HKGIS 香港政府新聞處

DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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CONSUMER PROTECTION BILL WELCOMED
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THE SALE OF GOODS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977 WILL LIMIT VERY SEVERELY THE UNDESIRABLE PRACTICE OF SOME CAREFULLY WORDED SALE EXCLUSION CLAUSES AND MAKE A VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS PROTECTING THE CONSUMER, THE HON. T.S. LO NOTED DURING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL WHICH WAS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THE MOST OBVIOUS EXAMPLES OF THESE CLAUSES, WHICH HAVE OVER THE YEARS WHITTLED AWAY OR DENIED ALMOST ENTIRELY THE CONSUMER RIGHTS, ARE CONTAINED IN THE SO-CALLED +MANUFACTURERS' GUARANTEES+ SUPPLIED WITH GOODS SOLD, MR. LO POINTED OUT.

THERE ARE RIGHTS WHICH EVERY BUYER WOULD WANT TO HAVE AND WHICH EVERY SELLER WOULD WANT TO RESTRICT, MR. LO SAID.

+FOR EXAMPLE, IN SALES BY SAMPLE THE RIGHT THAT THE BULK SHALL CORRESPOND WITH THE SAMPLE IN QUALITY, IN A SALE BY DESCRIPTION THAT THE GOODS SHALL CORRESPOND WITH THE DESCRIPTION AND SHALL GENERALLY BE OF MERCHANTABLE QUALITY, AND IN A CASE WHERE THE BUYER MAKES KNOWN A PARTICULAR PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE GOODS ARE REQUIRED THE RIGHT THAT THE GOODS SUPPLIED SHALL BE REASONABLY FIT FOR THE PURPOSE.+

HE SAID THE NEW CONSUMER PROTECTION WAS PARTICULARLY VALUABLE IN HONG KONG BECAUSE OF THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL. +IF THE FAULT COMPLAINED OF IN GOODS BOUGHT CAN BE RECTIFIED BY PAYMENT OF AN AMOUNT NOT EXCEEDING $3,000 THE TRIBUNAL WILL HAVE JURISDICTION TO HEAR THE COMPLAINT,+ HE SAID, NOTING THAT IT WAS CLEAR THE TRIBUNAL HAD THE CAPACITY TO ASSIST EVEN THE ILLITERATE TO MAKE CLAIMS.

THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBER URGED THE CONSUMER COUNCIL TO REGARD IT AS ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO PUBLICISE BY EVERY POSSIBLE MEANS THE NEW PROTECTION WHEN IT COMES INTO FORCE, BECAUSE IT WOULD BE VASTLY REDUCED UNLESS THE PROVISIONS OF THE BILL ARE MADE WIDELY KNOWN TO CONSUMERS.

HE ALSO URGED THE COUNCIL TO PUBLICISE THE EXISTENCE OF THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL AS WELL AS ITS CONVENIENT PROCEDURE. +IF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC CAN BE EDUCATED TO USE THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL WHENEVER THEY HAVE A CLAIM WHICH COMES WITHIN ITS JURISDICTION THERE WILL, I HAVE NO DOUBT, BE AN INCREASE OF CASES GOING BEFORE THE TRIBUNAL,+ HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT HE SHOULD BE GLAD TO HEAR FROM THE GOVERNMENT THAT IT IS SATISFIED THE TRIBUNAL WILL HAVE ADEQUATE STAFF +BOTH IN QUANTITY AND QUALITY+ TO DEAL WITH THESE INCREASED CASES.

DR. THE HON. HENRY HU ALSO SUPPORTED THE BILL NOTING THAT THE AD HOC GROUP CONVENED BY MR. LO WAS GENERALLY SATISFIED THAT IT WOULD PROVIDE BETTER PROTECTION FOR CONSUMERS.

/HE EXPECTED .....

HE EXPECTED AN ASSURANCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT THAT THE MACHINERY OF THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL WOULD BE IMPROVED AND HOPED THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSUMER COUNCIL WOULD TAKE HEED OF MR. LO'S PLEA THAT FULL PUBLICITY BE GIVEN TO THE NEW PROTECTION TO CONSUMERS.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL, THE HON. G.C. THORNTON, IN REPLY SAID MR. LO'S CALL TO THE CONSUMER COUNCIL WAS WELL DIRECTED.

+IT MAY WELL BE THAT AS YET MANY HONG KONG PEOPLE ARE NOT AWARE THAT THIS TRIBUNAL DETERMINES IN AN INFORMAL WAY, INEXPENSIVELY AND IN CANTONESE, MONETARY CLAIMS NOT EXCEEDING $3,000,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THE REGISTRAR OF THE SUPREME COURT, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE TRIBUNAL, WAS KEEPING HIS EYE ON THE LEVEL OF WORK AND IF IT BECOMES NECESSARY, ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE FOR A THIRD TRIBUNAL TO BE SET UP IN ADDITION TO THE TWO AT PRESENT.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL SAID HE HAD HAD DISCUSSION WITH THE REGISTRAR ON THE ADEQUACY OF STAFF RAISED BY MR. LO.

+THE TRIBUNAL COMMENCED OPERATIONS ON OCTOBER 1, 1976 AND IS THUS STILL IN ITS INFANCY. INFANCY IS GENERALLY ACCOMPANIED BY TEETHING TROUBLES AND THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL HAS NOT BEEN IMMUNE,+ MR. THORNTON SAID.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE NATURE OF THE TRIBUNAL WAS SUCH AS TO IMPOSE PARTICULARLY DEMANDING CHALLENGES ON THE ADJUDICATORS AND THEIR SUPPORTING STAFF AND HE HAD IN MIND THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE STAFF TO REDUCE TO WRITING CLAIMS MADE ORALLY.

ALSO, HE ADDED, ADJUDICATORS WERE GIVEN A POSITIVE DUTY OF CONSIDERING WHAT WAS RELEVANT WHETHER OR NOT RAISED BY ONE OF THE PARTIES.

THESE SOMEWHAT NOVEL DUTIES HAD TO BE PERFORMED WITH PATIENCE AND ENTHUSIASM AS WELL AS SKILL IF THE TRIBUNAL WAS TO ACHIEVE ALL THAT WAS HOPED, HE SAID.

+TO EXTRACT THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A CLAIM FROM PERHAPS A LONG AND TANGLED TALE MAY BE TIME CONSUMING AND FAR FROM EASY BUT THIS TRIBUNAL WILL SUCCEED ONLY IF THE TRIBUNAL STAFF CAN EARN THE RESPECT AND CONFIDENCE OF THE PUBLIC THEY SERVE.

+THE REGISTRAR IS OF COURSE AWARE OF THIS AND IS MONITORING THE PROGRESS OF THE TRIBUNAL. HE HAS HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ADJUDICATORS CONCERNING THEIR ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES. IN ADDITION HE IS CONSIDERING WHETHER THE COUNTER STAFF NEEDS STRENGTHENING, PERHAPS BY JUDICIAL CLERKS,+ MR. THORNTON SAID.

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UNOFFICIALS SUPPORT SUMMARY OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL

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UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON WELCOMED THE BILL AIMED AT STRENGTHENING THE EXISTING LAW RELATING TO THE THROWING OR DROPPING OF THINGS FROM BUILDINGS TO THE DANGER OF THE PUBLIC.

AMONG OTHER IMPORTANT CHANGES, THE SUMMARY OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1977 PROVIDES FOR THE MAXIMUM FINE TO BE INCREASED TO $10,000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR SIX MONTHS FOR THE OFFENDER DROPPING THINGS FROM A BUILDING= AND FOR DROPPING OBJECTS FROM A BUILDING UNDER CONSTRUCTION, THE OFFENDER ALONG WITH THE PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR WILL BE LIABLE TO A FINE OF $50,000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR ONE YEAR.

THE HON. PETER C. WONG SAID THAT THE AD HOC GROUP SET UP BY THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS +WHOLEHEARTEDLY+ SUPPORTED MOST OF THE CHANGES PROPOSED.

