULAR FERRY SERVICE AND A NUMBER OF MINOR WORKS TO IMPROVE THE TRAFFIC FLOW IN THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL APPROACH AREAS,+ HE SAID.

THESE SUGGESTIONS ARE BEING INVESTIGATED BY THE DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED.

MR TODD SAID THE CONSULTANTS HAD NOT RECOMMENDED THE ADOPTION OF THE CROSS HARBOUR COMPANY'S PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE A MEZZANINE DECK IN THE EXISTING TUNNEL.

+THE REASONS ARE PRINCIPALLY, DISRUPTION TO TRAFFIC DURING CONSTRUCTION, ENHANCED RISK DUE TO RESTRICTED ACCESS FOR FIRE FIGHTING AND DIFFICULTIES WITH ADDITIONAL CONNECTING APPROACH ROADS.+

NEVERTHELESS, A REAPPRAISAL OF THE PROPOSAL IS BEING UNDERTAKEN TO SEE IF THE PROBLEMS COULD BE OVERCOME.

IN THE MEDIUM AND LONG TERM, MR TODD SAID, CONGESTION IN THE EXISTING CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL COULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED IF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONSULTANTS REPORT ON LONG TERM IMPROVEMENT MEASURES WERE IMPLEMENTED.

+THESE COULD TAKE THE FORM OF EITHER A BRIDGE AT LEI YUE MUN, IF THE PROBLEM OF THE KAI TAK AIRPORT APPROACH GUIDANCE SYSTEM CAN BE RESOLVED, OR A THIRD TUBE ALONGSIDE THE EXISTING TUNNEL,+ HE SAID.

IN ADDITION, A WESTERN HARBOUR CROSSING LINKING HONG KONG ISLAND WITH KOWLOON VIA STONECUTTERS ISLAND MAY BE REQUIRED IN THE LONG TERM, HE ADDED.

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INDUSTRIAL SAFETY EFFORTS INCREASED
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THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN PROGRESSIVELY INCREASING ITS INDUSTRIAL SAFETY EFFORTS IN FOUR MAIN AREAS - EXPANSION OF THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE, IMPROVEMENT OF SAFETY LEGISLATION, INTENSIFICATION OF INDUSTRIAL SAFETY TRAINING AND PROMOTION WORK, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON J.N. HENDERSON, SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON WONG PO-YAN.

IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, THE NUMBER OF FACTORY INSPECTORS INCREASED BY ABOUT 80 PER CENT FROM 81 TO 145, AND THE FIELD OFFICES INCREASED FROM 15 TO 28, FIVE OF THEM BEING SPECIFICALLY CONCERNED WITH CONSTRUCTION SAFETY.

THE NUMBER OF FACTORY INSPECTORS IS EXPECTED TO REACH 250 IN 1984.

SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO THE SAFETY REGULATIONS CONCERNING LIFTING APPLIANCES AND FOR CONSTRUCTION SITE SAFETY, AND PENALTIES SPECIFIED IN THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT SETS OF REGULATIONS HAVE BEEN INCREASED TO \$50 000.

THE DEPARTMENT ALSO HOPED SOON TO INTRODUCE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE FACTORY FIRE SAFETY REGULATIONS AND TO MAKE NEW ELECTRICITY SAFETY REGULATIONS.

HOWEVER, THE MAIN THRUST OF RECENT LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENT HAS BEEN TO INCREASE PENALTIES AND TO IMPROVE SUBSTANTIALLY EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION.

INCREASED PENALTIES, TOGETHER WITH THE HIGHER EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION RATES, AND INCREASING CIVIL LIABILITY AWARDS BY THE COURTS, SHOULD CAUSE RELUCTANT EMPLOYERS TO TAKE MUCH GREATER INTEREST IN, AND CONCERN FOR, A SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT IN THEIR ENTERPRISES, HE ADDED.

ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY TRAINING, MR HENDERSON SAID THE DEPARTMENT'S INDUSTRIAL SAFETY TRAINING CENTRE HAS BEEN EXPANDING ITS ACTIVITIES IN CONDUCTING TRAINING COURSES, BENEFIT ABOUT 6 000 PARTICIPANTS A YEAR.

