



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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HIGH TIME TO DEAL WITH POLLUTION

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IT IS HIGH TIME THAT FIRM ACTION IS TAKEN TO DEAL WITH POLLUTION PROBLEM CAUSED BY ANIMAL WASTE BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE WASTE DISPOSAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE NOTED THAT LIVESTOCK WASTE WAS A MAJOR CAUSE OF POLLUTION OF STREAMS, NULLAH AND COASTAL WATERS, AND IT WAS ESTIMATED TO CAUSE ABOUT 70 PER CENT OF ALL STREAM POLLUTION IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND ABOUT 50 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL ORGANIC POLLUTION ENTERING THE SEA.

HE SAID IT WAS ALSO POTENTIALLY A SERIOUS HEALTH RISK AND THE TERRITORY'S WATERCOURSES WERE SO HEAVILY POLLUTED THAT ACTION TO CLEAN THEM UP WAS LONG OVERDUE.

HE SAID THE WASTE DISPOSAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 SOUGHT TO IMPLEMENT A TEN-YEAR LIVESTOCK WASTE CONTROL PROGRAMME BY DESIGNATING 'LIVESTOCK WASTE PROHIBITION AREAS' AND 'LIVESTOCK WASTE CONTROL AREAS'.

MR CHAMBERS SAID THE STORAGE AND DISPOSAL OF LIVESTOCK WASTE WOULD BE CONTROLLED BY THE INCLUSION OF TWO NEW PARTS IN THE WASTE DISPOSAL ORDINANCE.

MR CHAMBERS SAID THE FIRST NEW PART WAS PART IIIA WHICH PROVIDED FOR THE DESIGNATION OF 'LIVESTOCK WASTE PROHIBITION AREAS', IN WHICH THE KEEPING OF LIVESTOCK (WHICH FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE ORDINANCE IS DEFINED AS "PIGS AND POULTRY") WOULD BE FORBIDDEN.

HE SAID IT ALSO PROVIDED FOR THE DESIGNATION OF 'LIVESTOCK WASTE CONTROL AREAS', IN WHICH IT WOULD BE AN OFFENCE TO KEEP LIVESTOCK UNLESS REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE COLLECTION, STORAGE, TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL OF THE WASTE PRODUCED WERE COMPLIED WITH.

"DETAILS OF THE PROHIBITION AND CONTROL AREAS ARE SET OUT IN THE FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD SCHEDULES, TOGETHER WITH THE DATES ON WHICH THEY WILL COME INTO EFFECT," MR CHAMBERS ADDED.

"THE FOURTH SCHEDULE EXEMPTS CERTAIN PERSONS FROM THE CONTROLS OF THE BILL, INCLUDING OPERATORS OF MARKETS, ABATTOIRS, AND FOOD SHOPS, AND KEEPERS OF VERY SMALL NUMBERS OF LIVESTOCK," HE SAID.

MR CHAMBERS SAID THE SECOND NEW PART WAS PART VA, WHICH PROVIDED FOR ENFORCEMENT MATTERS, INCLUDING POWERS OF ENTRY, THE OBTAINING OF INFORMATION AND THE ANALYSIS OF SAMPLES.

"CLAUSE 13 OF THE BILL EMPOWERS THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL TO AMEND THE SCHEDULES AND THE GOVERNOR TO AMEND THE DATES ON WHICH THE VARIOUS AREAS WILL COME INTO EFFECT.

"WE ARE AT PRESENT CONSIDERING WHETHER TO PROPOSE THE ADVANCING OF THE EFFECTIVE DATE FOR THE MUI WO AREA, IN VIEW OF THE PROBLEMS BEING CAUSED BY LIVESTOCK WASTE AT THE SILVERMINE BAY BEACH," MR CHAMBERS SAID.

MR CHAMBERS SAID THE LIVESTOCK SCHEME WOULD INEVITABLY AFFECT THE LIVELIHOOD OF SOME LIVESTOCK KEEPERS AND, THEREFORE, THE FARMERS AFFECTED WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR EX-GRATIA PAYMENTS.

"THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL WAS THAT THE RATES OF PAYMENT SHOULD BE THE SAME AS THOSE HITHERTO USED FOR DEVELOPMENT CLEARANCES.

"AT THE SUGGESTION OF FINANCE COMMITTEE, THE ADMINISTRATION HAS REVIEWED THE ALLOWANCE RATES AND RECOMMENDED THAT THEY SHOULD BE INCREASED BY ABOUT 30 PER CENT. THE REVISED RATES WERE APPROVED BY FINANCE COMMITTEE LAST WEDNESDAY," HE SAID.

MR CHAMBERS SAID EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT WITH DISTRICT BOARDS AND THE LIVESTOCK FARMERS AND THE PROPOSALS HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AT LENGTH WITH THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF AGRICULTURAL AND LIVESTOCK KEEPING ASSOCIATIONS.

"AS A RESULT OF THIS CONSULTATION A NUMBER OF CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE TO THE ORIGINAL PROPOSALS, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF A WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE WHICH INITIALLY WILL BE SUBSIDISED FROM PUBLIC FUNDS.

"THERE HAS ALSO BEEN CONSULTATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP," HE ADDED.

MR CHAMBERS SAID THIS BILL AND THE RELATED DRAFT REGULATIONS WERE THE RESULT OF MANY YEARS OF DETAILED WORK AND EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION WITH ALL THOSE AFFECTED.

"SOME PEOPLE'S LIVELIHOODS WILL INEVITABLY BE AFFECTED, BUT WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE NEW COMPENSATION RATES RECENTLY APPROVED BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THIS COUNCIL ARE FAIR AND REASONABLE," HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

SUPREME COURT OPERATION TO BE STREAMLINED

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THE PURPOSE OF THE SUPREME COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 IS TO IMPROVE AND STREAMLINE THE PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE OF THE SUPREME COURT WHICH IS COMPRISED OF THE HIGH COURT AND COURT OF APPEAL, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON MICHAEL THOMAS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE BILL FOR SECOND READING, MR THOMAS SAID ALTHOUGH THE UNITED KINGDOM LEGISLATION IN THIS REGARD HAD BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY AMENDED OVER THE YEARS AND WAS CONSOLIDATED BY THE SUPREME COURT ACT IN 1981, FEW CORRESPONDING AMENDMENTS HAD BEEN MADE TO THE HONG KONG ORDINANCE.

"ACCORDINGLY, THERE ARE NOW SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO PIECES OF LEGISLATION.

"BY 1984 IT HAD BECOME APPARENT THAT A THOROUGH REVIEW OF THE SUPREME COURT ORDINANCE WAS REQUIRED TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER ANY OF THE AMENDMENTS TO THE UNITED KINGDOM LEGISLATION SHOULD BE ADOPTED IN HONG KONG," MR THOMAS SAID.

"NO ONE SUGGESTS THAT HONG KONG MUST SLAVISHLY ADOPT ALL UNITED KINGDOM REFORMS.

"ANY AMENDMENT THAT IS PROPOSED ON THE BASIS OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM MUST BE EVALUATED IN THE LIGHT OF LOCAL NEEDS AND HONG KONG'S SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES," HE ADDED.

IN 1984, A SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE SUPREME COURT RULES COMMITTEE, BEING A PANEL OF JUDGES AND LEGAL PRACTITIONERS, WAS ESTABLISHED UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF MR JUSTICE KEMPSTER TO UNDERTAKE A THOROUGH REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE SUPREME COURT AND TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER THE AMENDMENTS INTRODUCED TO THE UNITED KINGDOM LEGISLATION AND CONSOLIDATED IN THE 1981 ACT SHOULD BE MADE TO THE HONG KONG ORDINANCE.

VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES TO THE LAW RECOMMENDED BY THE SUB-COMMITTEE HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN THE BILL, MR THOMAS SAID.

THE PROPOSAL MADE BY THE KEMPSTER SUB-COMMITTEE THAT HAD NOT BEEN INCLUDED IN THE BILL WAS A RECOMMENDATION THAT THE HIGH COURT SHOULD BE EMPOWERED TO GRANT "INTERIM DECLARATIONS" AGAINST THE CROWN AT AN EARLY STAGE OF PROCEEDINGS, HE SAID.

THIS FORM OF INTERIM RELIEF WAS INTENDED TO HAVE THE EFFECT OF TEMPORARILY RESTRAINING THE GOVERNMENT FROM TAKING AS DISPUTED ACTION UNTIL THE MATTERS IN ISSUE BETWEEN THE AFFECTED CITIZEN AND THE GOVERNMENT COULD BE FINALLY DETERMINED AT THE TRIAL.

THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT REJECTED THE PROPOSAL OUTRIGHT BUT HAD DECIDED TO RESERVE ITS FINAL VIEW UNTIL IT HAD BEEN DISCUSSED BY THE JUDICIARY, THE LEGAL PROFESSIONS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES IN THE COMMUNITY, MR THOMAS SAID.

HE ALSO SAID MANY OF THE PROVISIONS IN THE BILL WERE AIMED AT MAKING MORE EFFICIENT USE OF JUDICIAL MANPOWER.

THE FIRST PROVISION WAS THAT THE RANGE OF CASES IN WHICH TWO-MEMBER, RATHER THAN THE USUAL THREE-MEMBER, COURTS OF APPEAL MIGHT SIT TO DETERMINE APPEALS WOULD BE EXTENDED TO THOSE CASES WHERE THE PARTIES AGREED THAT A TWO-MEMBER COURT WAS SUFFICIENT, WHERE ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF A THREE-MEMBER COURT WAS UNABLE TO CONTINUE, AND TO OTHER CATEGORIES OF CASES PRESCRIBED BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE.

ANOTHER PROVISION WOULD REQUIRE A PARTY SEEKING TO APPEAL TO THE COURT FROM A STATUTORY TRIBUNAL (SUCH AS THE IMMIGRATION TRIBUNAL AND THE LANDS TRIBUNAL) FIRST TO OBTAIN LEAVE TO APPEAL FROM THE COURT, THEREBY WEEDING-OUT SOME UNMERITORIOUS APPEALS, HE SAID.

"OTHER AMENDMENTS ARE INTENDED TO EFFECT HOUSEKEEPING AND ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES WITHIN THE SUPREME COURT," HE SAID.

FIRSTLY, PROVISIONS WOULD BE INTRODUCED TO PERMIT THE CHIEF JUSTICE TO APPOINT ONE OR MORE JUSTICES OF APPEAL AS "VICE PRESIDENTS" TO HEAD THE THREE DIVISIONS OF THE COURT OF APPEAL.

SECONDLY, THE BILL WOULD ALSO CHANGE THE COURT'S NAME FROM "THE SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE" TO "THE SUPREME COURT OF HONG KONG".

THIRDLY, THE BILL WOULD PROVIDE THAT ONLY PERSONS WHO WERE QUALIFIED TO BE APPOINTED AS JUDGES OF THE SUPREME COURT MIGHT BE APPOINTED AS CHIEF JUSTICE. PRESENTLY THERE WAS NO QUALIFICATION FOR THAT IMPORTANT OFFICE.

MR THOMAS SAID MOST OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE BILL WOULD CLARIFY AND IMPROVE THE PRACTICE OF THE COURT.

"THE BILL WILL INTRODUCE PROVISIONS TO OVERCOME EXISTING DEFECTS IN THE COURT'S POWER TO ORDER A DEBTOR'S PROPERTY TO BE CHARGED AS SECURITY FOR HIS DEBTS, TO GRANT THE COURT WIDER POWER TO ATTACH MONIES OWED TO A DEBTOR BY A THIRD PARTY TO BE USED IN PAYMENT OF THE DEBTOR'S CREDITORS, AND TO CODIFY THE EXISTING COMMON LAW GOVERNING THE COURT'S POWER TO PROVIDE RELIEF AGAINST FORFEITURE OF LEASES WHEN A TENANT HAS FAILED TO PAY RENT ON THE DUE DATE," MR THOMAS SAID.

FURTHERMORE, A NUMBER OF LEGAL ANOMALIES AND ARCHAIC REMEDIES WOULD BE ABOLISHED. THE COURT WOULD BE GIVEN A WIDER, MORE FLEXIBLE POWER TO AWARD INTEREST ON CLAIMS FOR DEBT OR DAMAGES.

THE POWERS OF THE COURT TO AWARD COSTS AGAINST PARTIES WOULD BE MOVED FROM THE RULES OF THE SUPREME COURT TO THE ORDINANCE TO ENSURE THEIR VALIDITY.

"RECENTLY A NUMBER OF ACADEMIC ARTICLES HAVE CAST DOUBT UPON WHETHER THE COURT IS EMPOWERED TO UNDERTAKE JUDICIAL REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS. TO AVOID ALL DOUBT, THE BILL WILL PLACE INTO THE ORDINANCE A PROVISION SPECIFICALLY GRANTING SUCH A POWER TO THE COURT," HE SAID.

IN ADDITION, THERE WERE MANY OTHER CHANGES IN CIVIL PROCEDURE EFFECTED BY THIS BILL.

MR THOMAS FURTHER SAID THE BILL HAD BEEN THE SUBJECT OF WIDE CONSULTATION IN LEGAL CIRCLES.

"THE KEMPSTER SUB-COMMITTEE CANVASSED THE VIEWS OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE, THE JUDICIARY, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BAR ASSOCIATION, EACH FIRM OF SOLICITORS IN HONG KONG AND THE LAW FACULTY OF HONG KONG UNIVERSITY UPON ITS PROPOSALS.

"THE BILL IN DRAFT WAS LATER CIRCULATED TO THE BAR ASSOCIATION AND TO THE LAW SOCIETY AND SENT TO MR JUSTICE KEMPSTER AND TO THE RULES COMMITTEE FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION.

"THE BAR ASSOCIATION AND THE LAW SOCIETY HAVE, IN GENERAL, EXPRESSED THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE BILL AND THE PROPOSALS IT CONTAINS. THE GOVERNMENT'S LAW OFFICERS INCLUDING THE CROWN SOLICITOR, THE REGISTRAR GENERAL AND THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AID HAVE ALSO EXPRESSED THEIR SUPPORT," HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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GREATER PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BROADCASTING CONTROL SOUGHT  
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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BROADCASTING AUTHORITY WILL ALLOW FOR GREATER PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE CONTROL AND REGULATION OF THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY TO ENSURE THAT THE PROGRAMMES PROVIDED MEET THE NEED AND ASPIRATION OF THE COMMUNITY, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID FORD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR FORD SAID THE PROPOSAL FOR THE CREATION OF A BROADCASTING AUTHORITY WAS ONE OF THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE BROADCASTING REVIEW BOARD REPORT ACCEPTED BY GOVERNMENT.

EXPLAINING THE BILL, HE SAID IT PROVIDED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BROADCASTING AUTHORITY AS A BODY CORPORATE COMPRISING UP TO 12 MEMBERS TO BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR.

"IT WILL ASSUME THE POWERS AND FUNCTIONS CURRENTLY VESTED IN THE TELEVISION ADVISORY BOARD AND THE TELEVISION AUTHORITY WHICH WILL CEASE TO EXIST," HE SAID.

UNLIKE THE TELEVISION ADVISORY BOARD WHICH WAS CHAIRED BY AN OFFICIAL, THE AUTHORITY WOULD BE CHAIRED BY A NON-OFFICIAL MEMBER COMPRISING ONLY THREE PUBLIC OFFICERS, MR FORD NOTED.

THE TERMS OF OFFICE OF THE NON-OFFICIAL MEMBERS WOULD BE FOR A PERIOD OF UP TO THREE YEARS AND MEMBERS WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR REAPPOINTMENT, HE ADDED.

"THE NEW AUTHORITY WILL THEREFORE PROVIDE FOR GREATER PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE REGULATION OF THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY," MR FORD SAID.

ON THE WORK OF THE AUTHORITY, HE SAID IT WOULD MAINLY BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE GRANTING, RENEWAL OR REVOCATION OF TELEVISION LICENCES, THE PREPARATION OF CODES OF PRACTICE ON PROGRAMME, ADVERTISING AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS, THE ISSUING OF DIRECTIONS TO TELEVISION LICENCEES AND THE EXAMINATION OF PROGRAMME MATERIALS INTENDED FOR BROADCAST.

IT WOULD BE EMPOWERED TO IMPOSE FINANCIAL PENALTIES FOR ANY BREACH OF LICENSING CONDITIONS, HE ADDED.