+THE SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN PENALTY IS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE, AND MAY PROVE TO BE A DETERRENT,+ HE SAID.

IT WAS FAIR TO MAKE THE CONTRACTOR LIABLE, BECAUSE, VERY OFTEN, BY TAKING QUITE SIMPLE PRECAUTIONS DANGER TO THE PUBLIC WOULD BE AVOIDED, HE ADDED.

+HOWEVER, THE GROUP IS NOT CONVINCED THAT IT WOULD BE JUSTIFIED TO EXTEND LIABILITY TO THE OCCUPIER OF PREMISES, EVEN CONSIDERING THE EXIGENCIES OF THE MOMENT.

+IT IS MORE POLITIC THAN JUST AND ON BALANCE JUSTICE MUST OVERRIDE EXPEDIENCY,+ HE SAID, AND URGED THAT THE OCCUPIERS LIABILITY BE REMOVED FROM THE BILL.

MR. WONG SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO DEAL WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE PRONE TO COMMIT THE OFFENCE WAS TO +ENCOURAGE SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR THROUGH WELL-PLANNED CAMPAIGNS COMMENSURATE WITH THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION.+

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BAN ON MID-LEVELS BUILDING DEVELOPMENT TO BE LIFTED MAY 1, 1978

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THE STATUTORY BAN ON BUILDING DEVELOPMENT IN MID-LEVELS WILL BE LIFTED FROM MAY 1, NEXT YEAR.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD, TODAY MOVED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THE STATUTORY RESTRICTIONS BE EXTENDED UNTIL APRIL 30, 1978.

THE PRESENT RESTRICTIONS ARE DUE TO EXPIRE ON JULY 31, THIS YEAR.

MR. MCDONALD SAID +ALTHOUGH THE ADMINISTRATIVE RESTRICTIONS ON LEASE MODIFICATIONS AND NEW LAND SALES FOR BOTH MID-LEVELS AND POK FU LAM WILL REMAIN IN EFFECT, I CAN CONFIRM THAT NO FURTHER EXTENSIONS OF THE STATUTORY RESTRICTIONS ON BUILDING DEVELOPMENT WILL BE REQUIRED AFTER APRIL 30, 1978.+

MR. MCDONALD SAID THAT A FURTHER EXTENSION OF THE BAN WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE SEVERAL OF THE ESSENTIAL HIGHWAY WORKS ARE NOT SUFFICIENTLY ADVANCED TO ALLOW FOR COINCIDENTAL COMPLETION WITH NEW PRIVATE DEVELOPMENTS.

MR. MCDONALD RECALLED THAT LAST TIME, HE HAD SAID THAT TO LIFT THE RESTRICTIONS BAN WOULD MEAN UNDER EXISTING LEASE CONDITIONS AND PLANNING CONTROLS BUILDING DEVELOPMENT COULD TAKE PLACE WHICH WOULD RESULT IN AN INCREASE IN POPULATION IN MID-LEVELS TO ABOUT 55,000, OR NEARLY DOUBLE THE 1973 FIGURE.

+REMOVAL OF THE STATUTORY RESTRICTIONS IN POK FU LAM AREA AT THE END OF 1974 COULD BRING THE POPULATION THERE TO AROUND 75,000. A MORE RECENT ASSESSMENT OF THE POK FU LAM DEVELOPMENTAL POTENTIAL UNDER THESE CONDITIONS SHOWS THAT THE POPULATION COULD INCREASE TO MORE THAN 110,000.+

+THE LIFTING OF ADMINISTRATIVE RESTRICTIONS ON LEASE MODIFICATIONS AND NEW LAND SALES WOULD MEAN A POSSIBLE FURTHER INCREASE IN POPULATION OF ABOUT 7,000 IN MID-LEVELS AND NEARLY 92,000 IN POK FU LAM,+ HE SAID.

MR. MCDONALD SAID THAT EASING OF THE RESTRICTIONS DEPENDED ON PROGRESS MADE ON ESSENTIAL HIGHWAY WORKS BEING SUFFICIENTLY ADVANCED SO THAT THE COMPLETION AND OCCUPATION OF NEW DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WOULD COINCIDE APPROXIMATELY WITH THE COMPLETION OF HIGHWAY WORKS.

+ALTHOUGH SEVERAL OF THESE HIGHWAY SCHEMES ARE PROGRESSING WELL, A FEW OF THE MOST CRITICAL PROJECTS ARE STILL INSUFFICIENTLY FAR ADVANCED TO ALLOW FOR COINCIDENTAL COMPLETION WITH PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT.+

MR. MCDONALD SAID THAT IT WAS THEREFORE NECESSARY TO DEFER THE ACCEPTANCE OF BUILDING PLANS FOR PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES IN MID-LEVELS FOR A FURTHER PERIOD OF NINE MONTHS.

/DR. THE HON. .....

DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG, ON BEHALF OF HIS UNOFFICIAL COLLEAGUES, NOTED THAT A FEW OF THEM WERE NOT HAPPY WITH THE NINE MONTHS FURTHER EXTENSION.

+THEY CONSIDER THE TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN THIS AREA, WHICH IS THE MAIN REASON GIVEN FOR THIS BUILDING RESTRICTION, IS NO WORSE THAN IN SOME OTHER AREAS OF KOWLOON AND HONG KONG OR, FOR THAT MATTER, SOME OTHER BIG CITIES OF THE WORLD.

+ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY RECOGNISE THE URGENCY OF INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION IN THIS PRIME RESIDENTIAL AREA OF HONG KONG IN ORDER TO MEET DEMAND AND STABILISE RENTALS,+ DR. CHUNG SAID.

+NONETHELESS,+ HE SAID, +THE MAJORITY OF MY UNOFFICIAL COLLEAGUES ACCEPT THE CAUTIOUS APPROACH OF GOVERNMENT AS EXPLAINED BY THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS AND SUPPORT THE MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL ON THE CLEAR UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE WILL BE NO FURTHER EXTENSION OF THE STATUTORY RESTRICTION ON BUILDING DEVELOPMENT IN THE MID-LEVELS AREA BEYOND APRIL 30, 1978.+

THE HON. JAMES WU, WHO ABSTAINED FROM VOTING ON THE RESOLUTION, SAID HE COULD NOT, IN FAIRNESS, SUPPORT IT WITH PRICES AND RENTALS OF FLATS IN THE AREA HAVING DOUBLED DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, AGGRAVATED NO DOUBT, HE SAID, BY THE EFFECT OF THE MORATORIUM.

HE RECALLED THAT TWO YEARS AGO, HE HAD DRAWN ATTENTION TO WHAT THE HON. OSWALD CHEUNG HAD SAID IN JANUARY 1974 ON THE GRAVITY OF IMPOSING A MORATORIUM WHICH WAS A DEROGATION OF THE RIGHTS GRANTED BY THE CROWN LEASE TO BUILD IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS OF THE LEASE.

HE SAID THE TEMPORARY RESTRICTION OF BUILDING DEVELOPMENT (MID-LEVELS) ORDINANCE WAS FIRST INTRODUCED AND PASSED ON AUGUST 1, 1973 FOR WHAT WAS TO BE A TEMPORARY RESTRICTION OF SIX MONTHS.

+THERE WERE, HOWEVER, THREE SUBSEQUENT EXTENSIONS ESCALATING FROM SIX MONTHS TO TWO YEARS. IN THE PROCESS, FOUR MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ON GOVERNMENT'S ARGUMENT ON THE POINT OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION, AND THEIR RELUCTANCE TO ACCEPT THE ORDINANCE,+ HE SAID.

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BUDGET SURPLUS EXPLAINED
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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, SAID THE PREDICTION OF A SURPLUS OF $850 MILLION WAS BASED ON THE STATE OF THE TREASURY'S CASH BOOK AT FEBRUARY 16, A FORTNIGHT BEFORE BUDGET DAY.