THE TRAINING OFFICERS OF THE CENTRE ALSO VISIT AND GIVE TALKS ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY TO TECHNICAL INSTITUTES, VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES, SCHOOLS, FACTORIES AND TRADE ASSOCIATIONS. THE TALKS ARE HEARD BY ABOUT 7 000 PEOPLE A YEAR.

A ONE-YEAR EVENING TRAINING COURSE STARTED IN 1979 IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC PRODUCED ABOUT 100 PROPERLY-TRAINED SAFETY OFFICERS IN TWO YEARS.

PROGRAMMES FOR THE PROMOTION OF INDUSTRIAL SAFETY HAVE BECOME MORE SOPHISTICATED AND EXTENSIVE, AND COVER A WIDE RANGE OF EDUCATIONAL AND PUBLICITY ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS EXHIBITIONS, SEMINARS, CONFERENCES, TV PROGRAMMES, PRESS COVERAGE, POSTERS, ADVERTISEMENTS, MOBILE THEATRE SHOWS AND VARIOUS TYPES OF COMPETITIONS.

IN THE LAST THREE FINANCIAL YEARS, THE EXPENDITURE ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY PUBLICITY AVERAGED ABOUT HALF-A-MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR, BUT IN THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR THE BUDGET AMOUNTED TO ONE MILLION DOLLARS.

+THE DEPARTMENT HAS RECENTLY OBTAINED THE SERVICES OF A SENIOR INFORMATION OFFICER SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR GIVING PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT TO THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE IN THE PUBLICITY ASPECT OF PROMOTING INDUSTRIAL SAFETY,+ HE NOTED.

MR HENDERSON POINTED OUT THAT THE COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY AND ACCIDENT PREVENTION OF THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD WHICH ALREADY HAS A SUB-COMMITTEE ON CONSTRUCTION SAFETY, HOPED TO ESTABLISH A SUB-COMMITTEE FOR EACH MAJOR INDUSTRY. ONE FOR THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY WOULD BE ESTABLISHED VERY SOON.

+IT IS HOPED THAT SUCH SUB-COMMITTEES WILL ENCOURAGE AND INVOLVE BOTH EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS IN THE PROMOTION OF INDUSTRIAL SAFETY, AND GIVE PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF LEGISLATION AND WORKING PROCEDURES TO CONTRIBUTE TO DEVELOPING A SAFER WORKING ENVIRONMENT,+ HE CONCLUDED.

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PROTECTION ADEQUATE

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THE GOVERNMENT IS SATISFIED THAT IF THE PROVISIONS OF THE BUILDING (DEMOLITION WORKS) REGULATIONS ARE FOLLOWED THERE IS ADEQUATE PROTECTION FOR THE PUBLIC AND WORKMEN ON THE SITE, THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, MR DAVID MCDONALD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI, MR MCDONALD SAID THAT ONLY THE CONTRACTOR ON THE SITE WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO ASSESS THE STABILITY OF A BUILDING UNDER DEMOLITION AND TO TAKE THE NECESSARY MEASURES TO AVERT DANGER.

+THE BUILDING (DEMOLITION WORKS) REGULATIONS THEREFORE MAKE THE CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEMOLITION WORKS INCLUDING APPOINTING AN EXPERIENCED SUPERVISOR,+ HE SAID.

+ALTHOUGH THE CONDITION OF A BUILDING BEING DEMOLISHED IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING, OCCASIONAL SPOT CHECKS OF BUILDING UNDER DEMOLITION ARE MADE BY THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE.

+IF ANY DANGEROUS PRACTICES ARE DISCOVERED, ACTION IS TAKEN TO STOP THE WORK IMMEDIATELY AND TO INSTITUTE ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES.+

MR MCDONALD POINTED OUT THAT DEFICIENCIES IN THE REGULATIONS HAD BEEN FOUND AND AMENDMENTS WERE MADE IN 1979 TO INCREASE SUBSTANTIALLY THE PENALTIES FOR OFFENCES.

+FURTHER AMENDMENTS CAME INTO OPERATION IN APRIL THIS YEAR COVERING AMONG OTHER MATTERS THE USE OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT,+ HE ADDED.