AS THE AUTHORITY WOULD BE CLASSIFIED AS A PUBLIC BODY UNDER THE PREVENTION OF BRIBERY ORDINANCE, ANY APPEAL AGAINST ITS DECISION WOULD BE BY WAY OF A PETITION TO THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL, MR FORD SAID.

NOTING THAT ADVISORY COMMITTEES WITH CO-OPTED MEMBERS MIGHT BE SET UP TO EXAMINE ANY ASPECT OF BROADCASTING, HE SAID THE AUTHORITY WAS EXPECTED TO CONSULT WIDELY ON PROGRAMME STANDARDS.

COMPRISING FIVE MEMBERS OF THE AUTHORITY AND OTHER CO-OPTED MEMBERS, A COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE WOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO INVESTIGATE COMPLAINTS AGAINST BREACHES OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE TELEVISION LICENCES, CODES OF PRACTICE OR THE TELEVISION ORDINANCE AND TO ADVISE THE AUTHORITY ON THE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO TAKE, MR FORD SAID.

"THIS WOULD ENABLE THE COMMITTEE TO BENEFIT FROM THE EXPERT ADVICE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE IN PARTICULAR SUBJECTS.

"THE COMMITTEE WILL BE EMPOWERED TO REQUIRE THE SUBMISSION OF FILM MATERIALS FOR REVIEW AND TO INSPECT THE BOOKS AND RECORDS OF LICENSEES," HE SAID.

TURNING TO OTHER ASPECTS OF THE BILL, MR FORD SAID IT ALSO MADE A NUMBER OF CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO THE TELEVISION ORDINANCE AND THE SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION TO TRANSFER POWERS AND FUNCTIONS FROM THE TELEVISION ADVISORY BOARD AND TELEVISION AUTHORITY TO THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY.

"SECTION 13(1) OF THE TELEVISION ORDINANCE, REQUIRES THAT THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF NEW LICENCES WILL HAVE TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL 12 MONTHS BEFORE THE EXPIRY DATE OF THE EXISTING LICENCES WHICH IS ON DECEMBER 31, 1988.

"IT IS, THEREFORE, NECESSARY THAT THE BILL BE ENACTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO ENABLE THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY TO START WORK ON DRAWING UP THE TERMS FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE TWO COMMERCIAL TELEVISION LICENCES," HE SAID.

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PROPOSAL TO CHANGE AUDIT REQUIREMENT OF LIQUIDATORS' ACCOUNTS  
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THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT)(NO.2) BILL 1987 IS TO AMEND THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE IN RELATION TO THE ACCOUNTS OF LIQUIDATORS, THE FUNDS OF COMPANIES IN LIQUIDATION INVESTED BY THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER AND THE FEES PAYABLE IN WINDING UP PROCEEDINGS, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID NENDICK SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE AMENDMENT BILL, HE SAID UNDER THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE, ALL ACCOUNTS OF LIQUIDATORS OF COMPANIES IN COMPULSORY LIQUIDATIONS WERE REQUIRED TO BE AUDITED BY THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER. AND THIS HAD BECOME VERY TIME-CONSUMING AND WAS IN MANY CASES UNNECESSARY.

"TO REMEDY THE SITUATION, CLAUSE 2 OF THE BILL MAKES THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER'S AUDIT OF LIQUIDATORS' ACCOUNTS A DISCRETIONARY RATHER THAN A MANDATORY REQUIREMENT."

BESIDES, CLAUSE 4 OF THE BILL AMENDED SECTION 295 UNDER WHICH INTEREST ON INVESTMENTS OF MORE THAN \$100,000 WAS APPORTIONED BETWEEN THE COMPANY IN LIQUIDATION AND GENERAL REVENUE.

/THE PRESENT .....

THE PRESENT PRACTICE WAS TO ADJUST THE RATE FIXED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY FROM TIME TO TIME FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CREDITORS OF THE COMPANY IN LIQUIDATION CONSISTENT WITH CHANGES IN INTEREST RATES ACCORDING TO A COMPLICATED FORMULA SO THAT GENERAL REVENUE WOULD BE LEFT WITH AN AMOUNT EQUIVALENT TO A RATE OF ABOUT 1.5 PER CENT PER ANNUM.

"THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT WILL AVOID THE NEED FOR SUCH ADJUSTMENTS IN FUTURE AS IT PROVIDES THAT 1.5 PER CENT PER ANNUM ON SUCH INVESTMENTS, OR SUCH OTHER RATE AS MAY BE FIXED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WILL BE PAID TO GENERAL REVENUE AND THAT THE BALANCE WILL BE PAYABLE TO THE COMPANY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CREDITORS," HE SAID.

CLAUSE 5 OF THE BILL AMENDED SECTION 296 TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT FEES COULD BE VALIDLY CHARGED IN RELATION TO THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER'S OFFICE, AND THAT THEY NEEDED NOT BE SPECIFIC TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE OR OTHER COSTS INCURRED IN MANY PARTICULAR COMPANY LIQUIDATION.

FINALLY, MR NENDICK POINTED OUT THAT SIMILAR PROBLEMS AROSE UNDER THE BANKRUPTCY ORDINANCE, WOULD BE SOLVED WHEN HE MOVED THE SECOND READING OF THE BANKRUPTCY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL TO AMEND BANKRUPTCY PROCEDURE INTRODUCED

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THE BANKRUPTCY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 SEEKS TO AMEND THE BANKRUPTCY ORDINANCE TO MAKE THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER'S AUDIT OF TRUSTEES' ACCOUNTS A DISCRETIONARY RATHER THAN A MANDATORY REQUIREMENT, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID NENDICK, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR NENDICK SAID UNDER THE ORDINANCE, ALL ACCOUNTS OF TRUSTEES IN BANKRUPTCY HAD TO BE AUDITED BY THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER.

"THIS HAS PROVED TO BE VERY BURDENSOME FOR THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER AND IN MANY CASES UNNECESSARY," HE SAID.

MR NENDICK NOTED THAT THE BILL ALSO SOUGHT TO AMEND THE ORDINANCE IN RELATION TO THE FEES PAYABLE IN BANKRUPTCY PROCEEDINGS AND THE SERVICE OF CREDITORS' BANKRUPTCY PETITIONS.

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"CLAUSE 4 OF THE BILL PROVIDES THAT FEES CAN BE VALIDLY CHARGED IN RELATION GENERALLY TO THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE OFFICIAL RECEIVERS'S OFFICE AND THAT THEY NEED NOT BE SPECIFIC TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE OR OTHER COSTS INCURRED IN ANY PARTICULAR BANKRPUTCY.

"THE BILL ALSO AMENDS SECTION 9 BY INTRODUCING A REQUIREMENT FOR THE PERSONAL SERVICE OF BANKRPUTCY NOTICES AND BANKRPUTCY PETITIONS WITH PROVISION FOR SUBSTITUTED SERVICE BY COURT ORDER IN APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES.

"THIS WILL REPLACE THE PRESENT PROCEDURE WHEREBY SUCH PETITIONS CAN BE SERVED BY POST, WHICH HAS BEEN FOUND TO BE UNSATISFACTORY IN THAT ON SOME OCCASIONS THE PETITIONS ARE NOT RECEIVED BY THE PERSON ON WHOM THEY ARE TO BE SERVED," MR NENDICK SAID.

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BILL TO ENSURE QUALITY OF INSURANCE MARKET  
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A BILL TO GIVE THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY DISCRETIONARY POWERS TO REFUSE AN APPLICATION BY A COMPANY TO BECOME AN AUTHORISED INSURER ON GROUNDS NOT SPECIFIED IN SECTIONS 8(2) AND (3) OF THE INSURANCE COMPANIES ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

UNDER THE ORDINANCE, SECTIONS 8(2) AND (3) STIPULATED THAT THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY SHOULD NOT AUTHORISE A COMPANY IF ANY DIRECTOR OR CONTROLLER OF THE COMPANY WAS NOT A "FIT AND PROPER" PERSON OR IF IT DID NOT SATISFY CERTAIN CONDITIONS RELATING TO ITS NET ASSETS, CAPITAL AND MANAGEMENT.

HOWEVER, THE REQUIREMENTS IN THE TWO SECTIONS WERE INTENDED TO BE THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID NENDICK, NOTED WHEN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE INSURANCE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT)(NO.2) BILL 1987 IN THE COUNCIL.

IF THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY HAD TO AUTHORISE ANY APPLICANT WHO SATISFIED THESE MINIMUM CONDITIONS, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO EXERCISE EFFECTIVE QUALITY CONTROL OVER ENTRY TO THE LOCAL INSURANCE MARKET AND COULD RESULT IN A PROLIFERATION OF LOW QUALITY INSURANCE COMPANIES IN HONG KONG, HE SAID.

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"IN THE INTERESTS OF POTENTIAL POLICY-HOLDERS, CLAUSE 2 OF THE BILL INSERTS A NEW SECTION 8(1) TO PROVIDE THE AUTHORITY WITH EXPRESS POWER TO REFUSE AUTHORISATION ON GROUNDS NOT SPECIFIED IN SECTIONS 8(2) AND (3)," HE EXPLAINED.

MEANWHILE, "AS A SAFEGUARD AGAINST ANY POSSIBLE ABUSE OF THIS POWER, CLAUSE 3 OF THE BILL PROVIDES THAT ANY COMPANY WHOSE APPLICATION HAS BEEN REFUSED BY THE AUTHORITY UNDER THE NEW SECTION 8(1)(B)(II) MAY APPEAL TO THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY," HE ASSURED.

"IN THE EVENT OF SUCH AN APPEAL, THE AUTHORITY WOULD BE REQUIRED TO FURNISH HIS REASONS FOR REFUSAL TO THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY WHO WOULD REVIEW THE CASE AND MAKE AN INDEPENDENT AND FINAL DECISION."

MR NENDICK ALSO SAID THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY HAD DRAWN UP ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES WHICH SPELT OUT IN GENERAL TERMS THE AUTHORISATION CRITERIA.

"THESE GUIDELINES WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO COMPANIES PROPOSING TO APPLY TO BECOME AN AUTHORISED INSURER," HE SAID.

THE INSURANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, THE INSURANCE COUNCIL OF HONG KONG AND THE LIFE INSURANCE COUNCIL HAD EXPRESSED FULL SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL TO IMPROVE PILOTAGE LAW OPERATION INTRODUCED  
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THE PILOTAGE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 SEEKS TO REVISE THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE PILOTAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND TO PROVIDE THE PILOTAGE AUTHORITY WITH CERTAIN POWERS TO IMPROVE THE OPERATION OF THE PILOTAGE ORDINANCE, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID NENDICK, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR NENDICK SAID THAT THE ESTABLISHED PILOTAGE AUTHORITY WAS THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE WHO, UNDER THE ADVICE OF THE PILOTAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, REGULATED AND CONTROLLED PILOTAGE IN HONG KONG.

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SINCE THE ENACTMENT OF THE ORDINANCE IN 1972, THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE, HE SAID.

THEREFORE, THE BILL PROPOSED VARIOUS CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP TO CATER FOR THE INTERESTS OF NEW PRIVATE SECTOR GROUPINGS WHICH HAD EMERGED IN RECENT YEARS AND TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO THE COMMITTEE.

"AS A RESULT OF SUCH CHANGES, MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE WILL BE INCREASED FROM 11 TO 13," HE CONTINUED.

TURNING TO THE OPERATION OF THE PILOTAGE ORDINANCE, HE SAID THE BILL WOULD SEEK IMPROVEMENTS IN TWO RESPECTS.

FIRST, IT WOULD REMOVE THE PRESENT NEED FOR CERTAIN APPRENTICE PILOTS TO UNDERGO TWO SEPARATE MEDICAL TESTS DURING THE COURSE OF THE YEAR.

SECOND, IT WOULD EXEMPT CERTAIN TYPES OF HAMPERED VESSELS FROM THE REQUIREMENT OF COMPULSORY PILOTAGE, WHERE THESE VESSELS WERE UNDER THE CONTROL OF LOCALLY CERTIFICATED CREW WHO COULD REASONABLY BE EXPECTED TO BE FAMILIAR WITH HONG KONG WATERS.

UNDER THE EXISTING REQUIREMENT, AN APPRENTICE PILOT SHOULD PASS TWO MEDICAL TESTS DURING THE INITIAL APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OF HIS APPRENTICESHIP AND THE SUBSEQUENT ISSUE OF A PILOT'S LICENCE AFTER ITS COMPLETION NORMALLY IN LESS THAN 12 MONTHS.

"TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE SHORT TIME SPAN BETWEEN THE TWO MEDICAL TESTS, THE LATTER REQUIREMENT IS CONSIDERED UNNECESSARY," MR NENDICK SAID.

IT WAS THEREFORE PROPOSED TO DISPENSE WITH THE SECOND MEDICAL TEST WHERE AN APPRENTICE PILOT COULD PROVE THAT HE HAD, WITHIN THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS, PASSED A SIMILAR ONE.

THE BILL ALSO SOUGHT TO EMPOWER THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES TO SET FEES FOR THOSE MEDICAL TESTS IN THE SAME WAY AS HE CURRENTLY SET FEES FOR THE MEDICAL EXAMINATION BOARD.

AS FOR THE EXEMPTION OF CERTAIN TYPES OF HAMPERED VESSELS FROM COMPULSORY PILOTAGE, MR NENDICK SAID THE PRESENT REQUIREMENT WAS THAT HAMPERED VESSELS OF 300 GROSS REGISTERED TONNAGE OR OVER WERE SUBJECT TO COMPULSORY PILOTAGE.

HOWEVER, THE BILL PROPOSED THAT COMPULSORY PILOTAGE FOR LOCAL VESSELS LICENSED UNDER PART IV OF THE SHIPPING AND PORT CONTROL ORDINANCE OR TO HYDROFOILS OR JETFOIL ON, FOR EXAMPLE, THE HONG KONG-MACAU RUN SHOULD BE WAIVED.

/THIS WAS .....

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THIS WAS DUE TO "BOTH CATEGORIES OF VESSELS ARE REQUIRED TO BE IN THE CHARGE OF MASTERS IN POSSESSION OF CERTIFICATES OF COMPETENCY ISSUED BY THE MARINE DEPARTMENT AND WHO ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE CONDITIONS OF THE WATERS OF HONG KONG," HE EXPLAINED.

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS HAD BEEN DRAWN UP IN CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH THE HONG KONG PILOTS ASSOCIATION, THE PORTS COMMITTEE, THE PORTS OPERATION COMMITTEE AND THE PILOTAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL SEEKING DESIGNATION OF EX-INMATE HOSTELS INTRODUCED  
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THE SUPERVISION ORDERS (RESIDENTIAL REQUIREMENTS) BILL 1987 SEEKS TO PROVIDE FOR THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY TO DESIGNATE THE HOSTELS FOR EX-INMATES UNDER SUPERVISION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE COMMISSIONER OF THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES TO ADMINISTER THEM, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE BILL ALSO SOUGHT TO PROVIDE FOR RESIDENTS OF THESE HOSTELS WHO WERE IN EMPLOYMENT TO BE CHARGED A TOKEN SUM OF \$200 PER MONTH FOR THEIR BOARD AND LODGING.

VISITING JUSTICES HAD ALREADY BEEN VISITING THESE HOSTELS ONCE A MONTH AND THE BILL ALSO CONTAINED AMENDMENTS TO THE PRISON RULES TO GIVE LEGAL FOOTING TO THIS IMPORTANT ESTABLISHED ARRANGEMENT, HE SAID.

MR JEAFFRESON EXPLAINED THAT UNDER THE PRESENT LEGISLATION, THE COMMISSIONER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES WAS EMPOWERED TO MAKE RULES GOVERNING THE CONDITIONS OF RESIDENCE OF EX-INMATES WHILE UNDER SUPERVISION.

"BUT AT PRESENT THERE IS NO LEGISLATIVE PROVISION WHEREBY RESIDENTS OF THESE HOSTELS WHO ARE IN GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT CAN BE CHARGED FOR THEIR BOARD AND LODGING.

/"AND THERE .....

