



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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THURSDAY, JULY 30, 1981

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GOVERNMENT SHARES CONCERN OVER INFLATION

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HONG KONG HAS OUT-PERFORMED MOST OF THE WORLD'S MAJOR ECONOMIES IN TERMS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND OF MAINTAINING LOW UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY THE HON JOHN BREMRIDGE SAID TODAY (THURSDAY).

AND ALTHOUGH OUR RATE OF INFLATION IN 1979 AND 1980, WHETHER MEASURED BY THE CONSUMER PRICES INDEXES OR THE GDP DEFLATOR, WAS RAPID, IT WAS NOT OUT OF LINE WITH THE RATE OF INFLATION IN THESE COUNTRIES.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION RAISED AT TODAY'S LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING BY THE HON PETER C. WONG WHO ASKED WHAT MEASURES THE GOVERNMENT WAS TAKING TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION.

MR BREMRIDGE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE OF PUBLIC CONCERN ABOUT THE HIGH RATES OF INCREASE IN CONSUMER PRICES, AND SHARED THIS CONCERN.

+BUT INFLATION IS A CURRENT PROBLEM WORLD-WIDE, AND GIVEN THE EXTERNALLY ORIENTED NATURE OF OUR ECONOMY WE CANNOT EXPECT TO BE UNAFFECTED,+ HE SAID.

IN THE FIRST HALF OF THIS YEAR, CONSUMER PRICES AVERAGED ABOUT 14 PER CENT HIGHER THAN IN THE FIRST HALF OF LAST YEAR. THIS IS SOMEWHAT HIGH EVEN IN TERMS OF CURRENT INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE BECAUSE OF THE DELAYED EFFECT OF THE DEPRECIATION OF THE HONG KONG DOLLARS DURING THE LAST NINE MONTHS OF 1980 WAS WORKING THROUGH TO THE RETAIL LEVEL.

+BUT THE RATE OF INCREASE IN THE GDP DEFLATOR, WHICH IS REALLY THE BEST MEASURE AVAILABLE ON INFLATION FOR THE ECONOMY AS A WHOLE, IS MUCH LOWER, AS A CLOSER BALANCE BETWEEN THE DEMAND FOR AND SUPPLY OF DOMESTIC RESOURCES, EVEN IN RESPECT OF LAND AND PROPERTY, IS BEING ACHIEVED,+ MR BREMRIDGE SAID.

A ROUGH ESTIMATE SHOWS THAT THE GDP DEFLATOR IS NOW RUNNING AT A RATE OF ONLY ABOUT 7 TO 8 PER CENT. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND OUR GDP DEFLATOR THIS YEAR IS CONFIDENTLY EXPECTED TO GROW AT 8 PER CENT.

SO FAR, DOMESTIC EXPORTS ARE UP IN REAL TERMS BY ABOUT 7 PER CENT, AND RE-EXPORTS BY OVER 35 PER CENT. THE VISIBLE TRADE ACCOUNT SHOWS A FAIR DEGREE OF STABILITY: WHILE OUR UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION BY WORLD STANDARDS IS GOOD - AND INDEED IN SOME AREAS SHORTAGES ARE DEVELOPING.

/+THIS SEEMS

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+THIS SEEMS TO ME NOT A TOTALLY UNSATISFACTORY POSITION IN WHICH TO FIND OURSELVES IN VIEW OF THE VERY UNFAVOURABLE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS PREVAILING IN OUR MAJOR EXPORT MARKETS - THE WORST SINCE THE WORLD RECESSION OF 1931.+

HE SAID THE FACT THAT THE RATE OF INCREASE OF CONSUMER PRICES WAS SIGNIFICANTLY FASTER THAN THAT OF THE GDP DEFLATOR WAS AN INDICATION THAT THE INFLATIONARY PRESSURES WE WERE EXPERIENCING WERE LARGELY IMPORTED.

IN THE PAST TWO AND A HALF YEARS, OVER HALF OF THE INCREASE IN CONSUMER PRICES WAS ATTRIBUTABLE TO INCREASES IN THE PRICE OF FOOD. ANOTHER 12 PER CENT AND 8 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO INCREASES IN THE PRICE OF +FUEL AND LIGHT+ AND +TRANSPORT AND VEHICLES+.

+SO ABOUT 70 PER CENT OF THE INCREASE IN CONSUMER PRICES DURING THE PAST TWO AND A HALF YEARS IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO INCREASES IN THE PRICES OF THOSE CONSUMER ITEMS WHICH ARE HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY IMPORT PRICES,+ MR BREMRIDGE SAID.

+IMPORT PRICES OF FOOD IN THE FIRST HALF OF 1981 WERE 16 PER CENT HIGHER THAN IN THE FIRST HALF OF 1980. IMPORT PRICES OF FUEL WERE 39 PER CENT HIGHER.+

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY ALSO POINTED OUT THAT IN OUR FREE ECONOMY BASED ON MARKET PLACE DISCIPLINE AND WITHOUT EXCHANGE CONTROLS THERE WAS LITTLE THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD DO TO CURB SUCH INFLATIONARY PRESSURES WITHOUT RESORTING TO THE BLUNT INSTRUMENT OF INTEREST RATE INCREASES.

+WE MUST BE VERY CAREFUL TO ENSURE THAT THE CURE IS NOT WORSE THAN THE DISEASE.

+I WILL NOT PUT FORWARD MEASURES TO AMELIORATE IMPORTED INFLATION WHICH WILL ALSO HAVE THE EFFECT OF SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASING UNEMPLOYMENT. AND ONE MUST REALISE THE BURDEN THAT HIGH INTEREST RATES PRESENT TO MANY SECTORS OF OUR COMMUNITY.+

MR BREMRIDGE STRESSED THAT IN NO CIRCUMSTANCES DID THE GOVERNMENT INTEND TO INTERVENE INTEMPERATELY AND IN A WAY THAT WOULD RADICALLY CHANGE THOSE POLICIES OF PRUDENT FREEDOM THAT HAD SERVED US SO WELL.

+BUT WE SHALL DO WHAT WE CAN TO HELP THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE,+ HE ADDED.

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REALISTIC TARGETS SET FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

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THE WILL TO MOVE FASTER WAS THERE, BUT THE RESOURCES, PARTICULARLY HUMAN RESOURCES, MIGHT NOT BE, SAID THE HON ÉRIC P. HO, SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE WHITE PAPER ON PRIMARY EDUCATION AND PRE-PRIMARY SERVICES, AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR HO SAID THE TARGETS TOWARDS THE LATTER END OF THE DECADE COULD BE REVIEWED ONCE IT WAS SEEN HOW THE SUPPLY OF TEACHERS, TEACHER TRAINERS AND CLASSROOMS MEASURED UP TO THE TARGETS SET IN THE WHITE PAPER.

IT HAS BEEN THE GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN TO SET REALISTIC IMPLEMENTATION DATES.

+IF IT IS POSSIBLE TO SPEED UP THINGS, THE GOVERNMENT WILL CERTAINLY DO SO,+ HE SAID.

MR HO WAS REFERRING TO COMMENTS MADE BY THE HON THE REV JOYCE BENNETT AND THE HON DR HENRY HU THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE MOVING FASTER IN SOME AREAS THAN THE WHITE PAPER INDICATES.