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NO POLICY CHANGE ON BOAT PEOPLE

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THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY IN REGARD TO VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE HAS NOT CHANGED FROM THAT ADOPTED IN 1979, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON LYDIA DUNN, MR DAVIES SAID THE POLICY IS TO ALLOW THESE PEOPLE TEMPORARY ASYLUM IN HONG KONG AGAINST A GUARANTEE GIVEN BY THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES THAT THEY WILL USE THEIR BEST ENDEAVOURS TO SECURE THEIR RESETTLEMENT OVERSEAS TO COUNTRIES OF PERMANENT ASYLUM.

+IN THE CASE OF THOSE RESCUED AT SEA BY PROPERLY-REGISTERED OCEAN-GOING VESSELS IN WHICH HONG KONG IS THEIR NEXT DESIGNATED PORT OF CALL AND WHERE THE VESSEL DOES NOT CALL AT ANY OTHER PORT FIRST, WE GRANT TEMPORARY ASYLUM AGAINST A GUARANTEE FROM THE COUNTRY OF THE FLAG CARRIER THAT IT WILL RESETTLE THEM WITHIN THREE MONTHS.+

DURING THIS PERIOD, MR DAVIES SAID, SUCH PERSONS ARE DETAINED AND ARE NOT PERMITTED TO WORK.

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THREE BILLS PASSED

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THREE BILLS, THE PUBLIC HOLIDAY (PRINCE OF WALES' WEDDING) BILL 1981, THE LABOUR TRIBUNAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1981 AND THE MAGISTRATES (AMENDMENT)(NO. 2) BILL 1981, WERE PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 1981

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PROVISIONAL TRADE FIGURES FOR MAY

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THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT TODAY PUBLISHED THE PROVISIONAL TRADE FIGURES FOR HONG KONG'S VISIBLE TRADE IN MAY 1981. THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS FOR MAY WAS \$10 302 MILLION, MADE UP OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS AT \$6 880 MILLION AND RE-EXPORTS AT \$3 422 MILLION. WITH IMPORTS AT \$11 737 MILLION, THE VISIBLE TRADE DEFICIT FOR MAY WAS \$1 435 MILLION.

COMPARED WITH THE SAME MONTH IN 1980, THERE WERE THE FOLLOWING INCREASES BY VALUE: \$912 MILLION OR 15.3 PER CENT FOR DOMESTIC EXPORTS, \$895 MILLION OR 35.4 PER CENT FOR RE-EXPORTS, \$1 807 MILLION OR 21.3 PER CENT FOR TOTAL EXPORTS AND \$2 281 MILLION OR 24.1 PER CENT FOR IMPORTS. THE VISIBLE TRADE +GAP+, THAT IS THE PROPORTION OF THE VALUE OF IMPORTS NOT COVERED BY THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS, WAS 12.2 PER CENT IN MAY THIS YEAR, COMPARED WITH 10.2 PER CENT IN MAY 1980.

PUTTING THE MONTH'S FIGURES INTO CONTEXT, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS FOR THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF THIS YEAR WAS 25.5 PER CENT HIGHER THAN FOR THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF 1980 WHILE THE VALUE OF IMPORTS WAS 25.6 PER CENT HIGHER. FURTHER, THE VISIBLE TRADE +GAP+ FOR THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, AT 16.9 PER CENT, WAS VIRTUALLY THE SAME AS FOR THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF 1980 AT 16.8 PER CENT. HE CONCLUDED THAT THE VISIBLE TRADE ACCOUNT WAS CONTINUING TO SHOW A FAIR DEGREE OF STABILITY.

COMPARED WITH APRIL, THERE WERE THE FOLLOWING INCREASES BY VALUE: \$1 036 MILLION OR 17.7 PER CENT FOR DOMESTIC EXPORTS, \$94 MILLION OR 2.8 PER CENT FOR RE-EXPORTS, \$1 130 MILLION OR 12.3 PER CENT FOR TOTAL EXPORTS AND \$339 MILLION OR 3.0 PER CENT FOR IMPORTS. THE VISIBLE TRADE +GAP+ NARROWED FROM 19.5 PER CENT IN APRIL TO 12.2 PER CENT IN MAY. WHILE RECOGNISING THAT THE MARKED IMPROVEMENT SHOWN IN THIS COMPARISON WAS SEASONAL, THE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN CONSIDERED IT ENCOURAGING IN VIEW OF THE UNFAVOURABLE ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES PREVAILING IN HONG KONG'S MAJOR EXPORT MARKETS.