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"AND THERE IS NO PROVISION FOR THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND DESIGNATION OF THESE HOSTELS,

"IT IS TO PROVIDE FOR THESE REQUIREMENTS THAT THE SUPERVISION ORDERS (RESIDENTIAL REQUIREMENTS) BILL 1987 IS NOW BEFORE THIS COUNCIL," HE STRESSED.

THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT RAN THREE HOSTELS FOR PERSONS RELEASED UNDER SUPERVISION UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE DRUG ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTRES ORDINANCE, SECTION 109AA OF THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ORDINANCE, SECTION 5 OF THE DETENTION CENTRES ORDINANCE AND SECTION 5 OF THE TRAINING CENTRES ORDINANCE.

THE REQUIREMENT TO LIVE IN THESE HOSTELS WAS NORMALLY IMPOSED ON THOSE WHO EITHER HAD NO HOME TO RETURN TO UPON RELEASE FROM DETENTION OR WERE IN NEED OF A MORE RESTRICTIVE TYPE OF SUPERVISION THAN THOSE WHO COULD BE RELEASED UPON SUPERVISION AND ALLOWED TO LIVE WHEREVER THEY LIKED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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#### BILLS INTRODUCED FOR LIGHT RAIL OPERATION

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THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 WILL PROVIDE A MORE DETAILED LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR THE OPERATION OF THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (LRT) SYSTEM, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR LEUNG WAS MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL WHICH SEEKS TO EMPOWER THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL TO MAKE REGULATIONS FOR THE DESIGNATION OF STOPS FOR KCRC'S LRT AND ITS FEEDER BUSES ON A ROAD.

"THESE REGULATIONS ARE REQUIRED TO ENABLE THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT TO EXERCISE CONTROL OVER THE SITING OF LRT AND BUS STOPS TO ENSURE EFFICIENT TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND ROAD SAFETY," HE SAID.

MR LEUNG NOTED THAT THE MAIN LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK OF THE LRT SYSTEM IN THE FORM OF AMENDMENTS TO THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION ORDINANCE WAS ENACTED IN JULY LAST YEAR AND ON THE BASIS OF THE APPROVED LEGISLATION, MUCH PROGRESS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE LRT SYSTEM HAD BEEN MADE.

/HE EXPECTED .....

HE EXPECTED THE LRT SYSTEM TO COMMENCE OPERATION IN THE NORTH - WEST NEW TERRITORIES IN SLIGHTLY MORE THAN A YEAR'S TIME.

MR LEUNG ALSO MOVED THE SECOND READING OF ANOTHER BILL WHICH SEEKS TO INTRODUCE A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK GOVERNING THE OPERATION OF THE LRT SYSTEM.

THE ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 MAKES PROVISION FOR THE APPLICATION OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE TO THE LIGHT RAIL VEHICLES OF THE LRT SYSTEM AND ENSURES THAT THE OPERATION OF THE LRT WILL BE COMPATIBLE WITH OTHER ACTIVITIES ON THE ROAD.

"FOR THIS PURPOSE, THE DEFINITIONS OF 'VEHICLE', 'DRIVER' AND 'ROAD' ARE AMENDED, AND A DEFINITION OF VEHICLES TO BE USED ON THE LRT IS ADDED," MR LEUNG EXPLAINED.

THE AMENDMENT IS NECESSARY BECAUSE THE LRT, EVEN THOUGH OPERATING ON ITS DEDICATED RESERVE FOR THE GREATER PART OF ITS TRACK, WILL CROSS ROAD JUNCTIONS AND WILL MIX WITH OTHER ROAD TRAFFIC ON CERTAIN SECTIONS.

SINCE ACCIDENTS ON THE LRT MAY INVOLVE OTHER VEHICLES ENTERING THE LRT RESERVE, IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR DRIVERS OF LIGHT RAIL VEHICLES TO COMPLY WITH THOSE SECTIONS OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE REGARDING THE DUTY TO STOP IN CASE OF ACCIDENTS, THE PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE IN CASE OF SERIOUS ACCIDENTS AND THE OBLIGATION TO GIVE INFORMATION TO THE POLICE WHEN TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS OR OFFENCES OCCUR.

THIS IS ACHIEVED BY CLAUSE 3 OF THE BILL. THE CLAUSE ALSO EXTENDS THE REGULATION-MAKING POWERS IN THE ORDINANCE SO THAT REGULATIONS MAY BE MADE TO APPLY TO THE LRT.

SINCE LIGHT RAIL VEHICLES AT ROAD JUNCTIONS MAY OPERATE UNDER DIFFERENT SPEED LIMITS, CLAUSE 5 OF THE BILL EMPOWERS THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT TO EXEMPT LIGHT RAIL VEHICLES FROM A GENERAL SPEED LIMIT ON A ROAD, TO IMPOSE A DIFFERENT SPEED LIMIT ON THEM AND TO ERECT SIGNS FOR THAT PURPOSE.

TO ENABLE THE POLICE TO DEAL WITH EMERGENCIES ON THE LRT, CLAUSE 6 OF THE BILL EMPOWERS A POLICE OFFICER IN UNIFORM TO GIVE DIRECTIONS TO THE DRIVER OF A LIGHT RAIL VEHICLE WHERE THERE IS AN EMERGENCY ON OR NEAR THE LRT SYSTEM IN ORDER TO SAVE OR PROTECT LIFE OR PROPERTY IN IMMINENT DANGER OR TO CLEAR ANY OBSTRUCTION TO THE RAILWAY SYSTEM.

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COURT ACTION LAST RESORT IN PENSION CLAIM

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RECOURSE TO THE COURTS FOR ANY PERSONS WHO FEEL AGGRIEVED AT THE CANCELLATION, SUSPENSION OR REDUCTION OF HIS PENSION SHOULD ONLY BE THE ULTIMATE CHANNEL OF APPEAL, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID FORD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

WINDING UP THE DEBATE ON THE PENSION BENEFITS BILL, MR FORD SAID HE ACCEPTED THAT THERE SHOULD BE OTHER PROCEDURES AVAILABLE FOR PENSIONERS TO APPEAL IN THE FIRST INSTANCE.

"IT IS THEREFORE PROPOSED, AFTER CONSULTATION WITH STAFF, TO INTRODUCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A BODY TO ADVISE THE GOVERNOR, WHERE APPROPRIATE, ON APPEALS AGAINST DECISIONS TO CANCEL, SUSPEND OR REDUCE A PENSION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY," HE SAID.

MR FORD STRESSED ACTIONS TO WITHDRAW OR REDUCE A PENSIONER'S PENSION COULD ONLY BE TAKEN WHEN SOMEONE WAS CONVICTED OF AN OFFENCE OF AN EXTREMELY SERIOUS NATURE, INCLUDING OFFENCES UNDER THE PREVENTION OF BRIBERY ORDINANCE.

HE ADDED THAT IN GENERAL, THE OFFENCE MUST BE CONNECTED WITH THE PENSIONER'S WORK IN THE CIVIL SERVICE AND MUST BE SO SERIOUS THAT IT CAUSED GRAVE DAMAGE TO HONG KONG OR THE CIVIL SERVICE.

"AS REGARDS THE PROVISION WHEREBY A PENSION CAN BE CANCELLED IF SOMEONE HAS WILFULLY SUPPRESSED FACTS MATERIAL TO THE GRANT OF A PENSION, THIS IS AN EXISTING PROVISION AND DOES NO MORE THAN PREVENT A PERSON OBTAINING A PENSION BY FALSE PRETENCES," HE SAID.

"IT IS A NECESSARY SAFEGUARD TO ENSURE THAT A PENSION IS NOT GRANTED OR MAY BE WITHDRAWN WHERE IT IS FOUND THAT THE INFORMATION WHICH LED TO THE AWARD OF THE PENSION WAS UNTRUE AND THE PERSON CONCERNED WAS AWARE OF THIS," HE STRESSED.

WHILE NOTING THAT THERE HAD BEEN REFERENCE TO THE PROPOSAL TO REPLACE THE PHRASE "FUNDS OF THE COLONY" WITH THE TERM "GENERAL REVENUE" IN CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE LEGISLATION, MR FORD SAID THAT THE EXISTING LEGISLATION ALREADY PROVIDED THAT PENSIONS GENERALLY WERE PAID FROM GENERAL REVENUE.

"THE REFERENCE TO FUNDS OF THE COLONY APPEARS ONLY IN SECTIONS DEALING WITH OFFICERS TRANSFERRED FROM OR TO OTHER BRITISH TERRITORIES," HE SAID.

"THIS IS PROBABLY BECAUSE THESE SECTIONS ARE BASED ON A MODEL APPLICABLE TO MOST BRITISH TERRITORIES AMONG WHICH THERE MAY BE VERY DIFFERENT TERMS FOR GOVERNMENT MONIES."

THE PROPOSED REPLACEMENT OF TERMS WAS BASED ON THE FACT THAT: THE PHRASE "FUNDS OF THE COLONY" HAD NO PRECISE DEFINITION; PROVISION SHOULD BE MADE FOR ALL PENSIONS TO BE PAID FROM GENERAL REVENUE; THERE COULD BE NO GREATER SECURITY FOR PENSIONS THAN TO PROVIDE FOR THEM TO BE PAID FROM GENERAL REVENUE.

/MR FORD .....

MR FORD SAID THE PRESENT OPTION PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS FOR YOUNGER OFFICERS TO OPT TO TRANSFER TO THE NEW PENSION SCHEME, WHICH WAS ALREADY AN INCREASE OVER THE ORIGINAL PERIOD OF THREE YEARS, WAS ADEQUATE.

"SOME CUT OFF POINT IS ESSENTIAL FOR LONG TERM FINANCIAL AND STAFF PLANNING PURPOSES," HE EXPLAINED.

MR FORD, HOWEVER, ADDED, "THE PERIOD OF ONE YEAR PROVIDED FOR OLDER OFFICERS MAY BE TOO SHORT AND CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO PROVIDING THESE OFFICERS WITH A SOMEWHAT LONGER PERIOD IN WHICH TO OPT TO TRANSFER TO THE NEW SCHEME."

HE ALSO SAID, THE PROVISIONS FOR DEPENDANT PENSIONS GENERALLY FOLLOWED THOSE IN THE WIDOWS' AND CHILDREN'S PENSION ORDINANCE.

WITH REGARD TO CRITICS THAT SOME OF THE PROVISIONS RELATING TO DEPENDANT PENSIONS WERE DIFFERENT FOR MEN AND WOMEN WITH ADVANTAGES SOMETIMES TO THE MAN AND SOMETIMES TO THE WOMAN.

MR FORD SAID A SEPARATE REVIEW WOULD EXAMINE THE PROVISIONS FOR DEPENDANTS PENSIONS TO UPDATE THE PROVISIONS RELATING TO SUCH PENSIONS AND TO REMOVE ANY EXISTING ANOMALIES.

MR FORD ALSO PROMISED THE RATE OF MINIMUM DEPENDANT PENSIONS SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO A PERIODIC REVIEW.

MR FORD ALSO SAID THE INCONSISTENCIES IN PENSION FACTORS BETWEEN PENSIONABLE AND NON PENSIONABLE OFFICERS WHICH EXISTED IN THE PAST WOULD DISAPPEAR WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF A COMMON PENSION FACTOR.

AS TO THE POINT ABOUT EXEMPTING JUNIOR STAFF FROM THE REQUIREMENT TO SEEK PRIOR PERMISSION TO TAKE UP POST-RETIREMENT EMPLOYMENT, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE A LOOK AT IT AND HE DID NOT THINK THIS CONSTITUTED ANY REAL HARDSHIP.

MR FORD SAID UNDER THE NEW SCHEME THERE WERE DIFFERENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR EARLY LEAVERS WHICH WOULD STILL ALLOW OFFICERS TO LEAVE AT 45 BUT INVOLVED THEIR WAITING FOR THEIR PENSION BENEFITS UNTIL THEIR NORMAL RETIREMENT AGE.

"NO CHANGE IS CONTEMPLATED UNDER THESE ARRANGEMENTS," HE STRESSED.

"THE ONLY CHANGE THAT HAS BEEN MADE TO THE EXISTING SCHEME IN THIS CONNECTION IS TO DELETE THE PROVISION WHEREBY OFFICERS COULD BE COMPULSORILY RETIRED SIMPLY FOR HAVING REACHED THE RIPE OLD AGE OF 45.

"I AM SURE NO ONE WOULD WISH TO RETAIN THIS OBSOLETE PROVISION BUT I BELIEVE THERE HAS BEEN SOME MISUNDERSTANDING AMONG SOME STAFF THAT THIS DELETION AFFECTS THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR VOLUNTARY RETIREMENT. IT DOES NOT," HE SAID.

/MR FORD .....

MR FORD ALSO DESCRIBED AS "NOT ACCEPTABLE" SUGGESTION THAT OFFICER ELIGIBLE FOR A DEFERRED PENSION SHOULD BE PAID THEIR COMMUTED PENSION BENEFITS IMMEDIATELY.

"SUCH A MEASURE, WE BELIEVE, WOULD NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE STABILITY AND CONTINUITY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE," HE ADDED.

HE ALSO SAID WHILE STAFF REQUESTS FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS TO THE NEW PENSION SCHEME WERE UNDERSTANDABLE, THE SCHEME HAD ALREADY BEEN MODIFIED SUBSTANTIALLY TO MEET THEIR POINTS.

"THE PRESENT PACKAGE IS A REASONABLE, EVEN A GENEROUS ONE IN SOME EYES. WHAT IS MORE, I SHOULD STRESS THIS POINT, IT IS ENTIRELY OPTIONAL AND NO SERVING CIVIL SERVANT HAS TO TRANSFER TO THE NEW PENSION SCHEME IF HE DOES NOT WISH TO DO SO."

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MORE VIEWS FROM STAFF SIDE ON PENSION BILL

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ALTHOUGH MOST CIVIL SERVANTS HAVE EXPRESSED GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH THE NEW PENSION SCHEME, FURTHER COMMENTS AND DEMANDS HAVE BEEN MADE BY SOME CIVIL SERVANTS' UNIONS SINCE THE FIRST READING OF THE PENSION BENEFITS BILL 1987, THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR TAM SAID, AMONG OTHERS, THE STAFF UNIONS FELT THAT CLAUSE 29, WHICH EMPOWERED A GOVERNMENT OFFICER APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR TO CANCEL, SUSPEND OR REDUCE A PENSION ON CONVICTION OF A PUBLIC OFFICER, SHOULD NOT BE APPLIED TO THOSE WHO HAD ALREADY RESIGNED FROM THE SERVICE.

THEY ALSO FELT THAT APART FROM CORRUPTION OFFENCES, OFFICERS CONVICTED OF OTHER OFFENCES SHOULD NOT BE PENALISED TWICE OVER.

MR TAM SAID THE STAFF UNIONS ALSO THOUGHT THERE WAS INCONSISTENCY IN THE COMPUTATION OF THE PENSION FACTOR AND THAT JUNIOR OFFICERS SHOULD BE EXEMPTED FROM THE REQUIREMENT THAT A PENSIONER MUST OBTAIN THE PRIOR PERMISSION OF THE GOVERNOR BEFORE TAKING UP EMPLOYMENT IN HONG KONG WITHIN TWO YEARS AFTER HIS RETIREMENT.

/HE ALSO .....

HE ALSO SAID THAT SOME STAFF UNIONS WERE WORRIED THAT PAYMENT OF PENSION WOULD BE AFFECTED IF THE GOVERNMENT WAS IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES AND REQUESTED THAT THE WORDING "FUNDS OF THE COLONY" BE AMENDED TO "FUNDS OF HONG KONG".

THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALSO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES, CIVIL SERVANTS WOULD BE PAID OUT OF THE RESERVE FUND.

THE UNIONS ALSO FELT THAT THE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF DEPENDANTS PENSION, WHICH HAD NOT BE REVISED SINCE 1965, SHOULD BE REVIEWED ON A REGULAR BASIS.

ON THE OPTION PERIOD DURING WHICH AN OFFICER OVER THE AGE OF 49 WAS TO ELECT WHETHER TO JOIN THE NEW SCHEME, MR TAM SAID THE UNIONS WERE OF THE OPINION THAT IT SHOULD BE EXTENDED FROM ONE YEAR TO A MORE REASONABLE PERIOD OF THREE YEARS.