MR HO TOLD MEMBERS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD RECENTLY APPOINTED A CONSULTANT TO EXAMINE TEACHING IN KINDERGARTENS TO SEE WHAT AREAS NEEDED IMPROVEMENT AND TO INTRODUCE THE LATEST THINKING TO TEACHER TRAINERS.

+HER VIEWS, TOGETHER WITH THOSE OF THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE WILL BE CAREFULLY STUDIED TO ENSURE THAT THE BEST AND MOST APPROPRIATE TYPE OF EDUCATION IS MADE AVAILABLE TO OUR PRE-PRIMARY CHILDREN,+ MR HO SAID.

IN EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO MISS BENNETT AND DR HU FOR THEIR SUPPORT, HE SAID THAT THEY HAD BOTH GENEROUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN AT PAINS TO TAKE PUBLIC OPINION INTO ACCOUNT, AS WELL AS THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THE COUNCIL.

+FOR MY PART, I REITERATE THAT WHEN MODIFICATIONS TO THE MEASURES SET OUT IN THE WHITE PAPER BECOME DESIRABLE AND POSSIBLE OF ACHIEVEMENT, THE GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE THE NECESSARY CHANGES,+ MR HO SAID.

DISCUSSING PRE-PRIMARY CHILDREN ATTENDING INSTITUTIONS +WHICH THEIR AGE APPARENTLY DOES NOT ENTITLE THEM TO DO SO,+ MR HO SAID THE DEMARCATION BETWEEN CHILD CARE CENTRES AND KINDERGARTENS IS DETERMINED BY THE AGES OF THE CHILDREN PERMITTED TO ATTEND THESE INSTITUTIONS.

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AS FOR THREE-YEAR-OLDS WISHING TO ATTEND KINDERGARTENS, THE GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED TO PERMIT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BABY CLASSES PROVIDED THAT THE STANDARDS OF THESE CLASSES WERE THOSE APPLICABLE TO CHILD CARE CENTRES RATHER THAN KINDERGARTENS. IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEW THAT THERE WAS A GREATER NEED FOR CARE OF THESE YOUNGER CHILDREN, AND THAT THERE SHOULD BE A CORRESPONDINGLY GREATER PROVISION OF STAFF AND SPACE THAN FOR OLDER CHILDREN ATTENDING KINDERGARTENS.

+THESE STANDARDS WILL BE CLEARLY DEFINED IN THE RESPECTIVE ORDINANCES. I CAN SEE, NEVERTHELESS, THAT THERE MIGHT STILL BE ONE OR TWO DEMARCATION PROBLEMS, AND I MUST STRESS THAT IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO RETAIN THE STANDING CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE ON KINDERGARTENS AND CHILD CARE CENTRES WHICH IS CHAIRED BY A SENIOR OFFICIAL OF THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS IF AND WHEN THEY ARISE,+ MR HO SAID.

ON THE QUESTION OF TRAVEL TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS, MR HO GAVE ASSURANCE THAT EFFORT WOULD BE MADE TO ENSURE THAT TRAVEL BE KEPT TO A MINIMUM AND THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WOULD ALSO CONSIDER THE FEASIBILITY OF HAVING A ONE-MILE RADIUS FOR THE EXERCISE OF PERSONAL CHOICE AND DISTRICTS FOR DEPARTMENTAL ALLOCATION.

REGARDING THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN KINDERGARTENS, HE SAID IT WAS COVERED BY THE MANUAL OF KINDERGARTEN PRACTICE.

THE GOVERNMENT VIEW WAS THAT IT WAS ADVISABLE FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF ENGLISH INTO THE SYLLABUS TO BE POSTPONED TO PRIMARY TWO. BUT IF ENGLISH WERE TO BE INTRODUCED EARLIER, IT SHOULD BE KEPT VERY SIMPLE.

MR HO SAID THAT IN HIS REPLY, HE FELT CONSTRAINED TO DEAL ONLY WITH POINTS RELEVANT TO THE WHITE PAPER.

+NO POLICY DOCUMENTS CAN PLEASE EVERYBODY. SOME WILL BE UNHAPPY THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO MEET THE SPECIFIC POINTS THEY RAISED, BUT I THINK IT MUST BE CONCEDED BY EVEN THE MOST ENTHUSIASTIC CRITICS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS IN THIS WHITE PAPER MADE A GENUINE ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF PRIMARY EDUCATION AND PRE-PRIMARY SERVICES,+ MR HO CONCLUDED.

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CALL TO UPGRADE EDUCATION SYSTEM

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THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD UPGRADE OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF THE LAST TWO DECADES OF THIS CENTURY, THE HON THE REV JOYCE BENNETT TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

SPEAKING DURING THE DEBATE ON THE WHITE PAPER ON PRIMARY EDUCATION AND PRE-PRIMARY SERVICES, MISS BENNETT SAID SHE WAS HAPPY TO NOTE THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO SPEND MORE MONEY ON EDUCATION. SHE URGED THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION TOGETHER WITH THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION TO PRODUCE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS SIMILAR TO THOSE PROPOSED FOR THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

UNDOUBTEDLY, MISS BENNETT POINTED OUT, HONG KONG HAS BEEN EXAMINING ITS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN PIECEMEAL FASHION FOR YEARS AND THIS WAS +THE LAST STEP IN THE PROCESS+.

+WE DESPERATELY NEED THAT OVERALL EXAMINATION OF THE SYSTEM. HONG KONG SOCIETY DESERVES ITS EDUCATION TO BE TREATED AS A WHOLE.

+MAY THE EDUCATION OFFICERS BE ENCOURAGED TO SEE THE EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD AS A WHOLE?+

SHE THOUGHT THAT SECONDARY SCHOOLS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO LIAISE MORE WITH THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS FROM WHICH THEIR STUDENTS COME.

TURNING TO THE WHITE PAPER ITSELF, MISS BENNETT SAID THAT DESPITE THE IMPROVED DIVISION BETWEEN CHILD-CARE CENTRES AND KINDERGARTENS ON THE GROUNDS OF AGE, THERE WAS STILL SOME DOUBLE-THINK REQUIRED WHEN DEALING WITH THE THREE-YEAR-OLD BABY CLASS FOR THE KINDERGARTENS.

+THE GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO PERMIT THESE TO CONTINUE, BUT THEY MUST BE REGISTERED AS CHILD-CARE CENTRES?

+IN CONTRAST SOME CHILDREN OF 4-5 WILL BE ATTENDING CHILD-CARE CENTRES.

+WHEN IS A KINDERGARTEN A CHILD-CARE CENTRE AND WHEN IS A CHILD-CARE CENTRE A KINDERGARTEN?

+DO THE AUTHORS REALLY CONSIDER SUCH WORDS TRULY DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THESE TWO TYPES OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS?+ SHE ASKED.

HOWEVER, SHE NOTED THAT THE AUTHORS OF THE WHITE PAPER HAVE IN FACT DEvised WAYS BY WHICH THESE INSTITUTIONS MAY DRAW MORE AND MORE CLOSE TOGETHER. THESE ARE: THE STAFF WILL BE EVENTUALLY TRAINED IN THE SAME TRAINING COLLEGE AND FUTURE KINDERGARTENS WILL IMPROVE THEIR FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT TO MAKE THEM MORE LIKE CHILD-CARE CENTRES.

