

FUTURE OF HONG KONG ADVANCE COPIES 910

62

PS  
PS/PUS  
PS/MR LUCE  
MR DONALD  
HD/HKD  
HD/FED

COPY TO:  
MR COLES, No. 10 DOWNING ST

(RUBEN) NEWS

RESIDENT CLERK

ADVANCE COPY

IMMEDIATE

SECRET

FM HONG KONG 200805Z DEC 83  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 1985 OF 20 DECEMBER 1983  
INFO IMMEDIATE PEKING

ms

MY TELNOS 1714 AND 1973 (PARAGRAPHS 14 AND 23)

FUTURE OF HONG KONG: CONSTITUTIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL DEVELOPMENT.

FOLLOWING THE REVIEW ANNOUNCED IN PARA 103 OF MY ADDRESS TO LEGCO ON 5 OCTOBER 1983, I NOW PROPOSE, AS A FIRST STEP, TO PUT TO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ON 3RD JANUARY PROPOSALS FOR THE CREATION OF A REGIONAL COUNCIL TO SERVE THE NEW TERRITORIES AND FOR CHANGES IN THE COMPOSITION AND PROBABLY FUNCTIONS OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS. (NEW TERRITORIES IN THIS CONTEXT MEANS THE ADMINISTRATIVE AREA WHICH IS NOT COINCIDENT WITH THE QUOTE LEASED AREA UNQUOTE).

2. THE FUNCTIONS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES COUNCIL WILL BE SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THE URBAN COUNCIL, I.E. ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH, SANITATION AND HYGIENE; RECREATION, AMENITIES AND ENTERTAINMENT; AND PROVISION OF CULTURAL SERVICES. AS IN THE URBAN AREA, DISTRICT BOARD CONSTITUENCIES WILL BE GROUPED TOGETHER TO CONSTITUTE ELECTORAL DISTRICTS FOR THE RETURN OF ELECTED COUNCILLORS. THE SECOND COUNCIL MAY HAVE TO BE LARGER THAN THE PRESENT URBAN COUNCIL, BUT THE RATIO OF ELECTED TO NOMINATED MEMBERS WOULD BE 1:1. INCOME FOR THE NEW COUNCIL WILL BE A PROPORTION OF THE NEW TERRITORIES RATES. ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS AND STATUTORY POWERS WILL BE SIMILAR TO THOSE PRESENTLY APPLYING TO THE URBAN COUNCIL.

3. FOR THE DISTRICT BOARDS, I AM PROPOSING TO DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF ELECTED MEMBERS TO GIVE THE BOARDS A MORE REPRESENTATIVE STATUS. NOMINATION OF APPOINTED MEMBERS WILL CONTINUE, BUT THE RATIO WILL BE 2 ELECTED MEMBERS TO 1 APPOINTED. OFFICIAL MEMBERS WILL, IN FUTURE, BE 'IN ATTENDANCE' ONLY WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE DISTRICT OFFICER WHO WILL BECOME EX-OFFICIO VICE CHAIRMAN AFTER THE NEXT DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS IN 1985 WHEN THE BOARDS WILL ELECT THEIR OWN CHAIRMEN.

~~4. EXTENSION OF THE FUNCTIONS OF DISTRICT BOARDS REQUIRES FURTHER~~

4. EXTENSION OF THE FUNCTIONS OF DISTRICT BOARDS REQUIRES FURTHER EXAMINATION AND IS BEING CONSIDERED. INVOLVEMENT IN BUILDING MANAGEMENT, URBAN RENEWAL, LOCAL HAWKER CONTROL AND THE USE OF LOCAL FACILITIES SUCH AS COMMUNITY HALLS AND SPORTS GROUNDS ARE POSSIBILITIES I HAVE IN MIND.

5. CERTAIN CONSEQUENTIAL CHANGES TO THE ORGANISATION OF GOVERNMENT'S OWN INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION WILL BE NECESSARY. FOR INSTANCE, THE CULTURAL SERVICES DIVISION OF THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT WILL BE MERGED WITH THE RECREATION AND CULTURE DEPARTMENT TO CENTRALISE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PLANNING AND MANAGING FACILITIES IN THE FIELDS OF RECREATION AND CULTURE AND PROMOTION OF ACTIVITIES AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES. RESPONSIBILITY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH, REFUSE COLLECTION, ETC. WILL REMAIN WITH THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT, TO BE RE-TITLED THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT. BOTH THESE NEW DEPARTMENTS WILL HAVE REGIONAL DIVISIONS PROVIDING SUPPORTING SERVICES FOR THE TWO REGIONAL COUNCILS AND A CENTRAL CORE TO HANDLE TERRITORY-WIDE MATTERS. THE NEED FOR ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES AT POLICY SECRETARY LEVEL TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS WILL ALSO BE NECESSARY, BUT HAVE YET TO BE WORKED OUT IN DETAIL.

7. AS TO TIMING, MY INTENTION IS THAT CHANGES IN THE COMPOSITION AND FUNCTIONS OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN MARCH 1985, WHEN THE NEXT ELECTIONS ARE DUE. AT THE SAME TIME, A WHOLLY (NEXT WORD UNDERLINED) NOMINATED NEW TERRITORIES COUNCIL WOULD BE SET UP TO BE REPLACED BY THE HALF ELECTED/HALF NOMINATED COUNCIL, (PARA 2 ABOVE) IN MARCH 1986, THE DATE SCHEDULED FOR THE NEXT ELECTIONS FOR THE PRESENT URBAN COUNCIL.

7. IF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL APPROVES AN INTER-DEPARTMENTAL WORKING PARTY WOULD BE SET UP TO WORK OUT THE REQUIRED ADMINISTRATIVE PROPOSALS AND LEGISLATIVE CHANGES. FOR THE TIMING OF ANNOUNCEMENTS SEE PARA 23 OF MY TEL NO 1973.

YOUDE

CCN: LAST TWO PARAS TO READ 6 AND 7

NNNN