/THE FOLLOWING

THE FOLLOWING ARE PROVISIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE FIGURES
FOR MAY RELEASED BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT :-

<u>MERCHANDISE</u> :	DOMESTIC EXPORTS	:	\$ 6 880 MILLION
	RE-EXPORTS	:	\$ 3 422 MILLION
	TOTAL EXPORTS	:	\$10 302 MILLION
	IMPORTS	:	\$11 737 MILLION
	TRADE BALANCE	:	\$ 1 435 MILLION (IN DEFICIT)

COMPARATIVE FIGURES

<u>LATEST 3 MONTHS</u>	<u>MARCH - MAY 1981</u>	<u>MARCH - MAY 1980</u>	<u>INCREASE OR DECREASE</u>	
	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	%
DOMESTIC EXPORTS	18 500	15 922	+ 2 578	+16.2
RE-EXPORTS	10 071	7 027	+ 3 045	+43.3
TOTAL EXPORTS	28 572	22 949	+ 5 623	+24.5
IMPORTS	34 429	27 914	+ 6 516	+23.3
TRADE BALANCE	- 5 857	- 4 965	- 892	

<u>SAME MONTH LAST YEAR</u>	<u>MAY 1981</u>	<u>MAY 1980</u>	<u>INCREASE OR DECREASE</u>	
	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	%
DOMESTIC EXPORTS (% OF TOTAL EXPORTS)	6 880 (66.8%)	5 968 (70.3%)	+ 912	+15.3
RE-EXPORTS	3 422	2 527	+ 895	+35.4
TOTAL EXPORTS	10 302	8 495	+ 1 807	+21.3
IMPORTS	11 737	9 456	+ 2 281	+24.1
TRADE BALANCE	- 1 435	- 961	- 474	

/LAST MONTH

<u>LAST MONTH</u>	MAY 1981	APRIL 1981	INCREASE OR DECREASE	
	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	%
DOMESTIC EXPORTS (% OF TOTAL EXPORTS)	6 880 (66.8%)	5 844 (63.7%)	+ 1 036	+17.7
RE-EXPORTS	3 422	3 328	+ 94	+ 2.8
TOTAL EXPORTS	10 302	9 172	+ 1 130	+12.3
IMPORTS	11 737	11 398	+ 339	+ 3.0
TRADE BALANCE	- 1 435	- 2 226	+ 791	
<u>CALENDAR YEAR TO-DATE</u>	JAN - MAY 1981	JAN - MAY 1980	INCREASE OR DECREASE	
	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	%
DOMESTIC EXPORTS (% OF TOTAL EXPORTS)	28 784 (63.9%)	25 050 (69.8%)	+ 3 734	+14.9
RE-EXPORTS	16 272	10 862	+ 5 410	+49.8
TOTAL EXPORTS	45 056	35 912	+ 9 144	+25.5
IMPORTS	54 205	43 170	+11 035	+25.6
TRADE BALANCE	- 9 149	- 7 258	- 1 891	
<u>LAST 12 MONTHS</u>	JUNE 1980 TO MAY 1981	JUNE 1979 TO MAY 1980	INCREASE OR DECREASE	
	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	%
DOMESTIC EXPORTS	71 904	62 138	+ 9 766	+15.7
RE-EXPORTS	35 482	23 432	+12 050	+51.4
TOTAL EXPORTS	107 387	85 570	+21 816	+25.5
IMPORTS	122 686	97 447	+25 239	+25.9
TRADE BALANCE	-15 299	-11 877	- 3 422	

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 1981

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SUSPECTED IMPORTED CHOLERA CASE

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A 54-YEAR-OLD MAN, TAKEN ILL WHILE VISITING GUANGDONG LAST WEEK, IS SUSPECTED TO BE SUFFERING FROM CHOLERA.

THE CASE IS SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION BY LABORATORY TEST, THE RESULT OF WHICH WILL BE KNOWN TOMORROW.