ON THE CONTROL OF ENTRY TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS, MISS BENNETT WARNED THAT THERE WAS A DANGER THAT KINDERGARTENS WOULD BE PROVIDING THEIR ENTRANCE TESTS TO ASSESS WHICH CHILDREN TO ADMIT.

/+A VERY

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+A VERY POSITIVE ATTEMPT HAS BEEN MADE TO PREVENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS FROM IMPOSING TESTS AND THE WRONG TYPE OF INTERVIEWS ON THE FIVE TO SIX YEAR OLDS.

+I WONDER, HOWEVER, HOW THE INTERVIEWS CAN BE PROPERLY CONDUCTED IN THE PRESENCE OF 'AN OFFICER FROM THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'.

+THE SHEER MECHANICS OF SUCH AN EXERCISE MAKES THE MIND BOGGLE.

+WHAT KIND OF OFFICERS WILL BE DETAILED FOR THIS SERVICE - CLERICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE AS WELL AS PROFESSIONAL STAFF? OR WHO?+ SHE ASKED.

SHE SAID SHE WOULD WATCH THIS DEVELOPMENT WITH INTEREST.

REGARDING THE REVISED QUOTA OF DISCRETIONARY PLACES GRANTED TO SCHOOLS, MISS BENNETT THOUGHT IT WAS CERTAINLY WORTH TRYING OUT.

BUT UNTIL THE EXACT BOUNDARIES OF EACH DISTRICT WAS KNOWN, IT WAS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS THE SCHEME IN FULL.

SHE QUERIED WHETHER IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR EACH PRIMARY SCHOOL TO RECEIVE, FOR ITS RESTRICTED 30 PER CENT DISCRETIONARY PLACES, CHILDREN LIVING WITHIN ONE MILE OF THE SCHOOL.

AS THE GOVERNMENT HAS FOR A LONG TIME MADE IT A MATTER OF POLICY THAT NO CHILD SHOULD TRAVEL MORE THAN ONE MILE TO A PRIMARY SCHOOL, SHE URGED THAT HER SUGGESTION BE EXAMINED THOROUGHLY.

ALTHOUGH THE IMPROVEMENTS PROPOSED FOR THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS WERE MOST ATTRACTIVE, MISS BENNETT NOTED THE WHITE PAPER DID NOT TACKLE THE LANGUAGE QUESTION BEYOND ADVOCATING REMEDIAL TEACHING AND IMPROVED CURRICULUM FOR BOTH CHINESE AND ENGLISH.

THE WHOLE QUESTION OF HOW MUCH AND WHAT TYPE OF ENGLISH SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN KINDERGARTENS AND HOW MANY ENGLISH KINDERGARTEN CLASSES SHOULD BE ALLOWED IN EACH DISTRICT MUST ALSO BE TACKLED.

BILINGUALISM IN OUR SOCIETY IS IMPORTANT AND WE NEED TO DECIDE THE PROPER AGE AT WHICH TO ENCOURAGE IT.

CONCLUDING, MISS BENNETT WARNED THAT WE MUST NOT DELUDE OURSELVES INTO THINKING THAT OUR PRE-PRIMARY SERVICES AND PRIMARY EDUCATION ARE NOW AUTOMATICALLY IMPROVED WITH THE ISSUE OF THIS WHITE PAPER.

+MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE IN CLARIFYING THE GREY AREAS, SOME OF WHICH I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MENTION THIS AFTERNOON.

+IN ADDITION, GOVERNMENT AND THE VOLUNTARY BODIES MUST WORK TOGETHER TO IMPLEMENT THE CHANGES ADVOCATED IN THE WHITE PAPER,+ SHE SAID.

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GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACEMENT SUPPORTED
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DR HENRY HU, WHO SUPPORTED THE WHITE PAPER, SAID HE WAS PARTICULARLY PLEASED WITH THE GREATER FLEXIBILITY INTRODUCED INTO THE DISCRETIONARY PLACE SYSTEM.

HE SAID SCHOOLS WILL NOW BE ALLOWED TO OFFER UP TO 65 PER CENT DISCRETIONARY PLACES TO CHILDREN WITH SOME SPECIAL CONNECTION WITH THE SCHOOL COMPARED WITH THE ORIGINAL 15 PER CENT IN THE GREEN PAPER. AT THE SAME TIME, 65 PER CENT OF SCHOOL PLACES IN ANY DISTRICT WILL BE ALLOCATED TO CHILDREN LIVING IN THE AREA.

+I HOPE THAT IN THE MEDIUM TERM - WHEN THE SUPPLY OF TRAINED TEACHERS IS INCREASED AND THERE HAVE BEEN IMPROVEMENTS IN SCHOOL STANDARDS, FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT AND SUPPORTING SERVICES - IT WOULD THEN BE BOTH PRACTICAL AND DESIRABLE TO FURTHER INTEGRATE PUPILS OF DIFFERENT ABILITIES AND FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS IN SCHOOLS BY GRADUALLY REDUCING THE QUOTA OF DISCRETIONARY PLACES,+ HE SAID.

DR HU WELCOMED THE REPLACEMENT OF THE EXISTING PRIMARY SCHOOL ENTRY EXAMINATIONS BY INTERVIEWS. HOWEVER, HE WARNED THAT SUCH INTERVIEWS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE USED AS TESTS IN DISGUISE.

COMMENTING ON THE ELIGIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO LOW-INCOME FAMILIES, HE QUOTED AN EXAMPLE FROM THE WHITE PAPER TO SHOW THAT ONCE THE TOTAL FAMILY INCOME EXCEEDS THE \$3 000 LEVEL AFTER ALLOWING FOR RENT, IT WILL NO LONGER BE ENTITLED TO ANY ASSISTANCE.

+I FIND THIS UNNECESSARILY RESTRICTIVE, HOWEVER, AT TODAY'S HIGH INFLATION RATE.

+I WOULD URGE THAT THE CEILING BE SUITABLY RELAXED.+

ON THE QUESTION OF TRAINING OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS, DR HU SUGGESTED THAT SHORTER BUT MORE INTENSIVE COURSES SHOULD BE RUN.

EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PLACED NOT ONLY ON THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS BUT ALSO ON THE STAFF'S DEVOTION TO CHILDREN AND THEIR WORK, HE ADDED.

AS REGARDS THE PILOT PROJECT TO CHARGE NON-PROFIT-MAKING KINDERGARTENS IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES AT A WELFARE RENT, DR HU HOPED THAT IT WOULD BE MADE PERMANENT AND EXTENDED TO ALL ESTATE KINDERGARTENS, INCLUDING THOSE WHICH ARE PAYING THE FULL MARKET RENT FOR THEIR ESTATE PREMISES THROUGH OPEN TENDER.

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NEW TELEPHONE CHARGES APPROVED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY) APPROVED AN AMENDMENT TO THE SCHEDULE TO THE TELEPHONE ORDINANCE WHICH ALLOWS THE HONG KONG TELEPHONE COMPANY TO INCREASE CHARGES IN LINE RENTALS.

IN MOVING THE AMENDMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON P. JACOBS SAID IT WAS PROPOSED THAT NEW RENTALS FOR RESIDENTIAL LINES AND BUSINESS LINES, AND FOR LEASED CIRCUITS AND EXTERNAL EXTENSIONS SHOULD TAKE EFFECT ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1981.