THEY ALSO FELT THAT THE REMOVAL OF THE PROVISION IN THE OLD PENSION SCHEME ALLOWING AN OFFICER TO EARLY RETIREMENT AT THE AGE OF 45 WAS OBJECTIONABLE BECAUSE THE NEW SCHEME WAS SUPPOSED TO "IMPROVE" THE OLD ONE, HE SAID.

MR TAM SAID IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE NEW SCHEME HAD TO BE IN EFFECT IN JULY, OTHERWISE THOUSANDS OF CIVIL SERVANTS WOULD BE AFFECTED, HE WOULD GIVE HIS SUPPORT TO THE MOTION.

"HOWEVER, I HOPE THE GOVERNMENT WILL RESPOND TO THE REQUESTS PUT FORWARD BY THE STAFF SIDE AND WILL GIVE FURTHER CONSIDERATION TO THEM IN FUTURE," HE ADDED.

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PRUDENT POLICY ON USE OF RESOURCES STRESSED

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR, THE HON HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF PRUDENT POLICIES AT ALL TIMES BY GOVERNMENT IN REGARD TO THE USE OF MANPOWER AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF THE PENSION BENEFITS BILL 1987, MR CHEONG-LEEN SAID IF HONG KONG WERE TO REMAIN A PROSPEROUS AND DYNAMIC COMMUNITY, THERE SHOULD BE PRUDENT CONTROL OF THE SIZE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE AND STEADY PROGRESSION IN THE PRIVATISATION OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY GOVERNMENT WHEREVER IT WAS ECONOMIC AND IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST TO DO SO.

/HE SAID .....

HE SAID IT HAD BEEN ESTIMATED THAT BY THE EARLY PART OF THE NEXT CENTURY, IN VIEW OF THE AVERAGE AGE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE BEING RELATIVELY YOUNG, THE ANNUAL EXPENDITURE ON PENSIONS WOULD AMOUNT TO 40 PER CENT OF PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS.

EVEN THOUGH IT WAS CLAIMED BY THE ADMINISTRATION THAT IN THE LONG RUN THE NEW PENSION SCHEME COULD BRING ABOUT A SAVING OF EIGHT PER CENT, MR CHEONG-LEEN EMPHASISED THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAINTAIN PRUDENT POLICIES AT ALL TIMES ON THE USE OF ITS RESOURCES.

MR CHEONG-LEEN SAID THE FACT THAT THE NEW PENSION SCHEME WAS FOUND FULLY ACCEPTABLE TO THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES SHOULD ALLAY CONCERNS ON THE PART OF THOSE CIVIL SERVANTS WHOSE PENSIONS WOULD CONTINUE TO BE PAID AFTER 1997.

HE ADDED THAT CIVIL SERVANTS WOULD NO DOUBT WELCOME THE NEW PROVISION WHICH WOULD ALLOW THEM THE FLEXIBILITY TO COMMUTE UP TO 50 PER CENT OF THEIR PENSION FOR A LUMP SUM, AS WELL AS ANOTHER NEW PROVISION THAT PENSIONS WERE MADE A RIGHT RATHER THAN A PRIVILEGE.

HE ALSO BELIEVED THAT ADJUSTING THE NORMAL AGE OF RETIREMENT FROM 55 TO 60 WAS IN KEEPING WITH SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN HONG KONG.

ON CONCERNS ABOUT FLUCTUATION OF THE GENERAL REVENUE OR CHANGING ECONOMIC AND OTHER CONDITIONS THAT MIGHT AFFECT THE PENSION SCHEME, MR CHEONG-LEEN NOTED THAT CLAUSE 6 OF THE BILL WHICH STATED THAT "THERE SHALL BE CHARGED ON AND PAID OUT OF THE GENERAL REVENUE ALL SUMS OF MONEY AS MAY FROM TIME TO TIME BE GRANTED BY WAY OF PENSION BENEFITS" PROVIDED THE BEST INSURANCE.

"IT IMPLIED THE GOVERNMENT'S OBLIGATION TO PAY PENSION BENEFITS AND IT HAD TO DISCHARGE ITS OBLIGATION," HE SAID.

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IMPROVEMENTS TO CIVIL SERVICE PENSION SCHEME  
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THE HON K C CHAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE PENSION BENEFITS BILL 1987 PROVIDED FOR A NUMBER OF IMPROVEMENTS TO THE EXISTING PENSION SCHEME AND ONE OF THE IMPROVEMENTS WAS THAT PENSION WAS MADE A RIGHT RATHER THAN A PRIVILEGE.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL, MR CHAN SAID ANOTHER IMPROVEMENT WAS THAT DUE TO LONGER LIFE EXPECTANCY, CIVIL SERVANTS COULD NOW WORK AND EARN FIVE MORE YEARS OF THEIR HIGHEST SALARIES AND FRINGE BENEFITS.

/THE BILL .....

THE BILL ALSO PROVIDED FOR DEFERRED BENEFITS FOR THOSE CIVIL SERVANTS WHO RESIGNED AFTER COMPLETING 10 YEARS OF SERVICE.

MR CHAN, WHO WAS THE CONVENER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AD HOC GROUP TO STUDY THE BILL, RAISED TWO POINTS OF CONCERN AND REQUESTED THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO REPLY AND GIVE ASSURANCE TO ALLAY THE WORRIES, REAL OR IMAGINARY, OF THE STAFF.

THE FIRST WAS THAT AS THE SOURCE OF FUNDS FOR PENSION PAYMENTS UNDER THE BILL WAS FROM "GENERAL REVENUE", WOULD CIVIL SERVANTS PENSION BENEFITS BE AFFECTED WHEN THERE WAS A DEFICIT IN THE GENERAL REVENUE.

THE SECOND POINT CONCERNED CIVIL SERVANTS' RIGHT TO APPEAL AGAINST A DECISION BY THE GOVERNOR TO CANCEL OR REDUCE THEIR PENSION ON CONVICTION OF CERTAIN OFFENCES OR DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS. HE NOTED THAT THE LEGAL COST WOULD BE TOO HIGH.

"THE ADMINISTRATION HAS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE THAT THE EXISTING APPEAL PROCEDURES IN THIS BILL COULD BE FURTHER IMPROVED," HE SAID.

HOWEVER, DUE TO TIME CONSTRAINT AND COMPLEXITY OF THE ISSUE, THE AD HOC GROUP AND THE ADMINISTRATION FELT THAT MORE TIME SHOULD BE GIVEN TO REFINED THE APPEAL PROCEDURES, WHICH WAS THAT BESIDES THE PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION AN APPEAL TRIBUNAL SHOULD BE SET UP WITHOUT LEGAL COST TO THE APPELLANT.

MR CHAN ADDED THAT THE CIVIL SERVICE OF HONG KONG, MODELLED AFTER THE BRITISH SYSTEM, WAS EFFICIENT AND WAS A CONTRIBUTORY FACTOR TO THE STABILITY AND SUCCESS OF HONG KONG.

"FOR THOSE LAW-ABIDING AND HARD-WORKING CIVIL SERVANTS, I ALWAYS ADVOCATE THAT THEY SHOULD BE WELL PAID NOT ONLY DURING THEIR SERVICE BUT ALSO THAT THEY SHOULD HAVE REASONABLY GOOD RETIREMENT BENEFITS AFTER THEIR LONG AND LOYAL SERVICE TO THE CROWN," HE SAID.

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EMPLOYEES ALREADY PROTECTED AGAINST UNFAIR DISMISSAL  
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HONG KONG HAS PROVIDED A FAIR AND REASONABLE MEASURE OF PROTECTION AGAINST UNFAIR DISMISSAL TO EMPLOYEES WHILE AVOIDING THE EXPENSIVE MEASURES WHICH THE UNITED KINGDOM HAS INTRODUCED WITH QUESTIONABLE SUCCESS, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON MICHELANGELO PAGLIARI, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG, MR PAGLIARI SAID FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS TO THE LONG SERVICE PAYMENT SCHEME WERE NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION AND IF INTRODUCED, WOULD PROVIDE FURTHER PROTECTION TO EMPLOYEES DISMISSED THROUGH NO FAULT OF THEIR OWN.

/HE SAID .....

HE SAID THE BASIC PROBLEM WITH UNFAIR DISMISSAL LEGISLATION IS THE LEGAL DEFINITION OF WHAT IS AND WHAT IS NOT UNFAIR OR UNREASONABLE.

"THE EXPERIENCE OF THE UK IN INTRODUCING SUCH LEGISLATION DOES NOT FILL ONE WITH CONFIDENCE IN THIS PARTICULAR APPROACH TO DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM," HE SAID.

MR PAGLIARI SAID THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT OF 1971, WHICH CAME INTO OPERATION IN 1972, ATTEMPTED TO PROTECT WORKERS FROM UNFAIR DISMISSAL BY PROVIDING FOR REINSTATEMENT, RE-EMPLOYMENT OR COMPENSATION WHERE A WORKER HAS BEEN DEEMED BY AN INDUSTRIAL TRIBUNAL TO HAVE BEEN UNFAIRLY DISMISSED.

HE FURTHER EXPLAINED THAT THIS ACT WAS REPEALED IN 1974 AND REPLACED BY THE TRADE UNION AND LABOUR RELATIONS ACT OF 1974, THE EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION ACT 1975 AND THE EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION (CONSOLIDATION) ACT 1978, EACH OF WHICH CONTAINED SIMILAR UNFAIR DISMISSAL PROVISIONS.

"THE EFFECT OF ALL THIS LEGISLATION ON UNFAIR DISMISSAL IN THE U.K. IS BELIEVED TO BE QUITE LIMITED BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY OF DETERMINING WHETHER AN EMPLOYER HAS ACTED FAIRLY, ALTHOUGH THE INDUSTRIAL TRIBUNALS TAKE INTO ACCOUNT, WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE PROVISIONS OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE OF THE ADVISORY, CONCILIATIONS AND ARBITRATION SERVICE IN REACHING THEIR CONCLUSIONS," HE ADDED.

NOTHING THAT ALTHOUGH THE U.K. LEGISLATION PROVIDED LEGAL PROTECTION AGAINST UNFAIR DISMISSAL FOR EMPLOYEES WITH AT LEAST TWO YEARS SERVICE, MR PAGLIARI SAID THE ONLY GROUNDS SPECIFIED IN THE LAW AS BEING UNFAIR WERE WHERE THE EMPLOYEE HAD BEEN DISMISSED IN CONNECTION WITH TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP, BECAUSE OF PREGNANCY OR IN BREACH OF AGREED REDUNDANCY PROCEDURES.

HE SAID IN HONG KONG THERE WERE ALSO PROVISIONS, IN THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE, WHICH PROTECT EMPLOYEES FROM DISMISSAL FOR TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP AND WHICH PROTECT THE JOBS OF PREGNANT WORKERS.

HE SAID HE WOULD INTRODUCE A BILL TO FURTHER IMPROVE THE LEGAL PROTECTION OF PREGNANT WORKERS FROM UNFAIR DISMISSAL AT THE NEXT MEETINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

"IN ADDITION, THERE ARE PROVISIONS IN THE LAWS OF HONG KONG WHICH ENTITLE AN EMPLOYEE WITH TWO YEARS SERVICE WHO IS DISMISSED THROUGH NO FAULT OF HIS OWN TO SEVERENCE PAY," MR PAGLIARI SAID.

"HONG KONG LAW ALSO PROVIDE FOR LONG SERVICE PAY, A PROVISION WHICH DOES NOT EXIST IN U.K. LEGISLATION AND WHICH WAS INTRODUCED IN HONG KONG AS A MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO UNFAIR DISMISSAL LEGISLATION."

## IMPROVEMENT IN LANGUAGE STANDARD RESULT OF EDUCATION MEASURES

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THE APPARENT IMPROVEMENT IN THE STANDARD OF SCHOOL CHILDREN IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE IN RECENT YEARS WAS LIKELY TO BE THE RESULT OF A SERIES OF MEASURES INTRODUCED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON MICHALENVELO PAGLIARI, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID THE MEASURES INCLUDED THE REVISION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SYLLABUSES IN 1981 AND 1983 RESPECTIVELY; THE INTRODUCTION IN 1982 OF REMEDIAL TEACHING OF CHINESE AND ENGLISH AND THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL TEACHERS FOR THIS PURPOSE; THE INTRODUCTION OF WIRE-FREE INDUCTION LOOP SYSTEM ALSO IN 1982 TO IMPROVE LISTENING SKILLS; AND THE REGULAR LANGUAGE COURSES OFFERED TO IN-SERVICE TEACHERS BY THE ADVISORY INSPECTORATE OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DESMOND LEE ON THE IMPACT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION SINCE 1982 UPON THE LANGUAGE STANDARD OF SCHOOL CHILDREN, MR PAGLIARI SAID THE RESULT OF ITS WORK BY IMPROVING THE ABILITIES OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS WOULD ONLY BECOME VISIBLE IN THE LONGER TERM.

"NEVERTHELESS, THE INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION IS PLAYING A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE IN IMPROVING LANGUAGE STANDARDS AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL," HE NOTED.

"SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN 1982, THE INSTITUTE HAS TRAINED A TOTAL OF 2,718 PRIMARY SCHOOL LANGUAGE TEACHERS, REPRESENTING APPROXIMATELY 22.5 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ALL NON-GRADUATE LANGUAGE TEACHERS," HE SAID.

HE ALSO SAID THE INSTITUTE BEGAN TRAINING SECONDARY SCHOOL NON-GRADUATE LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN SEPTEMBER 1986.

ON MONITORING THE LANGUAGE STANDARD OF SCHOOL CHILDREN, MR PAGLIARI SAID THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT BEGAN TO USE TESTS OF ATTAINMENT TO MONITOR THE EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS OF CHILDREN IN PRIMARY FOUR TO PRIMARY SIX CLASSES IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE IN 1976.

HE CONTINUED THAT SIMILAR TESTS HAD ALSO BEEN APPLIED TO THE SECONDARY 3 LEVEL IN BOTH LANGUAGES SINCE 1979 WHILE ATTAINMENT TESTING OF SECONDARY ONE AND SECONDARY TWO CHILDREN STARTED THIS YEAR AND WOULD BEGIN FOR PRIMARY ONE TO PRIMARY THREE CHILDREN NEXT YEAR.

ACCORDING TO MR PAGLIARI, THERE WAS A STEEP DECLINE IN ATTAINMENT IN ENGLISH FOR THREE YEARS SINCE 1978 AFTER THE ABOLITION OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAMINATION.

"HOWEVER, THERE WAS A CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT IN STANDARDS AFTER 1981 WITH HIGHEST ATTAINMENT BEING ACHIEVED BY THE COHORT OF CHILDREN WHO STUDIED IN PRIMARY FOUR TO SIX IN 1984 TO 1986," HE SAID.

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HE DESCRIBED THE PATTERN FOR CHINESE WAS "SIMILAR IN THAT THERE WAS A DROP IN STANDARDS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE MID-1970'S".

THE LOWEST POINT WAS REACHED IN 1981 IN PRIMARY FOUR TO SIX, FOLLOWED BY AN IMPROVEMENT DURING THE MID-1980'S, HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT A DECLINE IN STANDARDS IN SECONDARY THREE ENGLISH AND CHINESE CLASSES BETWEEN 1979 AND 1981 HAD BEEN ARRESTED AND SINCE 1983 SOME IMPROVEMENT HAD BEEN SHOWN.

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NO SPECIAL CONCESSION FOR SALARIES TAX PAYERS OVER 60

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PERSONS AGED 60 OR OVER DO NOT ENJOY TAX ADVANTAGES SINCE LIABILITY TO PAY DIRECT TAX IN HONG KONG IS BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF ABILITY TO PAY WHICH IS DETERMINED BY THE LEVEL OF A PERSON'S INCOME, RATHER THAN AGE, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID NENDICK, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHAN YING-LUN, MR NENDICK SAID HONG KONG'S GRADUATED SALARIES TAX RATES WERE DESIGNED TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THE TAXPAYING ABILITIES OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES WITH DIFFERENT INCOMES.

"BECAUSE IT IS THE LEVEL OF A PERSON'S INCOME, RATHER THAN AGE, THAT DETERMINES THE PERSON'S ABILITY TO PAY, THERE APPEARS TO BE NO REASON WHY A PERSON AGED 60 YEARS OR MORE SHOULD ENJOY A TAX ADVANTAGE OVER A PERSON AGED LESS THAN 60 YEARS."