+THIS PREDICTION WAS BASED ON A FORECAST OF EXPENDITURE AT $6,600 MILLION AND OF REVENUE AT $7,450 MILLION,+ MR. HADDON-CAVE EXPLAINED IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS FROM THE HON. LYDIA DUNN, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

+IN THE EVENT, ACTUAL EXPENDITURE FOR 1976-77 TURNED OUT TO BE $6,591 MILLION, THAT IS LOWER THAN MY PREDICTION BY ONLY $9 MILLION, AN ERROR OF 0.1 PER CENT ONLY. ACTUAL REVENUE TURNED OUT TO BE $7,494 MILLION OR $44 MILLION MORE THAN MY PREDICTION OF $7,450 MILLION, AN ERROR OF 0.6 PER CENT ONLY,+ HE SAID.

THE ERROR WAS ACCOUNTED FOR BY HIGHER THAN EXPECTED YIELDS FROM BETS AND SWEEPS TAX AND FROM EARNINGS AND PROFITS TAXES, HE SAID.

+I CANNOT EXPLAIN AWAY HUMAN FRAILTY, BUT I CAN OFFER A PART EXPLANATION FOR THE HIGHER THAN PREDICTED YIELD FROM EARNINGS AND PROFITS TAXES.

+SOME 90,000 SALARIES TAXPAYERS MET THEIR LIABILITIES IN FULL BEFORE MARCH 31, 1977 INSTEAD OF TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE INSTALMENT SYSTEM WHICH ALLOWS THEM TO DEFER ONE QUARTER OF THEIR LIABILITIES,+ MR. HADDON-CAVE POINTED OUT.

REFERRING TO MISS DUNN'S SECOND QUESTION ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE SURPLUS ON THE CURRENT BUDGETARY POLICY, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THE SLIGHTLY LARGER THAN PREDICTED SURPLUS WOULD HAVE NO IMPLICATIONS.

THE SURPLUS PUTS OUR FISCAL RESERVES AT APRIL 1, 1977 AT $3,713 MILLION INSTEAD OF THE $3,660 MILLION ASSUMED IN THE PREPARATION OF THE 1977-78 BUDGET, MR. HADDON-CAVE ADDED.

+THE DIFFERENCE OF $53 MILLION REPRESENTS ONLY 0.32 PER CENT OF TOTAL ESTIMATED TURNOVER IN 1977-78 OF $16,500 MILLION. PUT ANOTHER WAY OUR FISCAL RESERVES AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS FINANCIAL YEAR, AFTER SETTING ASIDE $2,500 MILLION TO SECURE OUR CONTINGENT LIABILITIES, ARE STILL LESS THAN 15 PER CENT OF ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE THIS FINANCIAL YEAR.

+SO THE ACTUAL OUTTURN FOR 1976-77 HAS NO IMPLICATIONS FOR BUDGETARY POLICY IN 1977-78.+

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WORKING PARTY TO REVIEW CHILD CARE CENTRES REGULATIONS
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THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE HAS APPOINTED A WORKING GROUP TWO WEEKS AGO TO REVIEW THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CHILD CARE CENTRES REGULATIONS WHICH CAME INTO OPERATION ON JUNE 1, LAST YEAR.

IN THE LIGHT OF EXPERIENCE GAINED DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATIONS, DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, THE HON. THOMAS LEE, SAID THAT THE TERMS OF REFERENCE INDICATED THAT THE WORKING GROUP SHOULD FOCUS ITS ATTENTION PRIMARILY ON STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS IN RELATIONS TO SPACE, MANNING SCALE AND STAFF QUALIFICATIONS.

HE WAS SPEAKING IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. KO SIU-WAH IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON.

MR. LEE ADDED THE WORKING GROUP WOULD ALSO CONSIDER WHETHER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATIONS, WHICH WAS TO BE IN THREE STAGES, SHOULD BE SPREAD OVER A LONGER PERIOD OR IN MORE THAN THREE STAGES.

THESE WOULD NO DOUBT SERVE AS GUIDELINES FOR THE WORKING GROUP, WHICH HAD BEEN ASKED TO SUBMIT ITS REPORT TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE BY EARLY OCTOBER THIS YEAR, MR. LEE SAID.

THE WORKING GROUP CONSISTS OF THREE MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND IS TO BE CHAIRED BY ONE OF THEM= OTHER MEMBERS APPOINTED INCLUDE THREE FROM VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS ENGAGED IN CHILD CARE WORK, TWO FROM SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND ONE EXPERIENCED OPERATOR OF A PRIVATE CHILD CARE CENTRE.

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FIXED PENALTY PAYMENT PROCEDURE

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THE FIXED PENALTY (TRAFFIC CONTRAVENTIONS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977 WHICH SOUGHT TO SIMPLIFY, STREAMLINE AND STRENGTHEN THE PROVISIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE, WAS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON AFTER DEBATE ON POINTS RAISED BY THREE UNOFFICIALS.

DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG OBJECTED TO CLAUSE 10 (B) OF THE BILL ON THE GROUND THAT HE COULD NOT LEND SUPPORT TO AMENDING THE LAW TO +SUIT THE COMPUTER AT THE EXPENSE OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.+

DUE TO THE LIMITATION OF THE COMPUTER NOW BEING USED BY GOVERNMENT, A LOGICAL PROCEDURE FOR PAYING FIXED PENALTY FINE AND SURCHARGE COULD NOT BE ADOPTED BUT INSTEAD +IF A DEFENDANT FOR SOME REASON, SUCH AS OVERSIGHT OR ABSENCE FROM HONG KONG, DOES NOT PAY HIS FINE BY THE DUE DATE, HE IS UNABLE TO DO SO UNTIL HE RECEIVES A SUMMONS ISSUED AUTOMATICALLY BY THE COMPUTER,+ DR. CHUNG SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE INTENTION AND SPIRIT OF BOTH THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE AND THE AMENDING BILL WAS TO PROVIDE CONVENIENCE TO THE MOTORING PUBLIC.

+THE COMPUTER SHOULD BE THE TOOL OF MANKIND AND ITS APPLICATION AND LIMITATION SHOULD NOT BE USED AS AN EXCUSE TO DICTATE THE WAYS OF LIFE OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC,+ HE SAID.

IN SUPPORT OF DR. CHUNG'S REMARKS, DR. THE HON. HENRY HU URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO REVIEW ITS COMPUTER SERVICES IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY WASTE OF PUBLIC FUNDS OR A LOSS IN ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY.

HE REPEATED A SUGGESTION BY DR. CHUNG THAT THE PUBLIC WOULD BE BETTER SERVED IF A FOOTNOTE COULD BE PRINTED ON THE FIXED PENALTY TICKET, SIMILAR TO THAT APPEARING ON THE DEMAND NOTE FOR RATES, SAYING THAT A SURCHARGE WOULD BE ADDED IF THE FINE WAS NOT PAID ON TIME.

THE HON. T.S. LO, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE COUNCIL, MOVED AN AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 16 OF THE BILL WHICH, MR. LO SAID, ALLOWED FAR TOO GREAT A FLEXIBILITY, AS WORDED, TO THE AUTHORITIES TO PUT UP TRAFFIC SIGNS DIFFERENT TO THOSE LAID DOWN IN LEGISLATION.

+ALL TOO FREQUENTLY ONE SEES AMBIGUOUS TRAFFIC SIGNS, SIGNS WHICH FACE A DIRECTION FROM WHICH NO TRAFFIC CAN COME, AS WELL AS TRAFFIC SIGNS PASTED OVER WITH SHEETS OF PAPER WHICH MOTORISTS NEED BINOCULARS TO READ,+ HE SAID.

BY WAY OF EXAMPLE, HE LAID ON THE TABLE A PHOTOGRAPH OF A +NO WAITING+ SIGN ON WHICH WAS PASTED AN INSTRUCTION SHEET WHICH, HE SAID, SO FAR AS HE KNEW WAS NOT PROVIDED FOR IN THE ORDINANCE.

