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## DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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MONDAY, AUGUST 15, 1988

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PROPOSALS ON FOREIGN LAW FIRMS WILL NOT 'OPEN FLOODGATES'

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THE ASSISTANT SOLICITOR GENERAL, MR STUART COTSEN, SAID TODAY (MONDAY) THAT THERE WERE NO GROUNDS FOR CONCERN THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S RECENT PROPOSALS ON FOREIGN LAW FIRMS WOULD OPEN THE FLOODGATES AND LEAD TO THE LOCAL PROFESSION BEING DOMINATED BY FOREIGN LAWYERS.

THE PROPOSALS WILL ALLOW FOREIGN LAW FIRMS TO EMPLOY, OR ADMIT AS PARTNERS, LOCAL SOLICITORS TO ADVISE ON HONG KONG LAW, BUT AT THE SAME TIME WILL CONTINUE TO DISALLOW FOREIGN LAWYERS TO PRACTISE HONG KONG LAW ON MOTION WITHOUT HAVING TO PASS ANY EXAMINATION.

UNDER THESE PROPOSALS, FOREIGN LAWYERS WHO ARE NOT QUALIFIED IN HONG KONG'S SYSTEM OF LAW WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO DEAL WITH WORK WHICH UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ORDINANCE MAY ONLY BE DEALT WITH BY QUALIFIED SOLICITORS.

THE PROPOSED CHANGES, IF APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATURE, WILL APPLY TO ALL FOREIGN LAW FIRMS.

IN RESPONSE TO MEDIA REPORTS ON THE PROPOSALS, MR COTSEN POINTED OUT THAT FOREIGN LAW FIRMS HAD IN FACT BEEN OPERATING IN HONG KONG SINCE THE EARLY 1970'S AND "THEIR ADMISSION HAS BEEN REGULATED ONLY BY A LOOSE ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENT OPERATED BY THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT IN CONSULTATION WITH THE LAW SOCIETY WHICH HAS NO LEGISLATIVE BACKING AND NO CLEARLY LAID DOWN CRITERIA.

"IF THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS ARE IMPLEMENTED IT WILL MEAN THAT THE ADMISSION OF FOREIGN LAW FIRMS WILL BE BROUGHT UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE BY MEANS OF A STATUTORY SCHEME.

"SO, FAR FROM OPENING THE FLOODGATES IT WILL PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE CHECK ON BOTH THE QUALITY AND THE NUMBER OF FOREIGN LAW FIRMS PERMITTED TO PRACTISE IN HONG KONG," HE SAID.

DOUBTS HAVE ALSO BEEN RAISED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE BLURRING OF ROLES BETWEEN THE FOREIGN LAWYER AND THE LOCAL SOLICITOR OPERATING IN THE SAME FIRM.

MR COTSEN SAID FOREIGN LAWYERS WILL CONTINUE TO BE BARRED FROM DEALING WITH WORK WHICH IS ONLY TO BE HANDLED BY SOLICITORS QUALIFIED IN HONG KONG LAW AS STIPULATED IN THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ORDINANCE.

SUCH RESTRICTIONS WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED, HE STRESSED.

IN ADDITION, THE GOVERNMENT IS PROPOSING THAT A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK BE DEvised TO GOVERN THE RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES, DISCIPLINE AND CONDUCT OF FOREIGN LAW FIRMS ONCE THEY ARE PERMITTED TO PRACTISE IN HONG KONG.

/"THIS WILL .....

"THIS WILL ENABLE THE LAW SOCIETY TO EXERCISE DISCIPLINARY CONTROL OVER FOREIGN LAW FIRMS WHICH THEY ARE UNABLE TO DO AT PRESENT.

"SUCH CONTROL WILL, OF COURSE, ALSO EXTEND TO HONG KONG SOLICITORS WHO ARE EMPLOYED BY OR WHO ARE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SUCH FIRMS," MR COTSEN SAID.

HE URGED MEMBERS OF THE LAW SOCIETY AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FOREIGN LAW FIRMS TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DRAWING UP OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHEME OF ADMISSION AND CONTROL.

MR COTSEN ALSO REJECTED CRITICISMS THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS HAD BEEN INTRODUCED WITH HASTE AND SECRECY.

HE EXPLAINED THAT ALTHOUGH THESE WERE POLICY PROPOSALS REQUIRING CHANGES TO THE LAW AFTER DUE PASSAGE THROUGH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THEY HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED BEFORE THE DRAFT LEGISLATION HAD BEEN PREPARED, SO THAT THE LOCAL PROFESSION IS GIVEN FULL OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE PART IN DEVISING THE PROPOSED NEW SYSTEM OF CONTROL AND THE REGULATORY SCHEME OF FOREIGN LAW FIRMS.

THIS MEANS THE PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN MADE PUBLIC IN ADVANCE AND MUCH SOONER THAN IF A DRAFTING PROGRAMME HAD BEEN STARTED FIRST.