ON WHETHER CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN TO INCREASING THE TAX ALLOWANCES FOR THE ELDERLY, MR NENDICK SAID THAT PERSONS AGED 60 YEARS OR MORE ARE ENTITLED TO THE SAME PERSONAL AND FAMILY ALLOWANCES AVAILABLE TO ALL TAXPAYERS.

"ACCORDINGLY, AGED PERSONS ON LOW INCOMES GENERALLY HAVE NO LIABILITY TO TAX."

HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT THAT THE BASIC DEPENDENT PARENT ALLOWANCE WAS MOST RECENTLY INCREASED TO \$9,000 FOR THE YEAR OF ASSESSMENT COMMENCING APRIL 1, 1986.

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RISE IN COMPLAINTS AGAINST POLICE EXPLAINED

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AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS MADE AGAINST POLICE OFFICERS MAY HAVE BEEN ATTRIBUTED TO THE EFFORT BY THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND PUBLICITY BUREAU (CRPB) OF THE POLICE TO INFORM PEOPLE OF WHAT THEIR RIGHTS ARE IN RELATION TO THE FORCE AND WHAT THEY SHOULD DO IF THEY WANT TO COMPLAIN, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON POON CHI-FAI, MR JEAFFRESON SAID COMPLAINTS HAD ROUGHLY DOUBLED FROM 2,247 IN 1978 TO 4,535 IN 1986 SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CRPB, WHICH AIMS AT IMPROVING THE RELATIONS OF THE POLICE WITH THE COMMUNITY IN PARTICULAR AND ITS PUBLICITY GENERALLY.

MR JEAFFRESON POINTED OUT THAT "ANOTHER CONTRIBUTING FACTOR WHICH CANNOT BE IGNORED IS THE INCREASE IN THE SIZE OF THE FORCE".

"THUS PER HEAD OF THE STRENGTH OF THE DISCIPLINED MEMBERS OF IT, THE INCREASE BETWEEN 1978 AND 1986 WAS AROUND 45 PER CENT," HE SAID.

ON WHETHER THE AUTHORITIES HAVE CONDUCTED ANY COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BUREAU, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE FORCE INSPECTION SERVICES WING INSPECTED COMPREHENSIVELY THE CRPB EVERY TWO YEARS.

"THE LAST INSPECTION WAS IN MARCH THIS YEAR AND LASTED TWO WEEKS."

MR JEAFFRESON NOTED THAT THE CRPB KEPT ITS COMMUNITY RELATIONS ACTIVITIES UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW IN ITS SEARCH FOR NEW METHODS TO IMPROVE THEIR EFFECTIVENESS.

THESE REVIEWS HAD RESULTED IN THE INTRODUCTION OF A NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL VENTURES INCLUDING THE JUNIOR POLICE CALL, THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCHEME, AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD CO-ORDINATOR SCHEME, HE SAID.

"MEASURES LIKELY TO BE INTRODUCED FURTHER TO IMPROVE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE POLICE AND THE PUBLIC INCLUDE INCREASED TRAINING ON COURTESY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS FOR ALL POLICE OFFICERS AND THE VALUABLE INFORMATION WE HOPE TO OBTAIN FROM THE THIRD CRIME VICTIMISATION SURVEY WHICH WILL ASSIST IN FURTHER IMPROVING THESE RELATIONS.

"THE CLOSE CONTACT BETWEEN DISTRICT POLICE COMMANDERS AND THE 19 DISTRICT FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEES WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO BE MAINTAINED," HE ADDED.

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COMPULSORY INSURANCE PROPOSED FOR ALL CONSULTING FIRMS

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CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN TO INTRODUCING A COMPULSORY INSURANCE REQUIREMENT FOR ALL CONSULTING FIRMS ENGAGED ON PUBLIC PROJECTS, IRRESPECTIVE OF CORPORATE STATUS.

THIS STATEMENT WAS MADE BY THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON CHENG HON-KWAN.

MR BARNES SAID ENGINEERING CONSULTING FIRMS WHICH WERE LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANIES WERE REQUIRED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO CARRY PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE COVER WHILST ENGAGED ON PUBLIC PROJECTS.

FIRMS WHICH DID NOT HAVE LIMITED LIABILITY STATUS WERE NOT REQUIRED TO CARRY PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE, ALTHOUGH UNDER THE TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT LIABILITY WAS IMPLICIT.

COMMISSIONS AWARDED BY THE ARCHITECTURAL AND ASSOCIATED CONSULTANTS SELECTION BOARD WERE NOT AT PRESENT REQUIRED TO CARRY SUCH INSURANCE, BUT THE SITUATION WAS UNDER REVIEW, MR BARNES SAID.

HE SAID WHERE INSURANCE COVER WAS PRESENTLY REQUIRED IT WAS USUALLY FOR THE FULL LIMITATION PERIOD AS DEFINED IN THE LIMITATION ORDINANCE.

THIS PERIOD VARIED DEPENDING ON CIRCUMSTANCES.

FOR ACTIONS BASED ON SIMPLE CONTRACT OR TORT, AN ACTION MUST BE BROUGHT WITHIN SIX YEARS OF THE DATE ON WHICH THE CAUSE OF AN ACTION AROSE.

FOR ACTIONS BASED ON CONTRACT UNDER SEAL THE PERIOD WAS 12 YEARS FROM THE DATE ON WHICH THE CAUSE OF AN ACTION AROSE.

FOR CLAIMS FOR DAMAGES IN RESPECT OF PERSONAL INJURY THE PERIOD WAS THREE YEARS.

"GOVERNMENT'S VIEW HAS BEEN THAT INSURANCE COVER SHOULD CONTINUE FOR THE DURATION OF EACH COMMISSION LIMITATION PERIOD WHICH IS NORMALLY 12 YEARS," MR BARNES SAID.

"HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF A CONTINUING TREND FOR PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE COSTS TO ESCALATE, AND DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING COVER FOR 12 YEARS, CONSIDERATION IS NOW BEING GIVEN TO LIMITING THE PERIOD OF COVER TO SIX YEARS.

"THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH PRACTICE IN SOME UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS," MR BARNES SAID.

PROFESSIONAL LINK WITH BRITISH SHIPPING SECTOR ESTABLISHED

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THE MOST IMPORTANT RESULT OF THE POSTING OF THE MARINE ADVISER AT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT OFFICE IN LONDON IS THAT HONG KONG NOW HAS A PROFESSIONAL LINK DIRECTLY WITH THOSE IN THE UK WHO ARE FORMULATING BRITISH SHIPPING POLICY, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID NENDICK, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HELMUT SOHMEN, MR NENDICK SAID AS HONG KONG MOVED TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SHIPPING REGISTER SEPARATE FROM THAT OF THE UK, THE KNOWLEDGE OF HOW THAT POLICY WAS CONCEIVED AND IMPLEMENTED WOULD ENABLE THE TERRITORY TO BETTER EQUIP ITSELF FOR THE FUTURE.

MR NENDICK ALSO OUTLINED THE PROGRESS OF THE WORK DONE BY THE MARINE ADVISER, NOW HELD BY THE FORMER DIRECTOR OF MARINE, MR PETER CHAN, WHO TOOK UP THE POST IN JANUARY THIS YEAR.

"HE HAS ESTABLISHED WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE, THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT, THE HYDROGRAPHIC DEPARTMENT AND OTHER UK GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND WITH THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF BRITISH SHIPPING.

BESIDES, HE HAS RECENTLY COMPLETED AN INITIAL ROUND OF FAMILIARISATION VISITS, MR NENDICK NOTED.

"HE HAS BEEN APPOINTED HONG KONG'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANISATION AND HAS REPRESENTED HONG KONG AT A NUMBER OF MEETINGS INCLUDING THE MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE AND THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMITTEE," HE ADDED.

HE HAD ALSO BEEN THE NATURAL FOCUS OF MANY ENQUIRIES CONCERNING HONG KONG AND ITS REGISTER FROM THE VARIOUS SECTORS OF THE UK SHIPPING INDUSTRY, MR NENDICK ADDED.

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SLIGHT INCREASE IN NUMBER OF CORRUPTION REPORTS

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THE NUMEBR OF CORRUPTION REPORTS RECEIVED BY THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION SHOWED A SLIGHT INCREASE LAST YEAR WHILE THE NUMBER OF CORRUPTION ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE POLICE DROPPED BY 12.5 PER CENT, ACCORDING TO THE 1986 ANNUAL REPORT BY THE COMMISSIONER OF ICAC.

THE REPORT WAS TABLED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE HON MRS SELINA CHOW WHO WAS DEPUTISING FOR THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CORRUPTION, THE HON S. L. CHEN, WHO IS AWAY FROM HONG KONG. SHE IS A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE.

THE REPORT SHOWED THAT THE UPWARD TREND IN THE NUMEBR OF REPORTS RECEIVED AGAINST THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAD CONTINUED, AND THE FIGURE OF 1,060 OUT OF A TOTAL OF 2,574 CORRUPTION REPORTS WAS THE HIGHEST NUMBER RECORDED.

"IT IS ENCOURAGING TO NOTE THAT MORE PEOPLE ARE PREPARED TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES WHEN REPORTING CORRUPTION AND THE 1,664 NON-ANONYMOUS REPORTS, OR 65 PER CENT OF ALL CORRUPTION REPORTS RECEIVED, IS THE HIGHEST FIGURE EVER RECORDED," MRS CHOW SAID.

AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS THE COMMISSION RECEIVED A VERY LARGE NUMBER OF NON-CORRUPTION REPORTS. THE FIGURE FOR 1986 WAS 2,911, OR 53 PER CENT OF ALL REPORTS RECEIVED.

MRS CHOW NOTED THAT THE NUMBER OF CORRUPTION ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE POLICE STOOD AT 629 LAST YEAR, DOWN 12.5 PER CENT FROM LAST YEAR AND WAS THE LOWEST SINCE 1980.

"THE ICAC COMMISSIONER HAS REMARKED SPECIFICALLY UPON THE GREATLY IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ICAC AND THE POLICE, AND THE VERY POSITIVE CO-OPERATION AND GOOD PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP WHICH NOW EXISTS BETWEEN THEM," SHE SAID.

SHE ADDED THAT THE REVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT SHOWED THAT PRIVATE SECTOR CASES WERE A MAJOR FEATURE DURING THE YEAR AND INVESTIGATIONS INTO LARGE SCALE CORRUPTION-BASED FRAUDS TOOK UP ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF THE DEPARTMENT'S INVESTIGATION STRENGTH.

"THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE ICAC'S INVESTIGATION OF THE SO-CALLED "SHANGHAI" HORSE-RACING SYNDICATE, INVOLVING A CONSPIRACY TO CHEAT AT GAMBLING, AND THE COMMENDABLY FIRM ACTION SUBSEQUENTLY TAKEN BY BOTH THE COMMISSION AND THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB TO DEAL WITH RACING MALPRACTICES, CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF THE PUBLIC, AMONGST WHOM RACING REMAINS A SUBJECT OF INTENSE INTEREST," SHE SAID.

THE WORK OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS DEPARTMENT BROKE NEW GROUND IN 1986 IN A NUMBER OF AREAS. FOR MANY YEARS THE DEPARTMENT HAS WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE ACADEMIC STAFF OF SCHOOLS AND TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN PROMOTING NOT ONLY THE ANTI-CORRUPTION MESSAGE AMONGST STUDENTS, BUT ALSO A CLEARER APPRECIATION OF SOCIAL AND MORAL VALUES.

IN 1986 THIS WAS AUGMENTED BY THE INTRODUCTION OF THE FIRST STRUCTURED TEACHING MATERIAL FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND ALSO THE FIRST FORMAL GATHERING, ORGANISED BY THE COMMISSION, OF MORAL AND CIVIC EDUCATION CO-ORDINATORS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, SHE NOTED.

TURNING TO CORRUPTION PREVENTION, MRS CHOW SAID A NOTABLE FEATURE OF THE WORK OF THE CORRUPTION PREVENTION DEPARTMENT IN 1986 WAS THE EXPANSION OF SERVICES TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

"THERE IS STILL SOME RELUCTANCE IN THAT AREA TO SEEK ADVICE FROM THE ICAC, BUT THIS HAS RECENTLY IMPROVED AS THE DEPARTMENT'S ADVISORY SERVICES GROUP HAS BECOME MORE ESTABLISHED, AND IT IS HOPED THAT THE FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL SERVICES WHICH THEY OFFER WILL BECOME BETTER KNOWN AND USED MORE WIDELY IN THE FUTURE," SHE SAID.

SHE ADDED THAT TO SOME EXTENT THIS HAD ALREADY BEEN OCCURRED IN THE BANKING INDUSTRY WHERE THE NEED BECAME APPARENT FOR STANDARD RULES OF CONDUCT WHICH COULD BE FOLLOWED BY BANKS AND DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES THROUGHOUT HONG KONG.

IN CLOSE CO-OPERATION WITH THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING AND THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT, A CODE OF CONDUCT WAS FORMULATED WHICH WAS SUBSEQUENTLY PUBLISHED IN THE GOVERNMENT GAZETTE TOWARDS THE END OF THE YEAR.

MRS CHOW NOTED THAT ICAC COMMISSIONER HAD, IN THE REVIEW CHAPTER OF THE REPORT, COMMENTED ON THE SENTENCES HANDED DOWN BY THE COURTS. ALTHOUGH IN 1986, THE PROPORTION OF ACTUAL JAIL SENTENCES WAS HIGHER THAN IN 1985, THE COURTS ALSO AWARDED A HIGHER PROPORTION OF SUSPENDED SENTENCES - 35 PER CENT AS AGAINST 27 PER CENT IN 1985.

"MRS S. L. CHEN AND I SHARE THE COMMISSIONER'S VIEW THAT, FROM A DETERRENT ASPECT, THE VALUE OF A SUSPENDED SENTENCE IS NOT ALWAYS IMMEDIATELY APPARENT, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE OBVIOUSLY CASES WHERE SUCH SENTENCES ARE APPROPRIATE," SHE SAID.

SHE SAID THAT CERTAINLY FROM THE COMMISSION'S VIEWPOINT THERE WAS OCCASIONAL CONCERN ABOUT DISPROPORTIONATE OR APPARENTLY LENIENT SENTENCES WHICH WERE SOMETIMES GIVEN BY THE COURTS FOR WHITE COLLAR CRIMES, WHICH SERVED NEITHER TO DETER POTENTIAL OFFENDERS NOR TO SIGNIFY THE SERIOUS NATURE OF CORRUPTION OFFENCES.

"BUT I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF CASES THIS YEAR WHEN RATHER MORE SEVERE SENTENCES HAVE BEEN AWARDED ON CONVICTION, OR ON APPEAL BY THE CROWN," SHE SAID.

SHE ADDED THAT A FINAL POINT OF INTEREST WAS THE 3RD INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION CONFERENCE WHICH THE COMMISSION WOULD BE HOSTING IN HONG KONG FROM NOVEMBER 2 - 6 THIS YEAR AND WHICH WOULD BE WIDELY ATTENDED BY DELEGATES FROM OVERSEAS.

"I AM SURE THAT THE ICAC'S GROWING INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION AS A LEADER IN ITS FIELD WILL BE STRENGTHENED BY THAT OCCASION," SHE SAID.

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LOCAL BODIES VALUABLE TO COMMUNITY  
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LOCAL BODIES SUCH AS AREA COMMITTEES, MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES AND OWNERS INCORPORATIONS PLAY AN IMPORTANT AND VALUABLE ROLE IN ENHANCING COMMUNITY SPIRIT AND PROVIDING TWO-WAY CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL RESIDENTS, THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, WAS DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION AS THESE BODIES FORM AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION SCHEME AND HAVE PROVED TO BE EFFECTIVE IN ENHANCING A SENSE OF BELONGING AMONG LOCAL RESIDENTS.

MR LIAO WAS RESPONDING TO COMMENTS BY LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS IN WINDING UP THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE FUNCTION AND WORK OF AREA COMMITTEES, MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES AND OWNERS INCORPORATIONS.