HE SAID THE PRESENT RENTAL CHARGES HAD BEEN HELD CONSTANT FOR THREE YEARS, BUT INCREASES WERE NOW UNAVOIDABLE BECAUSE OF INCREASES IN THE COMPANY'S COSTS DURING THE PERIOD.

INCREASES IN RENTALS FOR PRIVATE PAYPHONES, MAINTENANCE CHARGES FOR PRIVATE AUTOMATIC BRANCH EXCHANGES (PABX), AND VARIOUS INCREASED INSTALLATION AND REMOVAL CHARGES WOULD TAKE EFFECT ON JANUARY 1, 1982.

THE INCREASES WOULD ONLY ALLOW THE COMPANY TO RECOVER THE COSTS OF PROVIDING THE SERVICES AND AVOID CROSS-SUBSIDISATION FROM OTHER SERVICES, MR JACOBS SAID.

HE SAID THE COUNCIL HAD BEEN ALERTED ON MARCH 11, 1981, WHEN IT RESOLVED TO AMEND THE SCHEDULE IN ORDER TO INCREASE A NUMBER OF THE TELEPHONE COMPANY'S CHARGES, THAT INCREASES IN LINE RENTALS AND RELATED CHARGES MIGHT BE NECESSARY IN LATE 1981 OR EARLY 1982.

THE PROPOSED INCREASES IN CHARGES WHICH THE COUNCIL APPROVED TODAY WERE SUBMITTED BY THE COMPANY IN EARLY JUNE.

MR JACOBS SAID THE COMPANY HAD ALSO APPLIED TO RAISE THE CHARGE FOR THE USE OF A PUBLIC PAYPHONE FROM 50 CENTS TO \$1 A CALL.

+ALTHOUGH DISALLOWED, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT AS THE PROVISION OF SERVICE IS UNECONOMIC AT 50 CENTS A CALL AND AS AN INCREASE OF LESS THAN 50 CENTS IS IMPRACTICABLE BECAUSE OF THE COSTS INVOLVED IN MODIFYING PAYPHONE MECHANISMS TO ACCEPT A SECOND COIN, IT IS LIKELY THAT THE PRESENT CHARGE WILL NEED TO BE RAISED WHEN TELEPHONE TARIFFS ARE NEXT REVIEWED,+ HE SAID.

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NO CHANGE PLANNED FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME
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NO CHANGE IS PROPOSED IN THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME UNDER WHICH PEOPLE ARE GIVEN FINANCIAL HELP TO MEET THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE IF THEY HAVE +SAVINGS+ OF LESS THAN \$4 500 IN THE CASE OF INDIVIDUALS AND \$3 000 IN THE CASE OF FAMILY MEMBERS, THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MRS ANSON CHAN, SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MRS CHAN WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON THE REV JOYCE BENNETT, WHO ASKED IF THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ADOPT THE SAME METHOD OF PAYMENT OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS AS WAS BEING ADOPTED FOR VOLUNTARY SOCIAL WELFARE AGENCIES.

THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME, WAS +NOT ANALOGOUS TO THE SUBVENTION SYSTEM FOR VOLUNTARY WELFARE AGENCIES+, AND WAS AN +INCOME MAINTENANCE SCHEME DESIGNED TO ASSIST THOSE WITH INADEQUATE MEANS TO MEET THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE+, SHE SAID.

SMALL DONATIONS UNDER \$100 AND DESIGNATED DONATIONS GIVEN TO THESE PEOPLE ARE DISREGARDED, BUT UNDESIGNATED PUBLIC DONATIONS RECEIVED AFTER A NATURAL DISASTER ARE TREATED AS +SAVINGS+, FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME.

+SAVINGS UNDER \$4 500 FOR A SINGLE PERSON OR \$3 000 FOR EACH FAMILY MEMBER ARE NOT TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. FOR EXAMPLE, A FOUR-MEMBER FAMILY MAY HAVE SAVINGS OF \$12 000 AND STILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE IF THE MONTHLY INCOME IS CONSIDERED INADEQUATE BY PUBLIC ASSISTANCE STANDARDS+, SHE SAID.

HOWEVER, A LARGE DONATION COULD RENDER A FAMILY INELIGIBLE FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FROM THE MONTH FOLLOWING RECEIPT UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE +SAVINGS+ FALL BELOW THE PERMITTED LEVEL.

+THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT IS IN KEEPING WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME AND NO CHANGE IS PROPOSED+, SHE SAID.

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ID CARD FORGERS NOW FACE 14 YEARS' JAIL
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PEOPLE FORGING IDENTITY CARDS NOW RISK GOING TO JAIL FOR UP TO 14 YEARS.

THIS IS PROVIDED UNDER NEW LEGISLATION -- THE CRIMES (AMENDMENT) BILL AND THE IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL -- PASSED TODAY BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THE NEW MEASURES COME CLOSE ON THE HEEL OF STIFF PENALTIES WHICH CAME INTO EFFECT LAST WEEK, PROVIDING FOR A FINE OF \$50 000 AND SEVEN YEARS' IMPRISONMENT FOR POSSESSION OF A FORGED IDENTITY CARD.

THE NEW MEASURES ARE DESIGNED TO DETER POSSIBLE ABUSE OF DOCUMENTS OF PROOF OF IDENTITY AND AS A FURTHER DETERRENT TO ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION.

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GOVERNMENT HELPS PROMOTE WORK OF MACS
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THE GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED THAT MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE EFFECTIVE, THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR DAVID AKERS-JONES, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

MR AKERS-JONES WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI, WHO ASKED IF GOVERNMENT UNDERTOOK REGULAR ASSESSMENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ESTABLISHED MACS AND IF GOVERNMENT WOULD MAKE A STATEMENT ON THE RECENT STANDARD OF PERFORMANCE BY MACS FORMED IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES AND IN PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS.

TO ACHIEVE CONTINUED EFFECTIVENESS, STAFF OF THE NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION AND THE HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT VISITED MACS AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH, MR AKERS-JONES SAID. THESE VISITS PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO CHECK AND ASSIST THE COMMITTEES IN BUILDING MANAGEMENT AND ENCOURAGED THEM IN THEIR WORK AMONG THE RESIDENTS OF THE BUILDING.

HE SAID THE MAC MOVEMENT DATED BACK TO 1973 WHEN IT WAS LAUNCHED TO SUPPORT THE FIGHT VIOLENT CRIME AND KEEP HONG KONG CLEAN CAMPAIGNS, TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT AND SECURITY OF BUILDINGS, FOSTER A SENSE OF NEIGHBOURLINESS AMONG RESIDENTS AND GENERALLY TO ASSIST IN COMMUNITY WORK.

+THERE IS, OF COURSE, A TENDENCY FOR SOME MACS IN PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS TO BECOME LESS ACTIVE ONCE THE INITIAL PROBLEMS OF SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT HAVE BEEN OVERCOME,+ MR AKERS-JONES SAID.

IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES, THE COMMITTEES PLACED MORE EMPHASIS ON FOSTERING NEIGHBOURLINESS AND HELP AND SERVICE TO ONE ANOTHER.