+MOTORISTS MAY BE FORGIVEN FOR FEELING AGGRIEVED WHEN PENALISED FOR CONTRAVENING SUCH AN UNAUTHORISED SIGN,+ HE ADDED.

/THE SECRETARY .....

THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, IN REPLY TO DR. CHUNG AND DR. HU, SAID THAT IT WAS QUITE UNTRUE TO SAY THAT WHAT WAS DONE WAS DICTATED BY COMPUTER PROCEDURES.

+THE FACT IS THAT THE PROCEDURES WOULD BE THE SAME WHETHER OR NOT THEY WERE UNDERTAKEN BY THE COMPUTER OR BY AN ARMY OF CLERICAL WORKERS AND THE REASON IS THAT, ONCE A SUMMONS IS ISSUED, THE MATTER THEN BECOMES ONE FOR THE COURT RATHER THAN FOR THE GOVERNMENT,+ HE SAID.

+THESE PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN IN FORCE EVER SINCE 1971 AND THEY WERE AGREED BY THE THEN CHIEF JUSTICE AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AS BEING ESSENTIAL FOR THE SYSTEM TO WORK,+ HE ADDED.

MR. JONES EXPLAINED IN DETAIL HOW THE PAYMENT PROCEDURES ACTUALLY WORKED: +FIRST OF ALL, THE MOTORIST WHO COMMITS AN OFFENCE FINDS ON HIS CAR A PARKING TICKET WHICH ALLOWS A PERIOD OF SEVEN DAYS FOR PAYMENT.

+IF THIS IS NOT MET, A DEMAND NOTE FOR THE SAME AMOUNT IS ISSUED WHICH DEMANDS PAYMENT BY THE EXPIRY OF 21 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF ISSUE OF THE PARKING TICKET OR TEN DAYS FROM THE DATE OF THE DEMAND NOTE, WHICHEVER IS THE LATER.

+THE MOTORIST CONSEQUENTLY HAS A REMINDER PLUS A CONSIDERABLE PERIOD IN WHICH TO PAY THE PENALTY, AND THERE SHOULD NORMALLY THEREFORE BE NO LEGITIMATE REASON FOR NON-PAYMENT.+

HE ADDED THAT THERE WAS A FIVE-DAY +PERIOD OF GRACE+ AFTER THE LAST OFFICIAL DATE FOR PAYMENT TO THE TREASURY BEFORE THE SUMMONS WAS MADE BY THE COMPUTER, AND DURING THIS INTERVAL ALL LATE PAYMENTS WERE NOTIFIED BY THE TREASURY TO THE DATA PROCESSING DIVISION AND FED INTO THE COMPUTER.

+PAYMENT IS THEREFORE ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT AFTER THE DUE DATE. BUT IT CANNOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE SUMMONS IS ISSUED, BECAUSE THE AMOUNT IS THEN DUE TO THE COURTS, NOT TO THE TREASURY,+ HE SAID.

HE HOPED HE HAD MADE CLEAR THAT OFFENDERS HAD AMPLE TIME TO PAY, THAT ONCE THE SUMMONS WAS ISSUED, DIFFERENT PAYMENT WAS DUE AND THE ORIGINAL PENALTY HAD TO BE REJECTED, AND THAT THE SYSTEM OPERATED AS FAIRLY AS ANY SYSTEM COULD.

+WHILST IT IS TRUE THAT, IF THE PENALTY AND THE COURT COSTS ARE PAID BEFORE THE SUMMONS IS RECEIVED BY THE OFFENDER, THIS HAS TO BE REJECTED BECAUSE THE SUMMONS MUST BE AVAILABLE FOR CANCELLATION, SUCH CASES OF PAYMENT ARE RARE IN THE EXTREME,+ HE SAID.

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SALARY INCREASES FOR CIVIL SERVANTS
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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE TODAY APPROVED SALARY INCREASES FOR CIVIL SERVANTS. FOR THOSE ON THE MASTER PAY SCALE OR IN THE DISCIPLINED SERVICES AND FOR MINOR STAFF, THE INCREASE WILL BE ABOUT 7-1/2 PER CENT. FOR DIRECTORATE STAFF THE INCREASE WILL BE ABOUT 7 PER CENT.

THE INCREASES WILL TAKE EFFECT FROM APRIL 1 THIS YEAR. THE ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST IS $185 MILLION.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLICY THAT CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES SHOULD FOLLOW THOSE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THE INCREASES ARE BASED ON EVIDENCE OF PAY MOVEMENTS IN A SAMPLE OF 68 COMPANIES. A PAY INVESTIGATION UNIT SURVEY SHOWED THAT DURING THE 12 MONTHS, APRIL 1976 TO MARCH 1977, SALARIES INCREASED ON AVERAGE BY 7-1/2 PER CENT. IN THE SAME PERIOD, THE COST OF LIVING INCREASED BY 4-3/4 PER CENT.

THE INCREASE FOR DIRECTORATE OFFICERS IS BASED ON A RECOMMENDATION BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DIRECTORATE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE.

AS A RESULT OF THESE CHANGES, FOR EXAMPLE, THE MINIMUM PAY OF AN UNSKILLED LABOURER GOES UP FROM $840 A MONTH, PLUS $15 COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE (A TOTAL OF $855) TO $905 A MONTH. THE SALARY OF A SENIOR ENGINEER AT THE TOP OF THE MASTER PAY SCALE WILL INCREASE FROM $8,800 A MONTH TO $9,445 A MONTH. THE MINIMUM SALARY OF A POLICE CONSTABLE GOES UP FROM THE PRESENT $1,230 A MONTH TO $1,330 A MONTH. A STATION SERGEANT ON THE MAXIMUM GOES FROM $2,675 A MONTH TO $2,875 A MONTH.

SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS ARE FREE TO APPLY TO THE GOVERNMENT FOR ASSISTANCE TOWARDS THE COST OF GIVING THEIR STAFF A PAY RISE. THE APPROPRIATE HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH THESE ORGANISATIONS.

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NUMBER OF REPORTED ROBBERIES DECREASING

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THE POLICE ARE FAR FROM COMPLACENT ABOUT THE PRESENT INCIDENCE OF ROBBERIES, EVEN THOUGH THE REPORTED FIGURES REFLECT A MARKED IMPROVEMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

+THE POLICE ALSO SEEM TO BE EARNING INCREASING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE. FOR EXAMPLE, ROBBERY VICTIMS ARE BECOMING LESS RELUCTANT TO REPORT TO THE POLICE, JUDGING FROM THE NUMBER OF MINOR CASES WHICH ARE NOW COMING TO OUR ATTENTION WHICH WERE ONLY RARELY REPORTED HITHERTO,+ HE SAID, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. JAMES WU.

THERE HAD BEEN A STEADY DROP IN THE INCIDENCE OF ROBBERIES SINCE DECEMBER 1974. IN THAT MONTH A PEAK OF 1,274 REPORTED INCIDENTS WAS REACHED. THE MONTHLY AVERAGE IN 1975 WAS 926= THIS DROPPED TO 742 IN 1976, MR. DAVIES SAID.

+SO FAR FOR 1977 THE MONTHLY AVERAGE IS DOWN FURTHER TO 551. I TRUST IT WILL BE LOWERED FURTHER,+ HE ADDED.

+THERE ARE STILL KNOWN BLACK SPOTS AND THESE ARE GIVEN SPECIAL POLICE ATTENTION, OTHERS ALSO EMERGE. CID INTELLIGENCE UNITS PLOT VIOLENT CRIME ACCORDING TO PLACE, TIME OF DAY AND MONTH. FRESH BLACK SPOTS ARE THUS IDENTIFIED AND ACTION SQUADS ARE DEPLOYED IN TARGETTED AREAS PRIMARILY FOR PREVENTIVE PURPOSES, THOUGH, OF COURSE, THEY ALSO MAKE ARRESTS,+ HE SAID.