AREA COMMITTEES AND MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES WERE INITIALLY FORMED IN THE 1970'S TO SUPPORT THE KEEP HONG KONG CLEAN AND FIGHT VIOLENT CRIME CAMPAIGNS, BUT THEIR TERMS OF REFERENCES WERE REVISED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION SCHEME, HE SAID.

MR LIAO SAID THE LOCAL BODIES HAD COME A LONG WAY SINCE THEIR INCEPTIONS AND NOW PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN ADVISING ON MATTERS AFFECTING THE WELL-BEING OF PEOPLE LIVING IN THEIR AREAS AND THOSE WORKING THERE.

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THEY HAD ALSO BEEN EFFECTIVE IN REFLECTING RESIDENTS' VIEWS ON CURRENT AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT POLICIES, HE ADDED.

MR LIAO NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF DISTRICT BOARDS AND AREA COMMITTEES WERE SIMILAR IN CERTAIN AREAS, THE TWO COMPLEMENTED RATHER THAN DUPLICATED THE WORK OF EACH OTHER.

THERE ARE 110 AREA COMMITTEES IN THE TERRITORY -- 85 IN THE URBAN DISTRICTS AND 25 IN FIVE NEW TERRITORIES DISTRICTS. AS A WHOLE, SOME OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE AREA COMMITTEES ARE CARRIED OUT BY RURAL COMMITTEES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES AND OWNERS INCORPORATIONS WERE BUILDING-BASED RESIDENTS' ORGANISATIONS, AND DURING THEIR GROWTH THEY HAD NOT LOST SIGHT OF THEIR OBJECTIVES OF BUILDING MANAGEMENT, SECURITY AND CLEANLINESS IN THEIR OWN BUILDINGS, AND PROMOTING A SENSE OF NEIGHBOURLINESS AND MUTUAL HELP AMONG RESIDENTS, MR LIAO SAID.

AT THE END OF MAY, THERE WERE 4,268 MACS AND 2,988 OWNERS INCORPORATIONS THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY.

REGRETTABLY, SOME 750 MACS WERE FOUND TO BE INACTIVE BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF PRESSING ISSUES OR PROBLEMS TO SUSTAIN THEIR INTEREST.

"OTHERS HAVE FOUND THAT THERE IS LITTLE SCOPE FOR MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES BECAUSE OF THE SMALL NUMBER OF UNITS AND RESIDENTS INVOLVED, MOST OF WHICH ARE FOUND IN OLD PRIVATE TENEMENT BUILDINGS.

"STILL OTHERS HAVE LOST THE IMPETUS BECAUSE OF THE ABSENCE OF NEW TALENT WILLING TO TAKE OVER AS OFFICE-BEARERS, AND THE SHORTAGE OF LIAISON STAFF IN THE DISTRICT OFFICES MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR," SAID MR LIAO.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE RECENT REVIEW OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION SCHEME HAD REAFFIRMED THE VALUE OF THESE BODIES AND THAT THEY PROVIDED A GOOD TRAINING GROUND FOR LEADERS AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL.

SOME OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE REVIEW CALLED FOR PROVIDING MORE STAFF SUPPORT IN THE LIAISON WORK OF DISTRICT OFFICE TO BETTER SERVE SUCH BODIES AND ALSO TO GIVE ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO ACS AND MACS.

MR LIAO SAID THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WOULD BE ASKED TO CONSIDER THE CREATION OF NEW POSTS TO IMPROVE SERVICES TO LOCAL BODIES.

/HE SAID .....

HE SAID THE QUARTERLY GRANT TO MACS WAS BEING REVIEWED TO ENSURE THAT IT KEPT UP WITH INFLATION, WHILE A SUBMISSION WOULD BE MADE IN THE FIVE-YEAR FORECAST AND THE 1988-89 ESTIMATES TO INCREASE THE PROVISION OF THE DISTRICT OFFICE SERVICES VOTE TO HELP FINANCE MORE AC AND MAC PROJECTS.

"IN RECOGNITION OF THE VALUABLE SERVICES PROVIDED BY MACS, THE CHINESE TEMPLES COMMITTEE HAS GENEROUSLY AGREED TO PROVIDE AN INITIAL GRANT OF \$100,000 TO ASSIST THEM IN SETTING UP THEIR OFFICES AND UNDERTAKING COMMUNITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES," MR LIAO SAID.

EXPLAINING THE CLOSE LINKS BETWEEN ACS AND DISTRICT BOARDS, MR LIAO SAID THIS WAS MAINTAINED THROUGH CROSS-MEMBERSHIP OF THE TWO BODIES, AND IT WOULD NOT BE ADVISABLE TO FORMALISE THE CURRENT ARRANGEMENT BY MAKING ELECTED DB MEMBERS EX-OFFICIO AREA COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE CONSTITUENCIES AS IT WOULD INTRODUCE AN ELEMENT OF RIGIDITY INTO THE SYSTEM, WHICH MIGHT NOT BE ENTIRELY DESIRABLE AT THE RELATIVELY EARLY STAGE IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION SCHEME.

HE ALSO STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING THE VOLUNTARY ROLE OF AC MEMBERS WHOSE MAIN OBJECTIVES WERE TO STIMULATE A COMMUNITY SPIRIT AND TO ENCOURAGE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS.

MR LIAO SAID PROVISIONS HAD BEEN MADE TO SET UP THREE ADDITIONAL BUILDING MANAGEMENT CO-ORDINATION TEAMS IN THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR, AND THAT MORE TEAMS WOULD BE SET UP IN FUTURE AS RESOURCES PERMITTED.

"THE FOUR BUILDING MANAGEMENT CO-ORDINATION TEAMS SET UP IN EASTERN, YAU MA TEI, MONG KOK AND KWAI TSING HAVE PROVIDED USEFUL ASSISTANCE TO RESIDENTS AND MANAGEMENT BODIES IN 163 BUILDINGS," HE ADDED.

DISTRICT BOARDS WOULD BE CONSULTED IN THE NEAR FUTURE ON THE NEED TO CHANGE THE LAW TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR THE FORMATION OF OWNERS INCORPORATIONS, MR LIAO SAID.

MORE SUPPORT FOR GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS URGED

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MORE ATTENTION AND CARE MUST BE ACCORDED TO GRASS ROOTS ORGANISATIONS IF THEY ARE TO BECOME THE FOUNDATION STONE UPON WHICH DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION IS TO BE BUILT, DR THE HON RICHARD LAI SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON AREA COMMITTEES, MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES AND OWNERS CORPORATIONS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, DR LAI SAID THIS COULD BE DONE IN A NUMBER OF WAYS.

FINANCIALLY, HE SAID, MORE RESOURCES SHOULD BE ALLOCATED TO THE MACS TO MAKE THE JOB OF RUNNING LESS PAINFUL.

"MORE ATTENTION MUST BE PAID TO THE SUGGESTIONS MADE BY THESE ORGANISATIONS. THEY MUST BE MADE TO FEEL THAT THEY ARE RESPECTED AND THAT THEY ARE MORE THAN JUST SOMETHING TO BE USED TO CARRYING OUT OR PROMOTING CERTAIN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES."

DR LAI ALSO SAID THAT MORE MONITORING AND IMPROVEMENT IN THE LIAISON PROCESS MUST BE CARRIED OUT "IF WE ARE COMMITTED TO MAKING THEM AN EFFECTIVE CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION AND BASE FOR GRASSROOTS ORGANISATION".

"WITHOUT ACTIVE ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE GOVERNMENT, THEY CAN NEVER BECOME THE GRASSROOTS SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FIBRE WHICH THEY ARE DESIGNED TO BE," HE ADDED.

DR LAI RECALLED THAT THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF SETTING UP MACS AND OCS WAS FOR THE PROMOTION OF VARIOUS GOVERNMENT SPONSORED COMMUNITY PROJECTS TO IMPROVE THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL.

THEY PERFORMED AN INVALUABLE FUNCTION IN CAMPAIGNS AGAINST CRIME, KEEPING HONG KONG CLEAN, AND PROMOTING NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH PROGRAMMES.

THE LEADERS OF THESE ORGANISATIONS WERE ALSO SUPPOSED TO PROVIDE A POOL OF POTENTIAL GOVERNMENT APPOINTEES TO VARIOUS LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT.

HOWEVER, HE SAID THINGS DID NOT TURN OUT THE WAY THEY HAD BEEN ENVISAGED.

"FIRST OF ALL, THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT PROVIDE ADEQUATE RESOURCES FOR THESE GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS TO GROW INTO THEIR OWN.

"IN TERMS OF LEADERSHIP, THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDES VERY LITTLE TRAINING TO THE ORGANISERS, SO THEY ARE HANDICAPPED FROM THE WORD GO.

"THERE IS LITTLE FOLLOW-UP ASSISTANCE EXTENDED TO THEM ONCE THE MACS OR OCS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED.

"THE OPERATION OF THESE ORGANISATIONS IS LEFT IN THE HANDS OF THE CHAIRMEN WHO MAY BE VERY RELUTANT TO GET INVOLVED IN WORKS OF THIS NATURE IN THE FIRST PLACE."

DR LAI SAID WITH THE DEVELOPMENTS OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION AND REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, THESE ORGANISATIONS ALSO TAKE ON THE ROLE AS A CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM.

AFTERALL, THEY ARE THE MOST IMMEDIATE CHANNEL FOR PUBLIC OPINION. BUT THEY ARE NOT EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH SUCH A ROLE.

"IF THEY ARE TO PERFORM TO THE GOVERNMENT'S EXPECTATION, THEY MUST HAVE MORE SUPPORT FROM THE GOVERNMENT, IN TERMS OF FINANCE AND CO-ORDINATION."

AS REGARDS AREA COMMITTEES, DR LAI SAID FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP TO THEM, THERE WERE NO SET CRITERIA WITH RESPECT TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE DISTRICT OFFICE.

"TO REALISE THE FUNCTION AND SPIRIT OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, REPRESENTATION ON THE ACS MUST BE ACHIEVED," HE ADDED.

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GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS IMPORTANT  
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LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR THE HON LIU LIT-FOR SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT AREA COMMITTEES, OWNERS CORPORATIONS AND MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES WERE PLAYING A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN DISTRICT MANAGEMENT AS WELL AS IN COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON AREA COMMITTEES, MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES AND OWNERS CORPORATIONS, MR LIU SAID THAT AREA COMMITTEES, IN PARTICULAR, PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN REFLECTING PUBLIC OPINIONS BEFORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DISTRICT BOARDS.

MR LIU NOTED THAT THERE WERE SUGGESTIONS THAT MEMBERS OF AREA COMMITTEES SHOULD BE APPOINTED BY DISTRICT BOARDS OR BY DISTRICT OFFICERS IN CONSULTATION WITH DISTRICT BOARDS. ANOTHER SUGGESTION WAS THAT THEY SHOULD BE ELECTED.

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"AS A MATTER OF FACT, MEMBERS OF AREA COMMITTEES HAVE ALL ALONG BEEN APPOINTED BY THE DISTRICT OFFICERS AND THEY ARE ENTHUSIASTIC AND SINCERE IN SERVING THE COMMUNITY," HE NOTED.

HE SAID THE PERFORMANCE OF THESE MEMBERS OVER THE YEARS HAD BEEN OUTSTANDING. HE SAID MEMBERS OF AREA COMMITTEES SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE APPOINTED BY THE DISTRICT OFFICERS SO THAT PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE AND ALL KINDS OF TRADE COULD BE ADEQUATELY REPRESENTED.

"IF THEY ARE APPOINTED BY DISTRICT BOARDS, THE INDEPENDENCE OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS COULD NOT BE ASSURED," HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT IF MEMBERS OF AREA COMMITTEES WERE TO BE ELECTED, THERE WOULD BE TOO MANY ELECTIONS IN DIFFERENT FORMS. SINCE THEIR TERM OF OFFICE WAS ONLY ONE YEAR, IT WOULD SIMPLY BE A WASTE OF TIME, MONEY AND MANPOWER TO HOLD SUCH ELECTIONS. BESIDES, CIVIC-MINDED PERSONS MIGHT NOT NECESSARILY BE INTERESTED IN STANDING FOR ELECTIONS.

ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER AREA COMMITTEES AND DISTRICT BOARDS COULD GIVE FULL PLAY TO THEIR PRESENT FUNCTIONS IN TERMS OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TWO, MR LIU SAID HIS ANSWER WAS IN THE AFFIRMATIVE.

HE CITED THE CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICT AS AN EXAMPLE AND SAID THAT SINCE 1984 WHEN AREA COMMITTEE MEMBERS WERE CO-OPTED TO SERVE ON THE VARIOUS COMMITTEES UNDER THE DISTRICT BOARD, AND FOLLOWING THE ADOPTION OF A SERIES OF MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN THE LINK BETWEEN AREA COMMITTEES AND THE DISTRICT BOARD, THERE HAD NOT BEEN ANY BARRIER OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TWO.

HE SAID AREA COMMITTEES WERE THE MOST EFFECTIVE ORGANISATIONS IN REFLECTING GRASSROOTS OPINIONS BECAUSE THEY HAD REGULAR DIRECT CONTACT WITH RESIDENTS.

HE CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF STAFF IN DISTRICT OFFICES SO THAT THE LINK BETWEEN AREA COMMITTEES AND MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES COULD BE FURTHER STRENGTHENED. THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALSO PROVIDE AREA COMMITTEES WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT ON A REGULAR BASIS TO ENABLE THEM TO ORGANISE MORE ACTIVITIES.

IN ADDITION, GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS SHOULD ATTACH GREATER IMPORTANCE TO AREA COMMITTEES AND SHOULD ATTEND THEIR MEETINGS AND DEAL WITH THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS PROMPTLY.

MR LIU ADDED THAT THE RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF AREA COMMITTEES AND DISTRICT BOARDS SHOULD BE CLEARLY DEFINED. AREA COMMITTEES WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR SMALL SCALE CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AS WELL AS REFLECTING RESIDENTS' VIEW ON HOW TO IMPROVE LOCAL ORDER, ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE AND TRAFFIC, WHILE DISTRICT BOARDS' DUTIES COVERED THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

CALL TO RECRUIT MORE LIAISON STAFF

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN URGED TO RECRUIT MORE LIAISON STAFF WITHIN THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION (CNTA) TO STRENGTHEN ITS LINKS WITH AREA COMMITTEES, MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES AND OWNERS CORPORATIONS.

THE CALL WAS MADE BY THE HON HILTON CHEONG-LEEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON AREA COMMITTEES, MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES AND OWNERS CORPORATIONS.

MR CHEONG-LEEN SAID THE CNTA HAD IN THE LAST FEW YEARS BEEN SUFFERING FROM SERIOUS SHORTAGE OF LIAISON STAFF WHO WERE TO KEEP IN CLOSE AND REGULAR CONTACT WITH THOSE COMMITTEES.

THE SITUATION WAS BECOMING EVEN MORE ACUTE IN VIEW OF THE TENDENCY FOR AREA COMMITTEES TO SET UP SUB-COMMITTEES AND THE CONTINUOUS PRESSURE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES OR OWNERS CORPORATIONS IN NEW BUILDINGS, HE SAID.

PARALLEL TO STRENGTHENING THE CNTA LIAISON STAFF, MR CHEONG-LEEN SAID MORE BUILDING MANAGEMENT CO-ORDINATION TEAMS SHOULD BE SET UP AT A FASTER RATE TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE TO MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES AND OWNERS CORPORATIONS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THEIR BUILDINGS.

"AT PRESENT THERE ARE ONLY FOUR SUCH TEAMS AND I BELIEVE THE NUMBER SHOULD BE INCREASED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE TO MEET THE URGENT NEEDS FOR IMPROVED MULTI-STOREY BUILDING MANAGEMENT IN THE URBAN AREAS AND THE NEW TOWNS," HE SAID.

FURTHERMORE, HE THOUGHT THE TIME HAD COME FOR GOVERNMENT TO URGE ALL NEW MULTI-STOREY BUILDINGS TO HAVE A MUTUAL AID COMMITTEE OR OWNERS CORPORATION ESTABLISHED WITHIN A CERTAIN PERIOD OF TIME, FOR EXAMPLE AFTER A NEW BUILDING WAS MORE THAN HALF OCCUPIED.