INVESTIGATIONS SHOW THAT THE PATIENT, WHO IS UNEMPLOYED, VISITED CHINA ON JUNE 15 AND DEVELOPED SYMPTOMS OF SEVERE DIAHORREA AND VOMITTING ON JUNE 20.

HE WAS TAKEN TO LO WU AND TRANSFERRED BY AMBULANCE TO QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL ON THE SAME DAY.

HE WAS LATER TRANSFERRED TO PRINCESS MARGARET HOSPITAL WHERE HIS CONDITION IS DESCRIBED AS SATISFACTORY.

A MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY THAT THIS IS MOST LIKELY AN IMPORTED CHOLERA CASE.

HE SAID THAT THERE IS NO CAUSE FOR ALARM, AND URGED THE PUBLIC TO TAKE ALL PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES AGAINST THE DISEASE WHICH IS ENDEMIC IN SOUTH EAST ASIA.

PEOPLE SHOULD OBSERVE PERSONAL, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE.

+CHOLERA, LIKE OTHER GASTRO-INTESTINAL DISEASES, CAN BE TRANSMITTED THROUGH CONTAMINATED WATER AND FOOD. THE MOST DANGEROUS ITEMS OF FOOD ARE THOSE STORED AT ROOM TEMPERATURE AND EATEN WITHOUT FURTHER COOKING AND OTHER FOODS LIKE CUT FRUIT AND THE COOKED FOOD SOLD BY MOBILE HAWKERS,+ HE SAID.

SIMPLE RULES, SUCH AS WASHING OF HANDS BEFORE EATING AND AFTER VISITING TOILETS, SHOULD BE CLOSELY FOLLOWED, HE SAID.

FOOD SHOULD BE THOROUGHLY COOKED, AND, SHOULD BE WELL COVERED IF NOT EATEN.

ANTI-CHOLERA VACCINE BY ITSELF IS NOT EFFICACIOUS IN PREVENTING THE DISEASE AND GIVES ONLY PARTIAL PROTECTION FOR A RELATIVELY SHORT PERIOD, HE SAID.

THERE HAVE BEEN SEVEN CASES OF CHOLERA INCLUDING ONE IMPORTED CASE IN THE PAST SIX YEARS.

THE LAST CASE WAS REPORTED IN SEPTEMBER, 1979.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 1981

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NEW ROAD SET TO OPEN IN TSIM SHA TSUI EAST

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THE NEWLY-COMPLETED CHING YEE ROAD IN TSIM SHA TSUI EAST WILL BE OPENED TO TRAFFIC FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY, JUNE 26.

AT THE SAME TIME, NEW TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE INTRODUCED IN THE AREA, A TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY.

UNDER THE ARRANGEMENTS, CHING YEE ROAD WILL BE DESIGNATED AN URBAN CLEARWAY BETWEEN 7 AM AND 7 PM DAILY.

TRAFFIC HEADING SOUTH ALONG CHATHAM ROAD WILL BE ABLE TO TURN DIRECT INTO CHING YEE ROAD.

VEHICLES TRAVELLING NORTH ALONG SALISBURY ROAD WILL TURN INTO CHING YEE ROAD VIA CHING HAY STREET OR HING CHEUNG ROAD NORTHBOUND AND TRAFFIC FROM SALISBURY ROAD SOUTHBOUND WILL TURN INTO CHING YEE ROAD VIA CHING HAY STREET.

TRAFFIC MOVING WEST ALONG CHING YEE ROAD WILL TURN INTO CHATHAM ROAD NORTHBOUND, WHILE VEHICLES HEADING EAST ALONG CHING YEE ROAD WILL TURN INTO HONG CHONG ROAD NORTHBOUND VIA HING CHEUNG ROAD SOUTHBOUND.

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GASCOIGNE ROAD FLYOVER TO BE CLOSED FOR SIX NIGHTS

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THE EASTBOUND CARRIAGEWAY OF THE GASCOIGNE ROAD FLYOVER IN YAU MA TEI WILL BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC BETWEEN 8 PM AND 5 AM FOR SIX NIGHTS ON JUNE 26/27, 27/28, 29/30, JUNE 30/JULY 1, JULY 2/3 AND JULY 4/5.

A TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THE TEMPORARY CLOSURES WOULD FACILITATE MAINTENANCE WORK ON THE FLYOVER.