IN SHORT, HE BELIEVED THE 3 467 COMMITTEES NOW ESTABLISHED, TOGETHER WITH ABOUT 1 000 OWNERS INCORPORATIONS, HAD MADE A VALUABLE IMPROVEMENT TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THEIR BUILDINGS AND AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

+AND WHILE IT IS TRUE TO SAY THAT IN A MOVEMENT AS LARGE AS THIS THE PERFORMANCE OF SOME COMMITTEES COULD BE IMPROVED I BELIEVE THESE COMMITTEES HAVE DONE A MARVELLOUS JOB AND THEY DESERVE ALL THE HELP AND ENCOURAGEMENT THEY CAN GET AND THE EFFORTS OF THE STAFF ARE DIRECTED TO THIS END,+ MR AKERS-JONES SAID.

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CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES
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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HAS APPROVED ADJUSTMENTS TO CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES FOR THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR.

THE MAJORITY OF CIVIL SERVANTS WILL RECEIVE PAY ADJUSTMENT RANGING FROM ABOUT 17 PER CENT TO 18 PER CENT, WHILE OFFICERS AT THE DIRECTORATE LEVEL WILL HAVE THEIR RANGE OF SALARIES ADJUSTED BY ABOUT 17 PER CENT TO 13-1/2 PER CENT.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THE ADJUSTMENTS WERE BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF A SURVEY OF PAY TRENDS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR DURING THE PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR AND AFTER DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE STAFF SIDE AND THE OFFICIAL SIDE OF THE SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE COUNCIL.

THE NEW SALARIES OF CIVIL SERVANTS ON THE MASTER PAY SCALE RANGE FROM \$1 395 AT POINT ONE TO \$17 990 AT POINT 51, COMPARED WITH THE EXISTING RANGE OF \$1 180 TO \$15 230.

MODEL SCALE 1 WORKERS WILL RECEIVE REVISED SALARIES RANGING FROM \$1 660 TO \$2 610, COMPARED WITH THE PRESENT \$1 405 TO \$2 205.

STAFF OF THE DISCIPLINED SERVICES WILL BE PAID FROM \$3 335 TO \$17 990 AS AGAINST THE PRESENT \$2 835 TO \$15 230 IN THE CASE OF OFFICERS, AND FROM \$1 950 TO \$5 545 AS AGAINST THE PRESENT \$1 645 TO \$4 730 IN THE CASE OF RANK AND FILE.

THE REVISED DIRECTORATE AND DIRECTORATE JUDICIAL/LEGAL GROUP PAY SCALES RANGE FROM \$19 350 TO \$40 850, COMPARED WITH THE EXISTING RANGE OF \$16 500 TO \$36 000.

THE REVISED SCALES ARE EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 1 THIS YEAR AND THE NEW SALARIES WILL BE PAID IN AUGUST.

THE ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL COST IS ABOUT \$920 MILLION FOR THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR, COVERING THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE GRANT TO THE URBAN COUNCIL ACCORDING TO THE MEMORANDUM OF ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS AND REIMBURSEMENT TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY FOR SERVICES PAID FOR BY THE GOVERNMENT.

THE FINANCE COMMITTEE ALSO APPROVED PROVISION OF \$385 MILLION FOR THE CURRENT YEAR TO PROVIDE FOR APPROPRIATE INCREASES IN GRANTS TO DEFICIENCY GRANT ORGANISATIONS AND DISCRETIONARY GRANT ORGANISATIONS.

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PENSIONS ADJUSTED TO MEET COSTS
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A PROPOSAL BY THE GOVERNMENT TO INCREASE PENSION PAYMENTS FOR ITS STAFF IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE ORIGINAL PURCHASING POWER OF THE PENSIONS WAS TODAY APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON H.S. GREWAL, IN MOVING THE PENSIONS (INCREASE) ORDINANCE (CAP. 305) AND THE WIDOW AND ORPHANS PENSIONS (INCREASE) ORDINANCE (CAP. 205), SAID IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO MAKE THE ADJUSTMENTS TO REFLECT CHANGES IN THE COST OF LIVING.

DURING THE REVIEW PERIOD FROM JULY 1, 1980 TO JUNE 30, 1981, HE SAID, THE MOVING ANNUAL AVERAGE OF THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (A) ROSE BY 21.5 POINTS OR 14.30 PER CENT.

+IN THE LIGHT OF THIS MOVEMENT, IT IS PROPOSED THAT PENSIONS IN PAYMENT ON JULY 1, 1981, INCLUDING PREVIOUS INCREASES ALREADY APPROVED, SHOULD BE INCREASED BY 14 PER CENT WITH EFFECT FROM OCTOBER 1, 1981.+

MR GREWAL SAID THE COST OF THE INCREASE WAS ESTIMATED TO BE \$20.3 MILLION FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR AND \$40.6 MILLION IN A FULL YEAR.

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED, ON THE ADVICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, THAT WITH EFFECT FROM APRIL 1, 1982, THE REVIEW PERIOD AND THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF ANY AWARD OF PENSION INCREASES SHOULD BE THE SAME AS FOR SALARY ADJUSTMENTS, ALTHOUGH REVIEWS OF PENSIONS AND SALARIES WOULD CONTINUE TO BE CONDUCTED SEPARATELY BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERENT FACTORS INVOLVED.

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INTEREST ON TAX RESERVE CERTIFICATES
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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY HAS AUTHORISED AN INCREASE IN THE RATE OF INTEREST PAYABLE ON TAX RESERVE CERTIFICATES. AS FROM JULY 31, 1981, THE NEW ANNUAL RATE OF INTEREST WILL BE 13.2 PER CENT (TAX FREE) AS AGAINST THE CURRENT RATE OF 9.84 PER CENT (TAX FREE).

INTEREST ON TAX RESERVE CERTIFICATES IS CALCULATED IN MONTHLY STEPS AND THE NEW RATE WILL BE \$1.10 PER MONTH PER \$100. INTEREST WILL BE CREDITED AS BEFORE IN RESPECT OF COMPLETED MONTHS BETWEEN PURCHASE AND SURRENDER IN PAYMENT OF TAX.

INTEREST IS ONLY CREDITED WHEN CERTIFICATES ARE USED TO PAY TAX AND NO INTEREST IS DUE WHERE THE PRINCIPAL VALUE OF A CERTIFICATE IS REPAID IN CASH.

THE NEW RATE WILL APPLY TO ALL CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER JULY 31, 1981.

/CERTIFICATES WHICH

CERTIFICATES WHICH WERE ISSUED BEFORE JULY 31, 1981 WILL CONTINUE TO EARN INTEREST AS FOLLOWS:

4.2%	PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER SEPTEMBER 19, 1975 AND BEFORE FEBRUARY 17, 1977-
3%	PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER FEBRUARY 17, 1977 AND BEFORE SEPTEMBER 22, 1978-
3.24%	PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER SEPTEMBER 22, 1978 AND BEFORE NOVEMBER 24, 1978-
5.04%	PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER NOVEMBER 24, 1978 AND BEFORE FEBRUARY 16, 1979-
5.76%	PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER FEBRUARY 16, 1979 AND BEFORE MAY 4, 1979-
8.04%	PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER MAY 4, 1979 AND BEFORE OCTOBER 26, 1979-
8.4%	PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER OCTOBER 26, 1979 AND BEFORE APRIL 11, 1980-
10.5%	PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER APRIL 11, 1980 AND BEFORE MAY 30, 1980-
9%	PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER MAY 30, 1980 AND BEFORE JUNE 27, 1980-
7.2%	PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER JUNE 27, 1980 AND BEFORE JULY 30, 1980-
6.24%	PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER JULY 30, 1980 AND BEFORE OCTOBER 16, 1980-
8.16%	PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER OCTOBER 16, 1980 AND BEFORE NOVEMBER 21, 1980- AND
9.84%	PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER NOVEMBER 21, 1980 AND BEFORE JULY 31, 1981.