MR COTSEN REITERATED THAT THE LAW SOCIETY HAD BEEN GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY IN MAY TO COMMENT ON THE PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE GOVERNOR IN JANUARY BY A NUMBER OF AMERICAN LAW FIRMS.

"THE LAW SOCIETY NEVER INDICATED THAT IT HAD INADEQUATE TIME TO FORMULATE ITS RESPONSE NOR INDEED THAT THEIR SUBMISSIONS IN RESPONSE HAD IN ANY WAY FAILED TO ADDRESS ALL THEIR CONCERNS," MR COTSEN SAID.

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JOINT EFFORTS TO PROMOTE SAFETY IN LRT SERVICE AREA

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THE RE-ORIENTATION CAMPAIGN TO STEP UP MOTORISTS' AND VILLAGERS' AWARENESS OF THE OPERATION OF THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEM HAS MADE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN RECENT DAYS AND WILL BE CONTINUED IN THE COMING WEEKS, THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION LIGHT RAIL DIVISION AND THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY (MONDAY).

IT IS EXPECTED THAT WHEN THE SYSTEM COMMENCES ITS COMMERCIAL OPERATION, IT WILL BE WELL-INTEGRATED WITH THE PUBLIC.

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DOOR-TO-DOOR DISTRIBUTION OF SAFETY INFORMATION KITS TO HOUSEHOLDS IN SOME 120 VILLAGES IN TUEN MUN, YUEN LONG AND THE CASTLE PEAK ROAD CORRIDOR HAS BEEN COMPLETED.

IN ADDITION, MOBILE INFORMATION VANS EQUIPPED WITH AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT ARE TOURING THESE VILLAGES.

BESIDES DISTRIBUTING THE SAFETY INFORMATION KITS, A FIVE-MINUTE VIDEO THAT ILLUSTRATE WHAT MOTORISTS SHOULD WATCH OUT FOR AT THE LRT JUNCTIONS AND SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR PEDESTRIANS WILL BE SHOWN.

THE SAFETY INFORMATION KITS WILL ALSO BE DISTRIBUTED TO OTHER HOUSEHOLDS, AND AT CARPARKS AND SERVICE STATIONS FROM THIS WEEK.

IN ADDITION, THE LRT WILL ALSO DEPLOY A TEAM OF WARDENS TO SELECTIVE LOCATIONS TO EXPLAIN TO TRESPASSERS THE PROPER WAY TO CROSS THE TRACKS.

THE LRT EMPHASISED THAT TRESPASSERS APPREHENDED AFTER ALL THE WORKS ON THE NEARBY PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS ARE COMPLETED WILL FACE PROSECUTION.

PARTICULAR ATTENTION IS BEING PAID TO MOTORISTS. A SERIES OF BRIEFING HAS BEEN ORGANISED FOR THE TAXI, PUBLIC LIGHT BUS AND COACH OPERATORS. FURTHER BRIEFINGS WILL BE ORGANISED. THE RESPONSES OF OPERATORS HAVE BEEN VERY ENCOURAGING.

THE SPECIAL LEAFLETS FOR MOTORISTS DETAILING WHAT ROAD VEHICLES DRIVERS SHOULD LOOK OUT FOR AT ROAD JUNCTIONS AND INTERSECTIONS WITH THE LRT SYSTEM WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION AT CARPARKS AND SERVICE STATIONS SOON.

THE LRT IS JOINING WITH THE TUEN MUN AND YUEN LONG DISTRICT BOARDS IN THE LRT SAFETY PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGNS.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES INCLUDE DISTRIBUTION OF SAFETY PAMPHLETS, HOLDING MOBILE EXHIBITIONS AND DISPLAYING INFORMATION BOARDS TO SPREAD THE SAFETY MESSAGE.

MEANWHILE, LRT SAFETY MESSAGES ARE BEING BROADCAST THROUGH THE TELEVISION AND RADIO MEDIA.

THESE INCLUDE AN "ANNOUNCEMENT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST" (API) PRODUCED BY THE GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES, AND "METRODRAMA" - A FIVE-MINUTE TELEVISION PROGRAMME PRODUCED BY RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE LRT AND THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT.

THE ACTING ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT, MR DANIEL AU, SAID THE FREQUENCY OF THE TELEVISION API CONTAINING THE MESSAGES OF "GET TO KNOW THE NEW SIGNS AND MARKINGS", "OBSERVE THE TRAFFIC LIGHTS" AND "CROSS AT PROPER CROSSINGS" HAD BEEN STEPPED UP TO 48 TIMES A WEEK.

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COPIES OF THE API WOULD ALSO BE SENT TO THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT OFFICE, YUEN LONG DISTRICT OFFICE AND THE POLICE FOR SHOWING TO THE PUBLIC.

ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE FOR THE SLIDE ON SAFE USE OF THE LRT SYSTEM TO BE SHOWN IN CINEMAS IN TUEN MUN AND YUEN LONG FOR TWO MONTHS STARTING FROM SEPTEMBER 1, MR AU ADDED.

"THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT PUBLICITY EFFORTS AIMED AT EDUCATING ROAD USERS ON THE SAFE USE OF THE LRT SYSTEM," MR AU SAID.

THE LIGHT RAIL DIRECTOR OF THE KCRC, MR JOE WADE, SAID: "A LOT OF EDUCATIONAL AND PUBLICITY WORKS HAVE BEEN DONE IN THE PAST TWO YEARS TO FAMILIARISE THE PUBLIC WITH THE SYSTEM.

"THE RECENT EFFORTS MAINLY SERVE TO HELP THE PUBLIC TO REALLY ADAPT TO THIS NEW SYSTEM WHICH IS ABOUT TO COME INTO SERVICE."

HE REASSURED THE PUBLIC THAT THE LRT SYSTEM WAS A SAFE SYSTEM WHICH WOULD PROVIDE COMFORTABLE AND EFFICIENT TRANSPORT SERVICES.

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#### WATER STORAGE FIGURE

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STORAGE IN HONG KONG'S RESERVOIRS AT 9 AM TODAY (MONDAY) STOOD AT 36.4 PER CENT OF CAPACITY OR 213.543 MILLION CUBIC METRES.

THIS TIME LAST YEAR THE RESERVOIRS CONTAINED 435.131 MILLION CUBIC METRES OF WATER, REPRESENTING 74.2 PER CENT OF CAPACITY.

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WAN CHAI DB TO DISCUSS EDUCATION REPORT  
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THE WAN CHAI DISTRICT BOARD WILL DISCUSS THE EDUCATION COMMISSION REPORT NO. 3 AT A MEETING TOMORROW (TUESDAY).

AT THE MEETING, MEMBERS WILL ALSO EXPRESS THEIR OPINIONS ON THE CONSULTATION PAPER ON THE LAW ON HOMOSEXUAL OFFENCES, THE CRIMES (AMENDMENT) BILL WHICH SEEKS TO CLAMP DOWN ON NUISANCES ASSOCIATED WITH PROSTITUTION, AND THE LAW ON LOITERING.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE SHOWING OF VIDEOTAPES IN SHOW WINDOWS, AND FIRE PREVENTION IN RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN THE DISTRICT WILL BE RAISED BY THREE MEMBERS.

OTHER ITEMS ON THE AGENDA INCLUDE A REPORT ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO BE PRESENTED BY MR DESMOND LEE YU-TAI, PROGRESS REPORTS BY THE BOARD'S COMMITTEES, A REPORT OF THE WAN CHAI DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, AND PROGRESS REPORTS BY AREA COMMITTEES.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING OF THE WAN CHAI DISTRICT BOARD TO BEGIN AT 2.30 PM TOMORROW (TUESDAY) IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE WAN CHAI DISTRICT OFFICE, EIGHTH FLOOR, TUNG WAH MANSION, 201 HENNESSY ROAD, HONG KONG.

1988 MANPOWER SURVEY OF SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY BEGINS  
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THE SHIPBUILDING, SHIP REPAIR AND OFFSHORE ENGINEERING INDUSTRY TRAINING BOARD OF THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL WILL CONDUCT A SURVEY TO COLLECT UPDATED INFORMATION ON MANPOWER AND TRAINING NEEDS OF THE INDUSTRY.

THE SURVEY, TO BE CARRIED OUT FROM TOMORROW (TUESDAY) TO SEPTEMBER 10, WILL BE CONDUCTED WITH ASSISTANCE FROM THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

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BASED ON THE SURVEY FINDINGS, THE TRAINING BOARD WILL MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON MANPOWER TRAINING FOR THE SHIPBUILDING, SHIP REPAIR AND OFFSHORE ENGINEERING INDUSTRY.

QUESTIONNAIRES AND EXPLANATORY NOTES WERE SENT TWO WEEKS AGO TO ALL ESTABLISHMENTS TO BE COVERED IN THE SURVEY.

OFFICERS FROM THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT WILL CALL AT EACH OF THESE ESTABLISHMENTS TO COLLECT THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES AND TO ASSIST EMPLOYERS IN COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRES.

THE INFORMATION COLLECTED WILL BE HANDLED IN STRICT CONFIDENCE AND WILL BE PUBLISHED ONLY IN THE FORM OF STATISTICAL SUMMARIES WITHOUT REFERENCE TO ANY INDIVIDUAL ESTABLISHMENT.

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TEMPORARY LANE CLOSURE ON SHA TIN ROAD  
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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT REMINDED MOTORISTS THAT FROM MIDNIGHT TOMORROW (TUESDAY) TO 6 AM THE NEXT DAY, THE SOUTHBOUND SLOW LANE OF SHA TIN ROAD FROM FO TAN NULLAH TO CITY ONE SHATIN WILL BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC.

THE MEASURE WILL FACILITATE ROAD RECONSTRUCTION WORK.

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