+THE PRESENT COUNTER MEASURES ARE PROVING EFFECTIVE AND GIVE GROUNDS FOR GUARDED CONFIDENCE.

+MORE POLICE ARE BEING EMPLOYED IN PLAIN CLOTHES AND PERIODICALLY VULNERABLE AREAS ARE SATURATED ON A PREVENTIVE BASIS.

+THE BEAT RADIO SCHEME HAS ALREADY PRODUCED GOOD RESULTS BY WAY OF ARRESTS, AND ITS INTRODUCTION HAS HAD A SIGNIFICANT DETERRENT EFFECT WHICH CANNOT BE QUANTIFIED,+ HE SAID.

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LAW AND ORDER AT FOOTBALL MATCHES

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FOLLOWING INCIDENTS AT TWO RECENT FOOTBALL MATCHES, THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE HAS REVIEWED ARRANGEMENTS IN AN ENDEAVOUR TO ENSURE THAT DISORDER DOES NOT OCCUR, OR THAT IF IT DOES, IT IS CONTAINED EITHER INSIDE THE STADIUM OR WITHIN ITS IMMEDIATE VICINITY, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. OSWALD CHEUNG IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

+THE COMMISSIONER HAS DECIDED TO DEPLOY A SECOND COMPANY OF THE POLICE TACTICAL UNIT, 108 MEN, AS A RESERVE TO COVER MATCHES WHEN LARGE CROWDS ARE EXPECTED.

+IN ADDITION, OFFICERS OF THE CID WILL, AS AT PRESENT, BE DEPLOYED AMONG THE CROWD, BUT IN GREATER NUMBERS THAN IN THE PAST, DEPENDING ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MATCH,+ MR. DAVIES SAID.

THE SECRETARY SAID THAT AT PRESENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH LONG ESTABLISHED PRACTICE, THE COMMISSIONER, AT THE REQUEST OF THE HONG KONG FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION, SUPPLIES POLICE TO ASSIST WITH CROWD CONTROL DUTIES AND THE MAINTENANCE OF ORDER AT MAJOR FOOTBALL MATCHES.

NORMALLY, FOR IMPORTANT MATCHES THE POLICE DEPLOY ONE COMPANY OF THE POLICE TACTICAL UNIT AND TWO PLATOONS OF AUXILIARY POLICE, COMPRISING A TOTAL OF 143 MEN PLUS SOME 10 CID OFFICERS, WHILE AT LESS IMPORTANT MATCHES A REDUCED STRENGTH IS DEPLOYED, HE SAID.

NUMBERS OF TRAFFIC POLICE ARE ALSO DEPLOYED BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER MATCHES ON THE APPROACH ROADS TO THE STADIUM FOR TRAFFIC AND CROWD CONTROL PURPOSES, AND THEY ARE LATER JOINED BY FOUR MANNED VEHICLES OF THE EMERGENCY UNIT DEPLOYED AT STRATEGIC SPOTS TO MONITOR THE MOVEMENT AND BEHAVIOUR OF THE CROWD AT THE CLOSE OF A MATCH, HE POINTED OUT.

THE RESERVE COMPANY OF THE POLICE TACTICAL UNIT WILL IN THE FUTURE BE USED TO SUPPORT THE CONTROL OF DEPARTING CROWDS, AS WELL AS PROVIDING A RESERVE FOR THE POLICE DEPLOYED WITHIN THE STADIUM.

+THESE REVISED ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE WATCHED TO SEE IF ANY FURTHER ADJUSTMENTS ARE NECESSARY IN THE LIGHT OF EXPERIENCE,+ HE ADDED.

IN ANSWER TO ANOTHER QUESTION BY MR. CHEUNG ON WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SPECIFICALLY DRAW THE ATTENTION OF RADIO AND T.V. COMMENTATORS ON FOOTBALL MATCHES TO THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 26 OF THE PUBLIC ORDER ORDINANCE, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR. F.K. LI, SAID +YES+.

BY THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION THE MAKING OF ANY COMMENT OR STATEMENT INTENDED OR LIKELY TO INCITE PERSONS AT A PUBLIC GATHERING TO DO PHYSICAL INJURY TO ANY PERSON OR DAMAGE ANY PROPERTY WOULD CONSTITUTE A SERIOUS OFFENCE.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY, IN REPLY TO A FURTHER QUESTION BY MR. CHEUNG, SAID THAT WHERE THERE IS EVIDENCE OF AN OFFENCE UNDER THIS SECTION, CONSIDERATION WOULD ALWAYS BE GIVEN IN THE NORMAL WAY TO THE NEED FOR PROSECUTION.

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SWD MAY BE REGIONALISED
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REGIONALISATION OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT IS EXPECTED TO START IN APRIL NEXT YEAR IF THE GOVERNMENT GIVES THE 'GREEN LIGHT' TO THE DEPARTMENT'S PROPOSAL, THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MR. JIMMY SWEETMAN, SAID TODAY.

SPEAKING AT A LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE NORTH KOWLOON LIONS CLUB, HE SAID THAT THE PROPOSED STRUCTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT WOULD CONSIST OF THE HEADQUARTERS AND FOUR REGIONS - HONG KONG, KOWLOON EAST, KOWLOON WEST AND THE NEW TERRITORIES.

+IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES TO BE SPLIT UP INTO TWO REGIONS LATER ON WHEN MORE NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENTS TAKE PLACE,+ HE ADDED.

MR. SWEETMAN NOTED THAT EACH REGION WOULD BE HEADED BY A 'REGIONAL CO-ORDINATOR' WHO WOULD BE THE OVERALL ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE REGION IN SOCIAL WELFARE MATTERS.

+HE WILL BE THE SOCIAL WELFARE REPRESENTATIVE IN THE REGION TO THE PUBLIC, VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, AND HE WILL BE THE 'EYES AND EARS' OF THE DEPARTMENT FOR THAT REGION.+

IN THE MAIN, HE CONTINUED, THE JOB OF THE 'REGIONAL CO-ORDINATOR' WOULD BE CO-ORDINATION FOR ALL WELFARE SERVICES IN THE REGION TO SERVE THE PARTICULAR NEEDS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES DRAFTED BY THE HEADQUARTERS, LIAISON WITH LOCAL VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND LEADERS, AS WELL AS REFLECTION OF CHANGING NEEDS IN HIS AREA.

+HE WILL BE ASSISTED BY A STAFF OFFICER IN EACH OF THE FIVE MAIN BRANCHES OF SOCIAL WORK : FAMILY AND CASEWORK, PROBATION, GROUP AND COMMUNITY, REHABILITATION AND SOCIAL SECURITY.+

THESE OFFICERS IN THE REGIONS WOULD MAKE THE NECESSARY OPERATIONAL DECISIONS AND BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SMOOTH OPERATION OF THE WORK IN HIS FIELD IN THAT REGION, HE ADDED.

ON THE REASONS FOR THE CHANGE, MR. SWEETMAN SAID :
+THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT HAS EXPERIENCED A FIVE-FOLD INCREASE IN EXPENDITURE AND A DOUBLING OF THE STAFF WITHIN THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

+PLANS ARE WELL IN HAND FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT IN SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES, INCLUDING REHABILITATION FOR THE DISABLED, SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY, AND IN EXPANSION OF YOUTH SERVICES WITH AN EMPHASIS ON PREVENTIVE WORK AMONG YOUTH.+

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WITH SUCH A RAPID DEVELOPMENT AND THE PROSPECT OF STILL MORE TO COME, MR. SWEETMAN FELT THAT THE FIRST PRIORITY FOR THE DEPARTMENT WAS TO OVERHAUL ITS ORGANISATION AND TO DECENTRALISE ITS ACTIVITIES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THE CLIENTS IN NEED WITH A MORE RATIONALISED AND COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE UNDER ONE ROOF.