MR CHEONG-LEEN NOTED THAT TODAY, AREA COMMITTEES WERE ACTIVE BODIES VERY MUCH INVOLVED IN LOCAL PROBLEMS AND THEY ACTED AS A VALUABLE BRIDGE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND RESIDENTS LIVING WITHIN THE AREA.

HE ADDED THAT MANY AREA COMMITTEES WERE RECEIVING PROJECT FUNDS OR JOINT CO-OPERATION FROM BOTH THE DISTRICT BOARD AND THE URBAN COUNCIL FOR THEIR PROJECTS, ESPECIALLY IN THE FIELDS OF RECREATION, ENVIRONMENT IMPROVEMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

"THIS EVOLUTIONARY TREND SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED AND CLOSELY CO-ORDINATED BY CNTA," HE SAID.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES AND OWNERS CORPORATIONS HAD BEEN PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN TAKING CARE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND BUILDING MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS AS WELL AS COMMUNITY ISSUES AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL.

WAYS TO ENHANCE ROLES OF GRASSROOTS BODIES SUGGESTED

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THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER FURTHER STRENGTHENING THE CONSULTATIVE ROLE OF AREA COMMITTEES, THROUGH WHICH IT GATHERED PUBLIC VIEWS ON ISSUES OF WIDESPREAD CONCERN, THE HON MRS PAULINE NG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

LEADING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON AREA COMMITTEES, MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES AND OWNERS CORPORATIONS AS CONVENER OF A LEGCO AD HOC GROUP ON THE SUBJECT, MRS NG SUGGESTED THAT A FIRST STEP TO TAKE WOULD BE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO ENCOURAGE AREA COMMITTEES TO DISCUSS TERRITORY-WIDE ISSUES.

SHE ADDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALSO TAKE A MORE POSITIVE INITIATIVE TO CONSULT AREA COMMITTEES ON MAJOR ISSUES SUCH AS PUBLIC WORK PROJECTS OR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEMES, WHICH MIGHT AFFECT THE POPULACE WITHIN THEIR RESPONSIBLE AREAS.

NOTING THAT A LINKAGE WAS MAINTAINED BETWEEN DISTRICT BOARDS AND AREA COMMITTEES BY WAY OF CROSS-MEMBERSHIP, MRS NG SAID IT MIGHT NOW BE DESIRABLE TO FORMALISE THE RELATIONSHIP BY ALLOWING DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS TO BECOME EX-OFFICIO AREA COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF THEIR OWN CONSTITUENCIES SO THAT THEY WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR FOLLOW UP ACTIONS ON AREA PROBLEMS.

TO COMPLEMENT THIS CHANGE, MORE AREA COMMITTEE MEMBERS COULD BE ALLOWED TO JOIN DISTRICT BOARD SUB-COMMITTEES, SHE SAID ADDING THAT THERE WAS ALREADY AN ESTABLISHED PRACTICE FOR OUTSIDE EXPERTS TO BE CO-OPTED AS MEMBERS OF THESE SUB-COMMITTEES.

MRS NG POINTED OUT THAT AN INCREASING NUMBER OF PUBLIC COMPLAINTS HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY AREA COMMITTEE MEMBERS EACH YEAR.

"TO COPE WITH THE ADDITIONAL WORKLOAD, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE AREA COMMITTEES WITH ALL THE SUPPORTING SERVICES THEY REQUIRE TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY," SHE SAID.

SHE THEREFORE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO SERIOUSLY CONSIDER PROVIDING AREA COMMITTEE WITH THEIR OWN OFFICE PREMISES, WHICH WOULD GREATLY ASSIST THEIR MEMBERS IN THEIR DAILY CONTACTS WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

TURNING TO MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES, MRS NG SAID THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONDUCT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE A REVIEW ON THE LEVEL OF SUBSIDY TO THESE COMMITTEES AS THE PRESENT SUBSIDY OF \$600 PER QUARTER WAS LAST REVISED TWO YEARS AGO.

IN ADDITION, SHE SAID, SIMILAR TO AREA COMMITTEES, MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES ALSO HAD A GENUINE NEED FOR THEIR OWN OFFICE PREMISES.

AT THE MOMENT, A TOTAL OF 1,286 OFFICE PREMISES, WHICH USUALLY OCCUPIED AN AREA BETWEEN 10 TO 15 SQUARE METRES, WERE PROVIDED TO MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES FORMED IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES.

"JUDGING FROM MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, I THINK THERE IS A CASE FOR THE PRESENT SPACE LIMIT OF 10-15 SQUARE METRES TO BE RELAXED TO CATER FOR MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES WHICH SERVICE A RELATIVELY LARGER NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS," SHE SAID.

FINALLY, MRS NG GAVE HER SUPPORT TO THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSAL TO RECRUIT ADDITIONAL STAFF TO FILL EXISTING 92 TEMPORARY COMMUNITY ORGANISERS AND 103 EXECUTIVE OFFICERS VACANCIES, AND TO IMPROVE TRAINING FOR EXISTING LIAISON STAFF IN ORDER TO PROVIDE BETTER SERVICES TO AREA COMMITTEES, MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES AND OWNERS CORPORATIONS. SHE ALSO ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO REVIEW THE SALARY SCALE OF TEMPORARY COMMUNITY ORGANISERS, WHICH HAD NOT BEEN REVISED FOR MANY YEARS.

EARLIER IN HER SPEECH, MRS NG SPOKE ABOUT THE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS WHICH AREA COMMITTEES AND MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES HAD MADE TOWARDS IMPROVING HONG KONG'S LIVING ENVIRONMENT.

SHE SAID AREA COMMITTEE WERE NOW ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN IDENTIFYING AND SOLVING LOCAL PROBLEMS RELATED TO ENVIRONMENT IMPROVEMENT AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT, AS WELL AS IN PROVIDING FEEDBACK ON GOVERNMENT POLICIES.

MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES, ON THE OTHER HAND, WERE PLAYING AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN COMMUNITY BUILDING BY FOSTERING A SPIRIT OF MUTUAL CARE IN EACH NEIGHBOURHOOD, SHE ADDED.

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CALL TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

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IN ORDER TO ENABLE THE SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT TO ACHIEVE MAXIMUM EFFECTIVENESS, IT IS NECESSARY TO STRENGTHEN THE VARIOUS COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS AND ENHANCE THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND THESE ORGANISATIONS, THE HON DESMOND LEE YU-TAI SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON AREA COMMITTEES, MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES AND OWNERS CORPORATIONS, MR LEE SAID THIS WAS TO ENSURE THAT VARIOUS CONSULTATIVE BODIES AND THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED COULD MEET THE WISHES OF THE PUBLIC AS FAR AS PRACTICABLE.

IT WOULD ALSO ASSURE THE SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT OF INCREASING PUBLIC SUPPORT, HE SAID.

ON AREA COMMITTEES, MR LEE SAID A GENERAL OBSERVATION WAS THAT OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION WITH AND ASSISTANCE TO THEM WERE VERY LIMITED AND WERE PROVIDED IN A RATHER PASSIVE MANNER.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT ALSO FAILED TO PROVIDE AREA COMMITTEES WITH THE MEANS TO COMMUNICATE WITH LOCAL ORGANISATIONS AND RESIDENTS.

"THE CRITERIA FOR APPOINTING AREA COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE NEVER PUBLISHED AND LOCAL RESIDENTS MAY NOT CONSIDER ALL OF THEM AS BEING SUFFICIENTLY REPRESENTATIVE."

MR LEE PROPOSED THAT APART FROM PUBLICISING THE APPOINTMENT CRITERIA, RELEVANT LOCAL BODIES SHOULD BE INVITED TO NOMINATE CANDIDATES.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT DUE TO THE LACK OF ASSISTANCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT, THE AREA COMMITTEES HAD FAILED TO FULFIL THEIR ROLES SATISFACTORILY.

SOME AC MEMBERS FELT THAT THEIR VIEWS MIGHT NOT BE IMPLEMENTED CONSISTENTLY BY THE GOVERNMENT.

"IT IS HOPED THAT IN FUTURE, THEIR VIEWS WILL BE PUT INTO ACTUAL PRACTICE TO INCREASE THE SENSE OF SATISFACTION OF MEMBERS FROM THEIR WORK," HE SAID.

ON MACS AND OCS, MR LEE SAID THERE WERE AT PRESENT 4,259 MACS AND 2,968 OCS IN HONG KONG, FORMED UNDER THE CO-ORDINATION OF THE DISTRICT OFFICES.

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"BECAUSE OF THEIR LARGE NUMBER AND THE LIMITED MANPOWER, THE DISTRICT OFFICES ARE UNABLE TO MAINTAIN REGULAR LIAISON WITH THEM THROUGH VISITS.

"THIS HAS GIVEN RESIDENTS THE IMPRESSION THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED MORE WITH QUANTITY THAN QUALITY," HE SAID.

FURTHERMORE, HE ADDED, FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THEIR ACTIVITIES WAS PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT ON A REIMBURSEMENT BASIS SO THAT MAC MEMBERS HAD TO PAY OFF THE EXPENSES FIRST BEFORE THEY COULD APPLY FOR REPAYMENT.

MR LEE SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER MAKING IMMEDIATE CHANGES TO ITS POLICIES.

HE ALSO SAID THE DEEDS OF MUTUAL COVENANT HAD AROUSED BITTER DISPUTE OVER MANAGEMENT RIGHTS AND PROPOSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PASS LEGISLATION TO FACILITATE THE FORMATION OF OCS.

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#### TWO BILLS PASSED

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THE PENSION BENEFITS BILL 1987 AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1987 WERE PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE PENSION BENEFITS BILL 1987 WAS PASSED WITH FIVE AMENDMENTS OF A TECHNICAL NATURE MOVED BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY DURING COMMITTEE STAGE.

TEN OTHER BILLS WERE READ A SECOND TIME AND DEBATE ON THEM WERE ADJOURNED.

THEY ARE: BROADCASTING AUTHORITY BILL 1987, COMPANIES (AMENDMENT)(NO.2) BILL 1987, BANKRUPTCY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, INSURANCE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT)(NO.2) BILL 1987, PILOTAGE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, SUPREME COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, WASTE DISPOSAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, SUPERVISION ORDERS (RESIDENTIAL REQUIREMENTS) BILL 1987, KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 AND ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987.

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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, MR DAVID FORD, SAID THIS (WEDNESDAY) EVENING THAT BASED ON THE PRESENT ACTIVITIES AND A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PIPELINE, HONG KONG CAN ACHIEVE A MUCH MORE PLEASANT AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT.

SPEAKING AT THE ANNUAL DINNER OF THE HONGKONG ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, MR FORD POINTED OUT THAT THESE DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDED FIRSTLY, THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY DEVELOPED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT FOR DISPOSING OF SOLID WASTES.

HE SAID THAT WAS BASED ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THREE LARGE LANDFILL SITES, ONE EACH TO SERVE THE NORTH EAST AND NORTH WEST NEW TERRITORIES, AND ONE FOR KOWLOON AND HONG KONG ISLAND, "THEY SHOULD LAST FOR THE NEXT 30 TO 40 YEARS," HE ADDED.

MR FORD SAID THE STRATEGY WOULD ENABLE THE DOING AWAY WITH THE INCINERATORS WHICH HAD POLLUTED THE HARBOUR AREA SO MUCH. IT WOULD ALSO PRESENT THE OPPORTUNITY TO PASS OVER TO PRIVATE ENTERPRISE THE ENTIRE FUNDING, CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE WASTE DISPOSAL ACTIVITIES CURRENTLY OPERATED BY GOVERNMENT.

"ANOTHER REASON WHY I EXPECT TO SEE A GRADUAL IMPROVEMENT IN THE ENVIRONMENT IS THE MAJOR INITIATIVES WE HAVE TAKEN RECENTLY TO IMPROVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR DISPOSING OF SEWAGE," HE SAID.

THESE INCLUDED A START ON THE \$600 MILLION NORTH WEST KOWLOON SCHEME, PREPARATION OF MASTER PLANS FOR EAST KOWLOON AND THE SOUTH OF HONG KONG ISLAND, AND AN OVERALL DISPOSAL STRATEGY THAT IS AIMED AT SETTLING THE PROBLEM WELL INTO THE NEXT CENTURY.

MR FORD SAID THE INVESTMENT REQUIRED IN SEWERAGE INFRASTRUCTURE WOULD RUN TO ABOUT \$11 BILLION IN THE COMING DECADE.

"THAT IS AN ESSENTIAL INVESTMENT, NOT ONLY TO SAFEGUARD OUR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BUT TO PROVIDE THE ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR INDUSTRY, WITHOUT WHICH MORE STRINGENT POLLUTION CONTROLS WOULD BE REQUIRED," HE SAID.

MR FORD SAID THE OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDED THE LIVESTOCK CONTROLS INTRODUCED TODAY TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE NEW REGULATIONS TO CONTROL MAJOR EMITTERS OF AIR POLLUTION KNOWN AS SPECIFIED PROCESSES AND A SCHEME TO CONTROL SMOKE EMISSIONS FROM TAXIS, MINIBUSES AND OTHER DIESEL ENGINED VEHICLES.

WHILE STRESSING THAT THESE NEW CONTROLS WERE ALL ESSENTIAL, HE ASSURED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE CAREFUL TO KEEP THEM TO THE NECESSARY MINIMUM.

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"WHERE APPROPRIATE, WE ARE PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO INDUSTRY, AND OTHERS, IN THE FORM OF CHEMICAL WASTE TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL FACILITIES AND RATHER MORE ADVISORY SUPPORT THAN IS COMMON ELSEWHERE," HE ADDED.

MR FORD SAID WHEN THE 80 PER CENT ADDITIONAL MANPOWER ALLOCATED TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT HAD BEEN RECRUITED AND TRAINED, HONG KONG WOULD HAVE A TEAM OF ABOUT 335 ENGINEERS, SCIENTISTS AND TECHNICIANS, ALL HAVING THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AS THEIR SOLE MOTIVATION.

ON THE ACADEMIC SIDE, MR FORD SAID NEW INITIATIVES OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION WOULD RESULT IN AN MSC COURSE IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AT HONG KONG UNIVERSITY, A NEW DIPLOMA IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AT THE CITY POLYTECHNIC, AND VARIOUS QUALIFYING COURSES FOR PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL INSTITUTIONS AT THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC.

HE CONCLUDED THAT PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT WAS A JOINT ENTERPRISE REQUIRING CONTRIBUTIONS FROM BOTH THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS.

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#### HONG KONG VALUES ITS COMMONWEALTH LINKS

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HONG KONG HAS ALWAYS VALUED ITS LEGAL LINKS WITH THE COMMONWEALTH, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR MICHAEL THOMAS, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT A LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY, MR THOMAS SAID THE TERRITORY SHARES A COMMON LEGAL HERITAGE WITH MANY COMMONWEALTH MEMBER STATES.

SO SIMILAR ARE THE LAWS OF MANY COMMON LAW JURISDICTIONS THAT JUDGES AND COUNSEL FROM ONE JURISDICTION ARE ABLE TO SERVE OR PRACTISE EQUALLY WELL IN ANOTHER.

HE SAID THAT IN PRACTICAL TERMS HONG KONG'S LINKS WITH THE COMMONWEALTH ARE BOTH FORMAL ONES - CONFERENCES, AGENCIES, ASSOCIATIONS OR SCHEMES - AND INFORMAL ONES.

"HONG KONG HAS ALWAYS VALUED ITS COMMONWEALTH LINKS, AND FOR GOOD REASON," THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID.

FIRSTLY, THEY HAVE HELPED HONG KONG GREATLY IN BUILDING UP A COMMON LEGAL HERITAGE, HE SAID.

/ "THIS PROVIDES .....

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"THIS PROVIDES A COLLECTIVE SAFEGUARD AGAINST THE EROSION OF VALUABLE COMMON LAW FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND ENCOURAGES CONFIDENCE IN THE DURABILITY OF HARD WON PERSONAL FREEDOMS," MR THOMAS SAID.

SECONDLY, A RELATIVELY SMALL TERRITORY SUCH AS HONG KONG WITH A POPULATION OF ONLY 5.5 MILLION PEOPLE NEEDS EXPOSURE TO THE JURISPRUDENTIAL WISDOM AND EXPERIENCE OF LARGER JURISDICTIONS IF ITS OWN COMMON LAW IS TO DEVELOP IN A ROBUST MANNER AND RESPOND TO THE COMPLEXITY OF MODERN SOCIETIES, HE SAID.