MOTORISTS HEADING TOWARDS KWUN TONG FROM FERRY STREET ARE ADVISED TO TAKE AN ALTERNATIVE GROUND-LEVEL ROUTE DURING THE CLOSURE PERIODS.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 1981

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STUDENTS JOIN TUEN MUN TREE PLANTING DAY

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SOME 90 STUDENTS FROM THREE LOCAL SCHOOLS WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE TUEN MUN TREE PLANTING DAY TO BE HELD AT THE PUI TO ROAD (SOUTH) REST GARDEN THIS FRIDAY (JUNE 26).

A TOTAL OF 130 EVERGREEN BAUHINIA BLAKEANA, BAUHINIA VARIEGATA, JASMINUM PRIMULINUM AND ALLAMANDA CATHARTICA TREES TOGETHER WITH 2 000 YELLOW AND RED BORDER WEED WILL BE PLANTED TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE NEW TOWN.

THE EXERCISE IS AIMED AT AROUSING PUBLIC CONCERN AND INTEREST IN THE LOVE AND CARE OF TREES IN THE NEW TOWNS, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES SERVICES DEPARTMENT SAID.

THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (NORTH REGION) OF THE NEW TERRITORIES SERVICES, MR BOWEN LEUNG, WILL OFFICIATE AT THE TREE PLANTING CEREMONY. ALSO TAKING PART IN THE EVENT ARE THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT OFFICER, MR BILLY LAM, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NEW TERRITORIES HEUNG YEE KUK, MR LAU WONG-FAT, THE CHAIRMAN OF TUEN MUN DISTRICT BOARD ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE, MR NG CHEUK-TAI AND THE TUEN MUN URBAN SERVICES OFFICER, MR YUE KAI-CHIU.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO COVER THE TUEN MUN TREE PLANTING DAY CEREMONY TO BE HELD AT THE PUI TO ROAD (SOUTH) REST GARDEN AT 2.30 PM ON FRIDAY (JUNE 26).

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 1981

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MODEL WORKER AWARD SCHEME TO BE LAUNCHED IN TSUEN WAN
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A MODEL WORKER AWARD SCHEME IS TO BE LAUNCHED IN TSUEN WAN LATER THIS MONTH.

THE AIM OF THE SCHEME IS TO CREATE A SENSE OF BELONGING AMONG WORKERS THERE AND TO ENCOURAGE AND PROMOTE THEIR CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS LOCAL INDUSTRY.

IT IS BEING JOINTLY ORGANISED BY TSUEN WAN DISTRICT OFFICE, RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG, THE FEDERATION OF INDUSTRIES IN TSUEN WAN AND THE INDUSTRIAL SUB-COMMITTEE OF TSUEN WAN DISTRICT BOARD.

DETAILS OF THE SCHEME WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT A PRESS CONFERENCE TO BE HELD AT 2.45 PM ON FRIDAY (JUNE 26) IN THE CALIPH ROOM, 16TH FLOOR, AMBASSADOR HOTEL, TSIM SHA TSUI.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE SCHEME'S ORGANISING COMMITTEE, MR LAM KIN-MING, THE CHAIRMAN, DR LAI MING-WAH, AND THE DISTRICT OFFICER KWAI CHUNG, MR FRED TING, WILL BE PRESENT.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THE PRESS CONFERENCE ON FRIDAY (JUNE 26) AT 2.45 PM AT THE AMBASSADOR HOTEL.

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WORK ON WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM

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FRESH WATER SUPPLY TO A NUMBER OF PREMISES IN THE SOUTH BAY AND REPULSE BAY AREAS WILL BE TURNED OFF FOR EIGHT HOURS FROM 10 PM ON FRIDAY (JUNE 26) TO 6 AM THE FOLLOWING DAY FOR ESSENTIAL WORK ON THE SUPPLY SYSTEM.

AFFECTED WILL BE ALL PREMISES ALONG SOUTH BAY ROAD, HOUSE NOS. 90, 92 AND 110 OF REPULSE BAY ROAD, HOUSE NOS. 47, 49, 51, 53 AND 55 OF BEACH ROAD, INCLUDING PING SHAN RESTAURANT AND NAUTILUS CLUB.

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