+THE CHANGE WOULD ALSO BRING ABOUT CLOSER AND MORE EFFICIENT LIAISON WITH THE WORK PERFORMED BY VOLUNTARY AGENCIES ON THE GROUND, IN FURTHERING THE AIM OF SOCIAL WELFARE, AND TO IMPROVE LOCAL LIAISON BETWEEN STAFF WHO HAVE HITHERTO BEEN WORKING SEPARATELY IN VARIOUS DIVISIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT,+ HE STRESSED.

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FORMER LICENSED AREAS REDEVELOPED WITH MORE FACILITIES

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MOST OF THE OLD LICENSED AREAS HAVE BEEN REDEVELOPED AS TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS WITH PART-BUILT STRUCTURES, CONCRETE PLATFORMS, PROPER ELECTRICITY, DOMESTIC WATER SUPPLY, FLUSH TOILETS, PLAYGROUNDS, SITTING AREAS AND IN SOME CASES, WELFARE SERVICES AND SHOPPING FACILITIES, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. ALAN SCOTT, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

+WE CAN NOW CONFIDENTLY SAY THAT THEY ARE SATISFACTORY, AS TEMPORARY HOUSING,+ HE SAID, IN REPLY TO DR. THE HON. HENRY HU WHO WANTED TO KNOW THE PROGRESS ON IMPROVING LIVING CONDITIONS AND REHOUSING OF LICENSED AREA RESIDENTS FOLLOWING AN ADJOURNMENT DEBATE IN FEBRUARY LAST YEAR.

MR. SCOTT RECALLED THAT HIS PREDECESSOR, IN THE DEBATE REFERRED TO, HAD SAID THE REMAINING MARK 1 - THE OLDEST TYPE - LICENSED AREAS WOULD DISAPPEAR OVER A PERIOD OF SOME 15 MONTHS.

+EXCEPT FOR A SMALL AREA IN TAIPO, THESE AREAS HAVE BEEN DEMOLISHED, AND OVER 10,000 RESIDENTS HAVE BEEN REHOUSED IN ESTATES,+ HE SAID.

THERE ARE NOW ALTOGETHER 17 MODERN TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS WITH A CAPACITY FOR OVER 23,000 RESIDENTS, AND 1977/78, IT IS EXPECTED THAT ANOTHER 40,000 PEOPLE WILL BE ACCOMMODATED IN 15 NEW TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS, MR. SCOTT SAID.

+FURTHERMORE, $2 MILLION HAS BEEN SPENT IN THE PAST YEAR IN IMPROVING THE OLDER TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS TO HIGHER STANDARDS. OF THE 16 AREAS WITHOUT PART-BUILT STRUCTURES STILL IN USE, ALL NOW HAVE A PROPER ELECTRICITY SUPPLY= SEVEN HAVE DOMESTIC WATER SUPPLY, AND NINE HAVE BEEN PROVIDED WITH FLUSH TOILETS.

+SINCE APRIL 1 THIS YEAR, 180 FAMILIES OF 840 PERSONS FROM THESE AREAS HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED PUBLIC HOUSING,+ HE SAID.

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ILLEGAL CONNECTIONS ROB SHEUNG YUEN LING RESIDENTS OF WATER SUPPLY

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THE RESIDENTS OF SHEUNG YUEN LING HAVE BEEN DENIED AN ADEQUATE WATER SUPPLY DURING THE PERIOD OF WATER RESTRICTIONS BECAUSE OF ILLEGAL CONNECTIONS WHICH CUT THE SUPPLY BY ALMOST 20 PER CENT.

IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD, DENIED A SUGGESTION THAT THE RESIDENTS OF SHEUNG YUEN LING HAD BEEN UNABLE TO OBTAIN WATER AS A RESULT OF WATER RESTRICTIONS.

HE SAID ILLEGAL CONNECTIONS, NOT THE RESTRICTIONS ON SUPPLY, WERE THE CAUSE OF POOR PRESSURE.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. JAMES WU, MR. MCDONALD SAID, +AS A RESULT OF A COMPLAINT RECEIVED ON JUNE 23 THAT TWO OF THE TEN PUBLIC STANDPIPES SERVING THE VILLAGE FAILED TO SUPPLY WATER IN SUFFICIENT QUANTITY, AN INSPECTION WAS MADE AND REVEALED ILLEGAL TAPPING OF THE SERVICE MAIN SUPPLYING THE STANDPIPES.

+THE ILLEGAL CONNECTIONS WERE REMOVED AND NORMAL OUTPUT FROM THE STANDPIPES RESUMED ON JUNE 25.+

MR. MCDONALD SAID THERE HAD BEEN NO SUBSEQUENT COMPLAINTS OF LACK OF SUPPLY, BUT A RECENT REQUEST FROM THE CITY DISTRICT OFFICE FOR AN ADDITIONAL STANDPIPE HAS BEEN APPROVED AND IT WILL BE INSTALLED WITHIN A WEEK.

MR. WU ALSO ASKED WHETHER NEARBY MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION HAD RESULTED IN THE DRYING UP OF WELLS AT SHEUNG YUEN LING.

MR. MCDONALD SAID IT WAS NOT CONSIDERED THAT THE M.T.R. WORKS HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE YIELD FROM THE WELLS.

HE SAID THAT THOUGH THE EXACT NUMBER OF WELLS IN THE AREA WAS UNKNOWN, IT WAS CLAIMED THAT THERE MIGHT BE AS MANY AS 50.

MR. MCDONALD SAID THAT SIX OF THE LARGER WELLS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THE M.T.R. CONSTRUCTION WORKS WERE INSPECTED ON JULY 8.

+THE WELLS ARE ABOUT ONE METRE IN DIAMETER AND RANGE IN DEPTH FROM APPROXIMATELY 8.5 METRES TO 13.2 METRES.

MR. MCDONALD SAID THAT AT THE TIME OF THE INSPECTION, THE DEPTH OF WATER RANGED FROM TWO METRES IN THE SHALLOWEST WELL TO ABOUT 10 METRES IN THE DEEPEST WELL.

+THE WELLS HAD BEEN RECHARGED AS A RESULT OF FAVOURABLE RAINFALL IN THE PRECEEDING DAYS,+ MR. MCDONALD SAID, +WHICH INDICATES THAT THE PREVIOUS LACK OF WATER WAS ALMOST CERTAINLY DUE TO THE EXCEPTIONALLY DRY WEATHER CONDITIONS.+

REGULATIONS ADEQUATE FOR BAMBOO STANDS

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THE PRESENT REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE CONSTRUCTION OF TEMPORARY MATSHED AND BAMBOO STANDS ARE CONSIDERED ADEQUATE, AND NO FURTHER REVISION IS PROPOSED AT THIS TIME, THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. WONG LAM, WHO ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER TIGHTENING THE REGULATIONS COVERING THE USE OF TEMPORARY MATSHED AND BAMBOO STANDS CONSTRUCTED FOR PUBLIC PERFORMANCES IN THE INTEREST OF PUBLIC SAFETY.

MR. MCDONALD SAID THAT FOLLOWING THE COLLAPSE IN 1968 OF A STAND ACCOMMODATING MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, TIGHTER CONTROL OVER THE ERECTION OF SUCH STRUCTURES WAS CALLED FOR AND THE PLACES OF PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT REGULATIONS WAS SUBSEQUENTLY SUITABLY REVISED.

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PLANS ON SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY

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A GREEN PAPER ON WIDE RANGING SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY WOULD BE PUBLISHED EARLY IN THE NEXT SESSION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON. E.P. HO, REVEALED TODAY.

AFTER TAKING INTO ACCOUNT PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE GREEN PAPER, A WHITE PAPER WOULD BE PUBLISHED STATING GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON THE PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY OVER THE NEXT DECADE, HE SAID IN REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG.

HE ADDED THAT THE PROGRAMME PLAN ON SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY WOULD COVER THE NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY FOR SOCIAL SECURITY, HEALTH SERVICES, SOCIAL WORK SERVICES IN THE COMMUNITY, HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, TRANSPORT, LEISURE, CARE WITHIN INSTITUTIONS AS WELL AS FUNERALS.