EXAMPLE: \$1 000 CERTIFICATES PURCHASED ON AUGUST 1, 1981, SEPTEMBER 1, 1981 AND OCTOBER 1, 1981 RESPECTIVELY, SURRENDER IN PAYMENT OF TAX DUE ON DECEMBER 1, 1981, WILL HAVE INTEREST CALCULATED AS FOLLOWS:

ON \$1 000, AUGUST 1, 1981 TO DECEMBER 1, 1981, 4 COMPLETE MONTHS AT \$11 PER MONTH	-\$44
ON \$1 000, SEPTEMBER 1, 1981 TO DECEMBER 1, 1981, 3 COMPLETE MONTHS AT \$11 PER MONTH	-\$33
ON \$1 000, OCTOBER 1, 1981 TO DECEMBER 1, 1981, 2 COMPLETE MONTHS AT \$11 PER MONTH	-\$22

	\$99

HOWEVER, ALL CERTIFICATES ARE SUBJECT TO THE GENERAL RULE THAT INTEREST CEASES TO ACCRUE AFTER 36 COMPLETED MONTHS WITHOUT SURRENDER FOR PAYMENT OF TAX.

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GOVERNMENT THANKED FOR FREE LAND FOR TRAINING

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS RESERVED A SITE IN EAST KOWLOON FOR THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY TRAINING AUTHORITY TO BUILD THEIR SECOND TRAINING CENTRE, UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, DR FRANCIS TIEN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

AND ANOTHER SITE IN TSUEN WAN HAS BEEN GRANTED TO THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TRAINING AUTHORITY FOR THE SAME PURPOSE, HE SAID.

SPEAKING AT THE TABLING OF THE ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE TWO TRAINING AUTHORITIES FOR 1980, DR TIEN THANKED THE GOVERNMENT FOR GRANTING THE LAND FREE OF PREMIUM.

HE SAID THE DEMAND OF THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY FOR TRAINED MANPOWER FAR EXCEEDS THE TRAINING CAPACITY OF THE EXISTING CLOTHING INDUSTRY TRAINING CENTRE.

+OWING TO QUANTITATIVE RESTRAINTS, THE INDUSTRY HAS BEEN MOVING TOWARDS THE PRODUCTION OF HIGH QUALITY AND FASHION PRODUCTS.

+SUCH A MOVE DEMANDS NOT ONLY SOPHISTICATED MARKETING STRATEGY, IMPROVED DESIGN AND BETTER PRODUCTION PLANNING BUT ALSO AN INCREASED SUPPLY OF WELL-TRAINED MANPOWER.+

DR TIEN REPORTED THAT THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW ALSO SAW A SIGNIFICANT GROWTH IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY.

HE SAID THERE HAS BEEN A CONTINUING SHIFT FROM CIVIL ENGINEERING TO BUILDING WORKS WHICH REQUIRE A GREATER INPUT OF SKILLED WORKERS AND THEREFORE A SECOND TRAINING CENTRE IS REQUIRED.

CONSTRUCTION WORK ON THIS SECOND CENTRE WILL START SHORTLY AND IT IS HOPED THE CENTRE WILL BE OPERATIONAL IN LATE 1982.

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THURSDAY, JULY 30, 1981

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FEE AMENDMENTS APPROVED

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TWO AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW PRESCRIBING THE FEES AND PERCENTAGES PAYABLE IN RELATION TO THE WINDING UP OF COMPANIES AND THOSE TO BE CHARGED IN RESPECT OF PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE BANKRUPTCY ORDINANCE WERE APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

THE COMPANIES (FEES AND PERCENTAGES)(AMENDMENT) ORDER 1981, WHICH WAS MADE BY THE ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE ON JULY 20, 1981, INTRODUCES THREE CHANGES TO THE PRINCIPAL ORDER.

FIRST, IT PROVIDES THAT PAYMENT OF CERTAIN FEES AND PERCENTAGES PREVIOUSLY REQUIRED TO BE TAKEN IN STAMPS MAY NOW BE TAKEN IN CASH.

SECOND, IT REVISES THE PRESCRIBED FEES IN THE THIRD SCHEDULE OF THE PRINCIPAL ORDER BY INCREASING MOST OF THEM BY 50 PER CENT.

THIRD, IT REMOVES THE MAXIMUM FEE FOR PAYMENTS OUT OF THE COMPANIES LIQUIDATION ACCOUNT IN RESPECT OF UNCLAIMED DIVIDENDS.

IN MOVING THE AMENDMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES THE HON P. JACOBS SAID SINCE THE LAST REVIEW OF THESE FEES AND PERCENTAGES IN 1975, THE COSTS IN THE OFFICIAL'S RECEIVER'S OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT HAD INCREASED, AND THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER HAD BEEN OPERATING AT A LOSS.

THE BANKRUPTCY (FEES AND PERCENTAGES) SCALE (AMENDMENT) NOTICE 1981, ALSO MADE BY THE ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE ON JULY 20, 1981, REVISES THE FEES PRESCRIBED ON THE BASIS OF INCREASED COST OF ADMINISTERING THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER'S OFFICE.

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THURSDAY, JULY 30, 1981

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FIREARMS BILL APPROVED

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THE ARMS AND AMMUNITION BILL, WHICH AIMS TO STRENGTHEN AND MODERNISE THE LAW RELATING TO ARMS AND AMMUNITION, HAS BEEN RETITLED THE FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION BILL AND PASSED BY THE COUNCIL.

THIS IS TO DISTINGUISH IT FROM THE EXISTING ORDINANCE AND TO EMPHASISE THAT IT DEALS WITH FIREARMS AND NOT WEAPONS BEING DEALT WITH UNDER ANOTHER BILL.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL, MR PETER C. WONG SAID IT IS PARTICULARLY WELCOME AT THIS TIME +WHEN THE PUBLIC IS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE INCREASING INCIDENCE IN THE UNLAWFUL USE OF FIREARMS+.

THE LAW ENACTED IN 1933 WAS NOT DESIGNED TO COPE WITH PRESENT DAY SITUATIONS AND THE PENALTIES PRESCRIBED WERE INADEQUATE, HE SAID.

WHILE AGREEING THE PROPOSED NEW LAW MAY NOT NECESSARILY REDUCE THE UNLAWFUL USE OF FIREARMS, MR WONG SAID: +WITH A STRENGTHENED AND MODERNISED ORDINANCE, THE LAW ENFORCING AGENCIES WILL HAVE A POWERFUL WEAPON TO COMBAT OFFENCES WHICH THIS BILL IS DESIGNED TO PREVENT.+

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SIX BILLS BECOME LAW

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SIX BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

THEY ARE: THE ARMS AND AMMUNITION BILL 1981, THE WEAPONS BILL 1981, THE IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1981, THE DANGEROUS DRUGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1981, THE IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1981 AND THE CRIMES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1981.

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THURSDAY, JULY 30, 1981

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FIRM DECISION ON WATER SUPPLY NEXT MONTH

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THE DIRECTOR OF WATER SUPPLIES, MR WILLIAM TUCKER, TODAY EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE CURRENT LEVEL OF SUPPLY COULD BE MAINTAINED FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE SUMMER IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE STORAGE POSITION AND THE PROSPECT OF OBTAINING FURTHER YIELD IN THE COMING TWO MONTHS.

SPEAKING AT THE Y'S MEN'S CLUB LUNCHEON, HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT A REPORT WOULD BE PRESENTED TO GOVERNMENT IN THE MIDDLE OF NEXT MONTH WHEN THE OVERALL SITUATION WOULD BE REVIEWED AND A FIRM DECISION MADE.

+IT IS STILL VERY MUCH IN THE LAP OF THE GODS WHAT RAINFALL WILL OCCUR IN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS AND HOW THIS WILL INFLUENCE THE NEED TO OPERATE THE DESALTER OR THE LEVEL OF SUPPLY WHICH MAY BE MAINTAINED IN THE COMING DRY SEASON,+ MR TUCKER SAID.

+AS A CONTINGENCY MEASURE, THEREFORE, WE ARE PREPARING THE POSSIBLE FULL SCALE OPERATION OF THE DESALTER SHOULD IT PROVE TO BE NECESSARY.+

REFERRING TO THE CURRENT SITUATION, MR TUCKER SAID IT WAS IMPROVED TO SOME EXTENT BY THE RECENT RAINFALL.

+WHILE SOME 317.2 MM HAS FALLEN IN THE MONTH, GIVING A YIELD OF 64 MILLION CUBIC METRES AND REPRESENTING 43 DAYS OF SUPPLY, THE RESERVOIRS ARE STILL ONLY 43.9 PER CENT FULL,+ HE SAID.

+WE ARE, THEREFORE, IN THE DIFFICULT SITUATION OF STILL HAVING TWO MONTHS OF THE WET SEASON TO GO, BUT WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT THE RAINFALL IN THOSE TWO MONTHS IS LIKELY TO BE.+

IN THIS SITUATION, MR TUCKER SAID, HIS DEPARTMENT HAD TO EXAMINE ALTERNATIVE POSSIBILITIES.

+THESE ARE BASED ON PROBABILITIES RELATED TO THE MAINTENANCE OF DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SUPPLY, NOT ONLY FOR THE REMAINING TWO MONTHS OF THE WET SEASON, BUT FOR THE COMING DRY SEASON ALSO, SO THAT WE MAY ENTER THE NEXT WET SEASON WITH A REASONABLE QUANTITY OF WATER IN STORAGE,+ HE ADDED.

/ON WATER

THURSDAY, JULY 30, 1981

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ON WATER SUPPLY FROM CHINA, MR TUCKER SAID: +HONG KONG IS RECEIVING 168 MILLION CUBIC METRES ANNUALLY FROM CHINA AND THIS WILL INCREASE TO 182 MILLION CUBIC METRES ANNUALLY IN 1982.

+FURTHER INCREASES WILL BECOME AVAILABLE FROM 1983 ONWARDS UNDER THE TERMS OF THE LATEST AGREEMENT SIGNED IN MAY LAST YEAR, WHEREBY THE TOTAL SUPPLY FROM CHINA WILL INCREASE PROGRESSIVELY TO 620 MILLION CUBIC METRES IN THE MIDDLE OF 1990'S. THAT IS WATER SUPPLY FROM CHINA WILL BE MORE THAN TREBLED OVER THE NEXT 14 YEARS, INCREASING FROM ROUGHLY 30 PER CENT OF OUR CURRENT DEMAND TO 60 PER CENT OF THE ESTIMATED DEMAND IN 1994/95.+

TURNING TO THE LOK ON PAI DESALTING PLANT, MR TUCKER SAID IT COULD PRODUCE 182 000 CUBIC METRES OF WATER A DAY OR ABOUT 12 PER CENT OF THE PRESENT WATER DEMAND.

ANY DECISION TO OPERATE THE DESALTER, HE ADDED, WOULD BE VERY SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED, AND IT WOULD NOT BE RUN IN PLACE OF ALTERNATIVE, CHEAPER SOURCES OF SUPPLY THAT COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE.

HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT THAT THERE WOULD BE NO INCREASE IN WATER CHARGES ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE DESALTER SHOULD IT BE FOUND NECESSARY TO OPERATE IT.

MR TUCKER DEFENDED THE GOVERNMENT DECISION TO BUILD THE DESALTER, SAYING THAT AT THE TIME THE DECISION WAS MADE IN 1972, IT WAS THE MOST ECONOMICAL WAY OF PRODUCING THE ADDITIONAL QUANTITIES OF WATER REQUIRED BY HONG KONG TO MEET THE EXPECTED SHORTFALL JUST PRIOR TO THE COMMISSIONING OF THE HIGH ISLAND WATER SCHEME.

+IN RETROSPECT, THE DECISION TO CHOOSE A LOW USE FACTOR, SINGLE PURPOSE PLANT WAS THE CORRECT ONE, AS NOT ONLY DID IT PROVIDE A RELIABLE, FIXED CONTRIBUTION TO THE WATER RESOURCES AS AND WHEN REQUIRED, BUT IT DELAYED BY ABOUT TWO YEARS THE TIME BY WHICH A DECISION WOULD HAVE HAD TO BE MADE TO ENTER INTO LARGE SCALE DESALTING, PROBABLY IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PRODUCTION OF ELECTRICITY,+ HE SAID.

+THIS DELAY ENABLED AN APPROACH TO BE MADE TO THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES OF WATER LEADING TO DISCUSSIONS IN 1979 AND EVENTUALLY A LONG-TERM AGREEMENT IN 1980.+

MR TUCKER SAID THE DESALTER HAD ALREADY BEEN USED TO GOOD EFFECT IN 1977-78 AND WOULD BE AVAILABLE AGAIN TO FULFIL ITS ROLE AS A STRATEGIC RESERVE, IF NECESSARY.

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THURSDAY, JULY 30, 1981

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FIGHT AGAINST COUNTERFEITING +OUTSTANDING+

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+ONE OF THE MOST DESPICABLE FORMS OF FRAUD IS THAT OF STEALING ANOTHER PERSON'S COPYRIGHT, HIS INDUSTRIAL DESIGN OR HIS TRADE MARK,+ THE COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS AND CONTROLS, MR DOUGLAS JORDAN, SAID TODAY (JULY 30).

MR JORDAN TOLD THE LUNCHEON CLUB MEETING OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF KOWLOON THAT HONG KONG'S TRADING REPUTATION AND INTERNATIONAL STANDING COULD BE BROUGHT INTO JEOPARDY THROUGH THE SUBSTANTIAL DEGREE OF MISCONCEPTION ON COUNTERFEITING WHICH, IF NOT COUNTERED, QUITE UNFAIRLY GIVES HONG KONG AN UNDESERVED BAD NAME.

+HONG KONG'S EFFORTS TO COMBAT COUNTERFEITING ARE OUTSTANDING IN THE REGION, AND STAND HIGH IN THE WORLD AS A WHOLE,+ SAID MR JORDAN.

FOR INSTANCE, AS A RESULT OF A MAJOR OPERATION BY THE COPYRIGHT UNIT OF THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE SERVICE AGAINST THE PIRATES OF AUDIO CASSETTES, IT IS DIFFICULT TO FIND PIRATED MUSIC TAPES IN HONG KONG.