THIS PLAN WAS BEING DRAWN UP IN CONSULTATION WITH THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE AND ALL INTERESTED DEPARTMENTS AND BRANCHES OF THE GOVERNMENT.

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MORE FILMS FOR SHOWING TO CHILDREN

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THE COMMISSIONER FOR TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING AT HIS NEXT MEETING WITH FILM PRODUCERS AND DISTRIBUTORS IN AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER WILL RAISE THE POSSIBILITY OF SHOWING MORE FILMS SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN.

THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON. F.K. LI, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, SAID HE WOULD ASK THE COMMISSIONER, WHO MEETS THE PRODUCERS AND DISTRIBUTORS INFORMALLY ONCE OR TWICE A YEAR TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST, TO RAISE THE MATTER.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN HAD ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO EXAMINE THE POSSIBILITY OF ENCOURAGING THE SHOWING OF MORE SUCH FILMS SO AS TO PROVIDE THE CHILDREN WITH A GREATER WHOLESOME CHOICE.

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KOWLOON WALLED CITY ENVIRONMENT WILL CONTINUE TO BE IMPROVED

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THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDES A NUMBER OF SERVICES WITHIN THE KOWLOON WALLED CITY AND WILL CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THESE SERVICES AS FAR AS IS PRACTICABLE, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DENYS ROBERTS SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN TODAY ON GOVERNMENT PLANS TO IMPROVE THE GENERAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE AREA.

SIR DENYS POINTED OUT THAT AMONG THE SERVICES WERE THE COLLECTION AND REMOVAL OF NIGHTSOIL AND REFUSE, THE PROVISION OF LATRINES, INSPECTION OF FOOD PREMISES, PEST CONTROL, CHLORINATION OF WELLS, THE PROVISION OF STAND PIPES, THE CLEARANCE OF DRAINS AND THE MAINTENANCE OF ORDER.

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NO PLANS TO DEVELOP LAMMA ISLAND FOR INDUSTRY

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THERE ARE NO PLANS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF LAMMA ISLAND FOR INDUSTRY, ALTHOUGH A PLAN WHICH IS IN COURSE OF PREPARATION ZONES CERTAIN SMALL AREAS FOR INDUSTRY TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF EXISTING ACTIVITIES AND LEASES.

THIS WAS DISCLOSED BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE HON. DAVID AKERS-JONES, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF LAMMA ISLAND BY THE HON. S.L. CHEN IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

+AS FOR RECREATION,+ MR. AKERS-JONES CONTINUED, +THE TWO PRINCIPAL BEACHES ON THE WEST OF THE ISLAND HAVE BEEN GAZETTED AND ARE PROVIDED WITH LIFEGUARDS. BUT, GENERALLY SPEAKING, IT IS ENVISAGED THAT THE OPEN COUNTRY OF THE ISLAND WILL BE PRESERVED AS IT IS FOR ITS GENERAL RECREATIONAL AND AMENITY VALUE.+

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE PLAN BEING PREPARED WOULD ALSO SHOW IN BROAD TERMS CERTAIN AREAS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.

LITTLE OR NO ACTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ISLAND CAN TAKE PLACE UNTIL THE WATER SUPPLY IS IMPROVED, HE ADDED.

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MORE HALF-WAY HOUSES FOR DRUG ADDICTS

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS PLANS TO BUILD MORE HALF-WAY HOUSES FOR DRUG ADDICTS WHO ARE RELEASED UNDER A SUPERVISION ORDER FROM A DRUG ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTRE BUT WHO STILL NEED REASONABLY CLOSE GUIDANCE, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON.

A PROJECT FOR SUCH A CENTRE TO ACCOMMODATE 120 INMATES WAS INCLUDED IN THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME, HE ADDED IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG.

GIVEN THE PRESENT PRIORITIES MR. DAVIES ANTICIPATED IT TO BE READY BY 1981.

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CYCLISTS NOT ALLOWED IN WATERWORKS AREAS

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CYCLISTS AS A GENERAL RULE ARE NOT ALLOWED ON ROADS IN WATERWORKS AREAS EXCEPT FOR VILLAGERS WHO HAVE TO USE THE ROADS TO REACH THEIR HOMES.

IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS BY THE HON. ROGER LOBO IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES POINTED OUT THAT THESE NARROW ROADS WERE IN REGULAR USE BY HIKERS. +THE PRESENCE OF CYCLISTS COULD CAUSE AN UNNECESSARY HAZARD TO THE MANY WALKERS WHO ENJOY AND VALUE THE RELATIVE FREEDOM FROM WHEELED TRAFFIC WHICH THE AREAS PROVIDE.

+THEY ARE ALSO, IN MANY CASES, STEEP AND TORTUOUS AND DANGEROUS FOR INEXPERIENCED RIDERS TO NEGOTIATE,+ HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE COUNTRY PARKS AND SPECIAL AREAS REGULATIONS 1977, WHICH WOULD COME INTO FORCE IN SEPTEMBER, WOULD APPLY TO MANY WATERWORKS AREAS NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR INCLUSION IN COUNTRY PARKS.

UNDER THE REGULATIONS, NO ONE WILL BE PERMITTED TO TAKE INTO A COUNTRY PARK OR SPECIAL AREA ANY VEHICLE OR BICYCLE EXCEPT IN CASES WHERE THE USER IS RESIDENT IN THE AREA OR WHERE THE AUTHORITY DESIGNATES ANY PARTICULAR ROAD FOR SELECTED VEHICULAR USE, HE SAID.

HE EXPLAINED THAT AS CYCLISTS WERE NOT GENERALLY ALLOWED ON WATERWORKS ROADS, THERE WAS NO NEED FOR BICYCLE-HIRING SHOPS IN THESE AREAS AND THESE SHOPS WERE NOT ALLOWED TO OPERATE THERE.

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MODERN BREAKDOWN RECOVERY VEHICLE FOR LION ROCK TUNNEL

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT HAS ACQUIRED ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED BREAKDOWN RECOVERY VEHICLES FOR USE IN THE LION ROCK TUNNEL.

THE NEW VEHICLE IS A CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT OVER THE NORMAL RECOVERY UNITS WHICH USE DATED MECHANICALLY DRIVEN WINCHES AND TIME CONSUMING CHAIN AND SLING DEVICES.

IT UTILISES THE LATEST HYDRAULICALLY DRIVEN WINCHES AND HYDRAULICALLY OPERATED LIFTING GEAR. IT CAN HANDLE ANYTHING UP TO 36 TONS LIFT AND 60 TONS PULL, ON OR OFF THE ROAD QUICKLY, EFFICIENTLY, AND WITH THE MINIMUM OF DISRUPTION TO OTHER TRAFFIC.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: A DEMONSTRATION OF THE BREAKDOWN RECOVERY VEHICLE WILL BE HELD IN THE LION ROCK TUNNEL AT 3.30 P.M. TOMORROW (THURSDAY). TRANSPORT WILL BE PROVIDED FOR PRESS REPRESENTATIVES WISHING TO COVER THE EVENT. TWO 9-SEATER VANS, AM 2097 AND AM 3225, WILL LEAVE THE OLD K.C.R. STATION AT TSIM SHA TSUI STATION AT 2.45 P.M. SHARP. MR. THOMAS HAHN OF THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WILL BE PRESENT TO ASSIST THE PRESS.

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TRANSFER OF LICENSING POWERS

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THE AUTHORITY FOR ISSUING LOTTERY AND TOMBOLA LICENCES, AMUSEMENT WITH PRIZES LICENCES, AND MAHJONG AND TIN KAU LICENCES WILL BE TRANSFERRED FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE TO THE COMMISSIONER FOR TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING SO THAT THE POLICE FORCE COULD DEVOTE MORE RESOURCES TO FIGHT AGAINST CRIME.