TODAY IT IS THE VIDEO CASSETTE PIRATES THAT THE COPYRIGHT UNIT IS HITTING AS HARD AS IT PREVIOUSLY HIT THE MUSIC CASSETTE RACKET.

+IN THE FEW MONTHS THAT THIS FRESH FORM OF PIRACY HAS BEEN EVIDENT, A NUMBER OF RAIDS HAVE BEEN MADE AND SEVERAL CASES AWAIT HEARING IN THE COURTS.

+IN ONE, AS MUCH AS 14 LORRY LOADS OF CASSETTES, MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT WERE SEIZED AND REMOVED FROM THE ILLICIT FACTORY,+ SAID MR JORDAN.

THE INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY SECTION OF THE TRADE CONTROLS INVESTIGATION BRANCH WORKS IN PARALLEL WITH THE COPYRIGHT UNIT, PURSUING COUNTERFEITING IN FASHIONS AND CLOTHING, LUGGAGE, WATCHES, CLOCKS, PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT, AND OTHER GOODS.

LAST YEAR, THIS SECTION INVESTIGATED AN AVERAGE OF ONE CASE EACH WORKING DAY, OF WHICH 103 WERE PROCESSED THROUGH THE COURTS. +GOODS AMOUNTING TO \$12 MILLION WERE SEIZED,+ SAID MR JORDAN. +IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF THIS YEAR ALONE IT COMPLETED 87 CASES AND SEIZED \$13 MILLION-WORTH OF GOODS.

MR JORDAN SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY IN COUNTERING COUNTERFEITING IS FURTHER EXEMPLIFIED BY THE PROVISIONS OF THE TRADE DESCRIPTIONS ORDINANCE WHICH BECAME EFFECTIVE ON APRIL 1 THIS YEAR. THIS GAVE THE DEPARTMENT NEW POWERS OF ENFORCEMENT WITH SUBSTANTIAL INCREASES IN PENALTIES.

/A TRADING

THURSDAY, JULY 30, 1981

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A TRADING STANDARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE, ALTHOUGH IN EXISTENCE FOR ONLY A MONTH, IS MAKING GOOD PROGRESS ON THE FIRST - ON GOLD OR GOLD ALLOY ARTICLES - OF A NUMBER OF MARKING ORDERS TO RECOMMEND TO THE GOVERNMENT.

+THE MARKING ORDERS TO BE MADE BY THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL REQUIRE THAT GOODS ARE MARKED OR ACCOMPANIED BY PRESCRIBED INFORMATION - TRADE DESCRIPTIONS OR OTHERWISE - AS AN ASSURANCE OF THEIR STANDARD OR STANDING,+ HE SAID.

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CIVILIANS COMMENDED FOR BRAVERY

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FOUR CIVILIANS WHO HELPED RESCUE TWO WOMEN FROM A BURNING FLAT IN MONG KOK EARLY THIS YEAR WERE TODAY (THURSDAY) PRESENTED WITH DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES' COMMENDATION AND CASH AWARDS AT A CEREMONY HELD AT MONG KOK FIRE STATION.

THE PRESENTATION WAS MADE BY KOWLOON FIRE COMMAND'S CHIEF FIRE OFFICER ANTHONY CONWAY TO TSE HUNG-CHAU, HUI SAI-MING, LAW KAM-SHING AND TAM SIK.

TWO PEOPLE, A 46-YEAR-OLD WOMAN AND HER 17-YEAR-OLD SON WERE KILLED IN A FIRE WHICH OCCURRED IN THE EARLY HOURS OF APRIL 19, 1981, ON THE GROUND FLOOR OF 26 MEI ON STREET, KOWLOON.

THE FOUR PEOPLE, WHO WERE LIVING IN THE ADJOINING FLAT, WERE AWAKENED ABOUT 6.30 AM THAT MORNING AND TACKLED THE FIRE WITH EXTINGUISHERS. WHILE FIGHTING THE BLAZE, TSE, HUI, LAW AND TAM SAW TWO WOMEN TRAPPED IN THE COCKLOFT OF THE BURNING BUILDING, AND HELPED TO CARRY THEM TO SAFETY.

+THESE FOUR GENTLEMEN SHOWED INITIATIVE AND DETERMINATION IN TACKLING THE FIRE WHICH RESULTED IN THE RESCUES BEING SUCCESSFULLY CARRIED OUT,+ SAID MR CONWAY.

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WEST GERMAN FORESTRY SCIENTISTS VISIT HONG KONG COUNTRYSIDE

A GROUP OF 12 WEST GERMAN FORESTRY SCIENTISTS CURRENTLY VISITING HONG KONG TODAY (THURSDAY) TOOK A CLOSE LOOK AT THE TERRITORY'S COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVATION PROGRAMME.

THEY VISITED THE NATURE RESERVE AT TAI PO KAU AND WENT TO THE SHING MUN COUNTRY PARK, WHICH IS ONE OF HONG KONG'S WELL-ESTABLISHED FOREST PLANTATION AREAS.

THE GROUP WAS ACCOMPANIED BY TWO STAFF MEMBERS OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT, FORESTRY OFFICER MR S.L. CHONG AND SENIOR FIELD OFFICER MR T.W. CHAN.

BEFORE THEIR TOUR OF THE COUNTRYSIDE, THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (CONSERVATION AND COUNTRY PARKS) MR K.C. IU BRIEFED THE GROUP ON THE COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVATION AND AFFORESTATION PROGRAMME IN HONG KONG.

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TEMPORARY CLOSURES

A SECTION OF KWUN TONG ROAD, UNDER THE KWUN TONG MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY STATION (KWUN TONG UNDERPASS), WILL BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC AT INTERVALS DURING AUGUST SO THAT A PERMANENT LIGHTING SYSTEM CAN BE INSTALLED.

THE EASTBOUND AND WESTBOUND CARRIAGEWAYS WILL BE CLOSED FROM 8.30 AM ON SATURDAY (AUGUST 1) TO 8.30 AM ON AUGUST 6. THE WESTBOUND OF NGAU TAU KOK-BOUND CARRIAGEWAY WILL ALSO BE CLOSED FROM 8.30 AM ON AUGUST 6 TO 8.30 AM ON AUGUST 16 AND THE EASTBOUND OF LEI YUE MUN-BOUND CARRIAGEWAY FROM 8.30 AM ON AUGUST 16 TO MIDNIGHT ON AUGUST 31.

ALTERNATIVE TRAFFIC ROUTES WILL BE PROVIDED DURING THE CLOSURES.

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PLB'S BANNED FROM CAR PARK
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PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES WILL BE BANNED FROM ENTERING THE PUBLIC CAR PARK AT CLEAR WATER BAY BEACH WHEN AN ADJACENT PUBLIC LIGHT BUS TERMINUS COMES INTO OPERATION AT 10 AM ON SATURDAY (AUGUST 1).

ONLY PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO USE THE NEW TERMINUS.

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ROAD CLOSED TO LEARNERS
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LEARNER DRIVERS WILL BE PROHIBITED FROM ENTERING THE TAI PAK TIN STREET ACCESS ROAD LEADING TO THE SHEK YAM TEMPORARY HOUSING AREA FROM 10 AM ON MONDAY (AUGUST 3), SO AS TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC FLOW.

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