IN MOVING A RESOLUTION TO EFFECT THIS TRANSFER IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON. F.K. LI, SAID THAT THE RESOLUTION ALSO SEEKS TO AMEND THE GAMBLING ORDINANCE AND REGULATIONS.

MR. LI POINTED OUT THAT THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE HAS HISTORICALLY INHERITED A NUMBER OF LICENSING FUNCTIONS WHICH ARE NON-CONSTABULARY IN NATURE.

+THE PRESENT POLICY IS TO TRANSFER THESE FUNCTIONS TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS SO THAT THE POLICE FORCE CAN DEVOTE MORE RESOURCES TO FIGHT AGAINST CRIME,+ HE SAID.

+A NUMBER OF DEPARTMENTS HAVE ALREADY ACCEPTED SOME OF THE LICENSING FUNCTIONS AND THE PROPOSED TRANSFERS UNDER THIS RESOLUTION ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRESENT POLICY,+ HE ADDED.

MR. LI STRESSED THAT THIS WILL NOT RESULT IN ANY CHANGE IN THE EXISTING LICENSING POLICY RELATED TO GAMBLING, WHICH WILL STILL BE CONTROLLED BY THE RELEVANT POLICY BRANCHES IN THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT.

+FURTHERMORE, THE POLICE WILL CONTINUE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE CONDITIONS SPECIFIED IN THE LICENCES AND TO COMBAT ILLEGAL GAMBLING,+ HE SAID.

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HUNDREDS ENQUIRE ABOUT HOUSING EACH DAY

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THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT RECEIVED EACH DAY BETWEEN 500 AND 700 ENQUIRIES ABOUT APPLICATIONS -- OVER HALF OF THESE WERE IN WRITING, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. ALAN SCOTT SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

WRITTEN ENQUIRIES WERE ANSWERED IN WRITING WITHIN ONE WEEK, OR AT MOST TWO WEEKS, HE ADDED IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING.

MR. SCOTT POINTED OUT THAT APPLICANTS WERE ALSO ENCOURAGED TO VISIT OR TO TELEPHONE THE APPLICATIONS SECTION OF THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT, AS +PERSONAL CONTACT IS MORE USEFUL THAN CORRESPONDENCE.+

BECAUSE OF THE CONSIDERABLE VOLUME OF ENQUIRIES, AND THAT CORRESPONDENTS DID NOT ALWAYS GIVE FULL OR ACCURATE RETURN ADDRESS, WRITTEN REPLIES MIGHT ON OCCASION BE SOMEWHAT DELAYED, MR. SCOTT SAID.

IT WAS HOWEVER CONSIDERED THAT THE ARRANGEMENTS GENERALLY WORK WELL, HE ADDED.

38 SENIOR CLERKS DRAWING MAXIMUM SALARY

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THIRTY-EIGHT SENIOR CLERICAL OFFICERS, OUT OF A TOTAL STRENGTH OF 154, ARE ON THE MAXIMUM POINT OF THEIR SALARY SCALE, THE SECRETARY FOR CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON. J.C.A. HAMMOND TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN REPLYING TO QUESTIONS BY THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING MR. HAMMOND DISCLOSED THAT THE OFFICERS HAVE BEEN DRAWING MAXIMUM SALARY FOR AN AVERAGE OF 2.7 YEARS.

HE ADDED THAT 357 CLERICAL OFFICERS RANK I, OUT OF A TOTAL STRENGTH OF 837, AND 778 CLERICAL OFFICERS RANK II, OUT OF A TOTAL STRENGTH OF 4,800, ARE ON THE MAXIMUM POINT OF THEIR SALARY SCALE.

MR. HAMMOND ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE CLERICAL OFFICERS RANK I HAVE BEEN DRAWING MAXIMUM SALARY FOR AN AVERAGE OF 3.7 YEARS WHILE THAT OF THE CLERICAL OFFICERS RANK II IS 3.6 YEARS.

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ISSUE OF SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT SESSION, REPORTS OF SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WOULD BE ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES IN BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE, CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DENYS ROBERTS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. JAMES WU.

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NOTE TO EDITORS :

GOVERNOR TO VISIT CHEUNG CHAU ON SPORTS-FOR-ISLANDERS DAY

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THE GOVERNOR, SIR MURRAY MACLEHOSE, WILL VISIT CHEUNG CHAU ON SUNDAY (JULY 17) WHEN THE ISLAND COMMUNITY ENJOYS A DAY OF SPORTS, GAMES AND FUN.

A SPORTS-FOR-ISLANDERS DAY ON CHEUNG CHAU HAS BEEN PLANNED BY THE RECREATION AND SPORT SERVICE OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AS PART OF THE SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAMME.

THERE ARE MANY AQUATIC AS WELL AS LAND-BASED SPORTS AND GAMES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS. THEY INCLUDE RAFT, SAMPAN AND SURF BOARD RACES= TREASURE HUNT IN WATER, TABLE TENNIS SQUASH, GYMNASTICS AND CYCLE DISPLAY.

THE GOVERNOR WILL ARRIVE AT CHEUNG CHAU AT 3 P.M.

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO COVER THE GOVERNOR'S VISIT ON SUNDAY (JULY 17). TRANSPORT FOR NEWSMEN IS BEING ARRANGED. SHOULD YOU WISH TO USE THIS FACILITY, PLEASE INFORM G.I.S. DUTY OFFICER AT 5-233191 EXTENSION 250 BY 5 P.M. FRIDAY (JULY 15).

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BILLS PASSED

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THREE BILLS PASSED THE SECOND AND THIRD READING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY AND BECAME LAW.

THEY WERE THE JUBILEE SPORTS CENTRE BILL 1977, SALES OF GOODS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977 AND THE FIXED PENALTY (TRAFFIC CONTRAVENTIONS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977.

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REGISTRATION TEAM TO OPERATE IN TAI HANG TUNG ESTATE OFFICE

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THE COMMISSIONER OF REGISTRATION ANNOUNCED TODAY THAT A TEAM FROM THE REGISTRATION OF PERSONS OFFICE WILL CONDUCT REGISTRATIONS IN TAI HANG TUNG ESTATE OFFICE FOR RESIDENTS AND PERSONS LIVING NEARBY FOR SEVEN DAYS WITH EFFECT FROM JULY 21 TO JULY 22 AND FROM JULY 25 TO JULY 29.

REGISTRATIONS WILL BE CONDUCTED BETWEEN 9.30 A.M. AND 4.30 P.M. DAILY.

THE VISIT IS TO ENABLE PARENTS OR GUARDIANS TO REGISTER THEIR CHILDREN OR WARD BETWEEN 11 AND 17 YEARS OF AGE FOR JUVENILE IDENTITY CARDS AND HOLDERS OF JUVENILE IDENTITY CARDS TO REGISTER FOR ADULT IDENTITY CARDS ON REACHING 18 YEARS OF AGE.

ALL PERSONS LIVING IN THIS AREA ARE REMINDED OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO REGISTER THEMSELVES AND THEIR CHILDREN FOR IDENTITY CARDS AND TO REPORT CHANGES OF EMPLOYMENT OR RESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES, MARITAL STATUS, OR ANY OTHER PARTICULARS WHICH HAVE CHANGED SINCE REGISTERING FOR THEIR IDENTITY CARDS.

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PLB RESTRICTION ZONE

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT A PUBLIC LIGHT BUS RESTRICTION (7 A.M. TO MIDNIGHT) WILL BE IMPOSED ON THE ACCESS ROAD LEADING TO THE OCEAN PARK CAR PARK ENTRANCE FROM OCEAN PARK ROAD FROM 10 A.M. ON FRIDAY (JULY 15).

THE PUBLIC LIGHT BUS RESTRICTION WILL ALSO COVER THE ROUNDABOUT SITUATED AT THE EASTERN END OF THE ACCESS ROAD.

APPROPRIATE TRAFFIC SIGNS WILL BE PUT UP TO INDICATE THE RESTRICTIONS.

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