"OTHERWISE WE MAY LOSE THE SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE THAT IS SO IMPORTANT TO OUR STANDING AS AN INTERNATIONAL CENTRE," HE SAID.

THIRDLY, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID, HONG KONG'S TIES WITHIN THE COMMONWEALTH GIVE IT ACCESS TO THE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES THAT OTHER COMMON LAW JURISDICTIONS ARE ABLE TO OFFER.

"THE HIGH STANDARDS THAT HONG KONG HAS ACHIEVED IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE CAN ONLY BE MAINTAINED BY MAKING USE OF THE BEST THAT IS AVAILABLE ELSEWHERE.

"OUR COMMONWEALTH LINKS HAVE ENABLED US TO ESTABLISH A FIRM BASIS ON WHICH THIS CAN CONTINUE," MR THOMAS SAID.

JUST AS HONG KONG BENEFITS IN VARIOUS WAYS, SO ITS "MULTIFARIOUS AND EXTENSIVE" CONNECTIONS WITH THE COMMONWEALTH HAVE HELPED THE TERRITORY TO SHARE THE FRUITS OF ITS ENDEAVOURS AND EXPERIENCE WITH OTHER COMMON LAW JURISDICTIONS.

FOR EXAMPLE, IN 1983 HONG KONG HOSTED THE SEVENTH COMMONWEALTH LAW CONFERENCE WHEN SOME 2,000 DELEGATES FROM 45 COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES CAME TOGETHER. IN ADDITION TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE WORK INVOLVED IN HOSTING THE EVENT, TO WHICH THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT GAVE ITS FULL SUPPORT, LOCAL LAWYERS CONTRIBUTED A LARGE NUMBER OF PAPERS ON TOPICS OF SIGNIFICANCE TO THE COMMONWEALTH GENERALLY.

"HONG KONG IS DELIGHTED TO HAVE THESE OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMON LAW TRADITION WITHIN THE COMMONWEALTH," MR THOMAS SAID.

AS TO THE FUTURE, HE SAID THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION GUARANTEES THE CONTINUED APPLICATION OF THE COMMON LAW IN HONG KONG AFTER 1997.

"THIS IS INDEED ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PROVISIONS OF THE JOINT DECLARATION.

"CONTINUED CLOSE LINKS WITH OTHER COMMON LAW JURISDICTIONS WILL BE VITAL TO THE SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMON LAW IN THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION," HE SAID.

MR THOMAS SAID THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG'S LINKS WITH THE COMMONWEALTH IS A MATTER OF CONCERN FOR ALL.

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IN 10 YEARS TIME SOVEREIGNTY OVER HONG KONG WILL REVERT TO CHINA.

"IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT EXISTING LINKS TO SURVIVE BEYOND THAT TIME IN THEIR PRESENT FORM.

"HOW OUR FORMAL LINKS CAN BE ADAPTED TO THE FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS OF HONG KONG WILL NO DOUBT BE THE SUBJECT OF MUCH CONSIDERATION AND CONSULTATION OVER THE COMING YEARS.

"BUT IN ANY EVENT I AM CERTAIN THAT LINKS ESTABLISHED NOW AT A PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEVEL WILL PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR A LASTING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG AND THE COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES FOR MANY YEARS TO COME," MR THOMAS SAID.

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#### MAY PROVISIONAL TRADE FIGURES PUBLISHED

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THE RAPID GROWTH IN EXTERNAL TRADE RECORDED SINCE THE LATTER PART OF 1986 WAS SUSTAINED IN MAY 1987, ACCORDING TO THE PROVISIONAL TRADE FIGURES PUBLISHED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS IN MAY 1987, AT \$16,436 MILLION, INCREASED BY 33.3 PER CENT OR \$4,102 MILLION OVER MAY 1986, WHILE THE VALUE OF RE-EXPORTS INCREASED BY 48.8 PER CENT OR \$4,821 MILLION TO \$14,690 MILLION.

TAKING DOMESTIC EXPORTS AND RE-EXPORTS TOGETHER, THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS, AT \$31,126 MILLION, WAS 40.2 PER CENT OR \$8,923 MILLION HIGHER THAN IN MAY 1986. THE VALUE OF IMPORTS GREW BY 39.5 PER CENT OR \$8,824 MILLION OVER MAY 1986 TO \$31,174 MILLION.

AS THE GROWTH IN THE VALUE OF IMPORTS WAS SLOWER THAN THAT OF TOTAL EXPORTS, THE VISIBLE TRADE GAP (THAT IS, THE PROPORTION OF THE VALUE OF IMPORTS NOT COVERED BY THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS) IN MAY 1987 NARROWED TO 0.2 PER CENT, COMPARED WITH A GAP OF 0.7 PER CENT IN MAY 1986. IN ABSOLUTE VALUE TERMS, THE VISIBLE TRADE DEFICIT RECORDED IN MAY 1987, AT \$48 MILLION, WAS \$99 MILLION LESS THAN THAT RECORDED IN MAY 1986.

PUTTING THE MONTH'S TRADE FIGURES INTO CONTEXT, THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS FOR THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF 1987 WAS \$134,932 MILLION, MADE UP OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS OF \$69,503 MILLION AND RE-EXPORTS OF \$65,429 MILLION.

/COMPARED WITH .....

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COMPARED WITH THE SAME PERIOD IN 1986, THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS GREW BY \$38,670 MILLION OR 40.2 PER CENT, THAT OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS BY \$16,675 MILLION OR 31.6 PER CENT, AND THAT OF RE-EXPORTS BY \$21,995 MILLION OR 50.6 PER CENT.

OVER THIS PERIOD, THE VALUE OF IMPORTS GREW BY \$39,530 MILLION OR 39.3 PER CENT, TO \$140,029 MILLION.

A CUMULATIVE VISIBLE TRADE DEFICIT OF \$5,097 MILLION, EQUIVALENT TO 3.6 PER CENT OF THE VALUE OF IMPORTS, WAS RECORDED IN THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF 1987. THIS COMPARES WITH A VISIBLE TRADE DEFICIT OF \$4,237 MILLION IN THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF 1986, WHICH WAS EQUIVALENT TO 4.2 PER CENT OF THE VALUE OF IMPORTS IN THAT PERIOD.

COMMENTING ON THESE FIGURES, A GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE GROWTH MOMENTUM OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS IN THE LATTER PART OF 1986 HAD CONTINUED IN THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, REFLECTING STRONG DEMAND FOR HONG KONG'S PRODUCTS IN OVERSEAS MARKETS AND THE STIMULATING EFFECT OF THE DEPRECIATION OF THE HONG KONG DOLLAR, IN LINE WITH THAT OF THE U.S. DOLLAR, AGAINST MOST OTHER MAJOR CURRENCIES DURING THE COURSE OF 1986 AND THE EARLY MONTHS OF 1987.

THE VERY RAPID GROWTH IN RE-EXPORTS IN THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF 1987 WAS LARGELY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE FLOURISHING ENTREPOT TRADE WITH CHINA, WHICH FEATURED PROMINENTLY BOTH AS A SOURCE AND AS A MARKET FOR HONG KONG'S RE-EXPORTS. THE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT, GIVEN THE STRONG GROWTH IN IMPORTS, EXPORT PERFORMANCE WAS LIKELY TO REMAIN GOOD IN THE COMING MONTHS.

THE FOLLOWING TABLE PRESENTS THE PROVISIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE FIGURES FOR MAY 1987:

MERCHANDISE:	DOMESTIC EXPORTS	:	\$16,436	MILLION
	RE-EXPORTS	:	\$14,690	MILLION
	TOTAL EXPORTS	:	\$31,126	MILLION
	IMPORTS	:	\$31,174	MILLION
	TRADE BALANCE	:	\$48	MILLION (IN DEFICIT)

## COMPARATIVE FIGURES

	MAR 87 TO	MAR 86 TO	INCREASE	
	MAY 87	MAY 86	HK\$ MN.	%
LATEST 3 MONTHS	HK\$ MN.	HK\$ MN.		
DOMESTIC EXPORTS	45,458	33,951	11,507	33.9
RE-EXPORTS	42,809	27,995	14,814	52.9
TOTAL EXPORTS	88,267	61,946	26,321	42.5
IMPORTS	92,394	64,710	27,684	42.8
TRADE BALANCE	-4,127	-2,764	-1,363	

/MAY .....

SAME MONTH LAST YEAR	MAY 1987	MAY 1986	INCREASE	
	HK\$ MN.	HK\$ MN.	HK\$ MN.	%
DOMESTIC EXPORTS (% OF TOTAL EXPORTS)	16,436 (52.8%)	12,334 (55.6%)	4,102	33.3
RE-EXPORTS	14,690	9,869	4,821	48.8
TOTAL EXPORTS	31,126	22,203	8,923	40.2
IMPORTS	31,174	22,350	8,824	39.5
TRADE BALANCE	-48	-147	99	

LAST MONTH	MAY 1987	APRIL 1987	INCREASE	
	HK\$ MN.	HK\$ MN.	HK\$ MN.	%
DOMESTIC EXPORTS (% OF TOTAL EXPORTS)	16,436 (52.8%)	14,539 (50.5%)	1,897	13.0
RE-EXPORTS	14,690	14,255	435	3.1
TOTAL EXPORTS	31,126	28,794	2,332	8.1
IMPORTS	31,174	30,489	685	2.2
TRADE BALANCE	-48	-1,695	1,647	

CALENDAR YEAR-TO-DATE	JAN-MAY 1987	JAN-MAY 1986	INCREASE	
	HK\$ MN.	HK\$ MN.	HK\$ MN.	%
DOMESTIC EXPORTS (% OF TOTAL EXPORTS)	69,503 (51.5%)	52,828 (54.9%)	16,675	31.6
RE-EXPORTS	65,429	43,434	21,995	50.6
TOTAL EXPORTS	134,932	96,262	38,670	40.2
IMPORTS	140,029	100,499	39,530	39.3
TRADE BALANCE	-5,097	-4,237	-860	

LAST 12 MONTHS	JUN 86 TO	JUN 85 TO	INCREASE	
	MAY 87	MAY 86	HK\$ MN.	%
	HK\$ MN.	HK\$ MN.		
DOMESTIC EXPORTS	170,658	133,258	37,400	28.1
RE-EXPORTS	144,542	104,404	40,138	38.4
TOTAL EXPORTS	315,200	237,662	77,538	32.6
IMPORTS	315,484	238,904	76,580	32.1
TRADE BALANCE	-284	-1,242	958	

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RAID NETS 2 ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS IN TSUEN WAN  
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IMMIGRATION INVESTIGATORS ARRESTED TWO ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS AT A RESIDENTIAL FLAT IN TSUEN WAN, NEW TERRITORIES LAST NIGHT (TUESDAY).

THE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WERE A MAN AGED 24 AND A WOMAN AGED 31. THEY CLAIMED TO HAVE SNEAKED INTO HONG KONG FROM HAIFENG THIS MONTH AND IN DECEMBER 1986 RESPECTIVELY.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT REITERATED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO AMNESTY FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS. THEY WOULD BE REPATRIATED ONCE THEY WERE INTERCEPTED, HE SAID.

"IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE TO STEP UP ITS ANTI-ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION MEASURES WITH OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AND WE WILL PROSECUTE THOSE WHO AIDED AND ABETTED ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS TO REMAIN IN HONG KONG."

ENQUIRIES REVEALED THAT THE WOMAN HAD ONCE SNEAKED INTO HONG KONG FROM HAIFENG IN 1980 AND WAS REPATRIATED IN 1986 BUT SHE SOON CAME BACK TO HONG KONG.

SHE WAS FOUND TO HAVE POSSESSED AN IDENTITY CARD RELATING TO ANOTHER PERSON.

AT PRESENT, HER HUSBAND, A PERMANENT HONG KONG RESIDENT, IS ASSISTING WITH THE ENQUIRIES.

/IMMIGRATION INVESTIGATORS .....

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IMMIGRATION INVESTIGATORS ALSO ARRESTED THREE FILIPINO MAIDS YESTERDAY EVENING DURING A SERIES OF IDENTITY CHECKS AT BARS IN WAN CHAI.

TWO OF THEM WERE FOUND TO HAVE OVERSTAYED SINCE MARCH AND MAY THIS YEAR. THE REMAINING ONE WAS UNABLE TO PRODUCE ANY PROOF OF IDENTITY.

THE THREE FILIPINO MAIDS ARE BEING DETAINED FOR ENQUIRIES.

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TWO LOTS SOLD FOR \$193 MILLION  
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TWO LOTS OF GOVERNMENT LAND WERE SOLD FOR \$193 MILLION AT AN AUCTION TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MASS SUCCESS LIMITED PAID \$169 MILLION FOR A PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL SITE ON FUNG SHING STREET, HAMMER HILL, KOWLOON.

BIDDING OPENED AT \$100 MILLION.

THE SITE HAS AN AREA OF ABOUT 5,600 SQUARE METRES.

UNDER THE BUILDING COVENANT, THE DEVELOPER HAS TO COMPLETE NOT LESS THAN 16,800 SQUARE METRES OF GROSS FLOOR AREA BY JUNE 1991.

THE OTHER LOT, WHICH IS FOR INDUSTRIAL AND/OR GODOWN PURPOSES, BUT EXCLUDING OFFENSIVE TRADES, IS LOCATED AT SHA TIN NEAR CITY ONE. IT WAS SOLD FOR \$24 MILLION.

BIDDING FOR THE 1,776 SQUARE METRE SITE STARTED AT \$12 MILLION.

THE PURCHASER, HIWANA TRADING COMPANY LIMITED, IS REQUIRED TO COMPLETE A GROSS AREA OF NOT LESS THAN 5,328 SQUARE METRES, ALSO BY JUNE 1991.

COMMENTING ON THE SALE RESULTS, GOVERNMENT LAND AGENT, MR R.D. POPE, SAID HE WAS HAPPY WITH THE PRICES WHICH COULD REFLECT THE CURRENT ACTIVE PROPERTY MARKET.

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WAYS TO MEET SOCIAL NEEDS OF ELDERLY

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THE 13 DISTRICT OFFICES OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT WILL BE MOBILISING YOUTH VOLUNTEERS TO VISIT THE ELDERLY SINGLETONS LIVING IN THEIR RESPECTIVE DISTRICT, THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SHE DISCLOSED THAT THIS FUNCTION, TO BE CALLED "SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT - 1987 CONCERN VISIT BY YOUTH VOLUNTEERS FOR ELDERLY SINGLETONS", WOULD BE LAUNCHED IN AUGUST.

MRS WONG WAS ADDRESSING THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE "PARTY FOR A THOUSAND AGED" HOSTED BY THE SHUN TAK FRATERNAL ASSOCIATION AT THE CITY HALL CONCERT HALL.

"IT IS HOPED THAT THROUGH THESE VISITS, OUR YOUNG PEOPLE WILL ACQUIRE A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE LIVES AND THE NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY AND BRING TO THEM THE MESSAGE OF CONCERN, CARE AND LOVE," SHE SAID.

MRS WONG ALSO LOOKED AT HOW THE SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL NEEDS OF THE AGED COULD BE CATERED FOR BY THE ELDERLY THEMSELVES, BY THEIR FAMILIES, BY THE COMMUNITY AND BY THE GOVERNMENT.

SHE SAID THE ELDERLY SHOULD PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN ALL KINDS OF CULTURAL, RECREATIONAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES SO AS TO DEVELOP NEW HOBBIES, MAKE NEW FRIENDS AND LEARN NEW THINGS, THUS TURNING A NEW LEAF IN THEIR OLD AGE.

AS FOR FAMILIES, THEY SHOULD ENCOURAGE THEIR ELDERLY MEMBERS TO TAKE PART IN SUCH ACTIVITIES AND ALSO TAKE TIME TO KEEP THE ELDERLY COMPANY ON OUTINGS, SHE SAID.

SHE NOTED THAT IN RECENT YEARS MANY VOLUNTARY AND CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS HAD STARTED TO ORGANISE A WIDE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE ELDERLY AS AN EXPRESSION OF RESPECT AND LOVE FOR THE SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE PARTY HOSTED BY THE SHUN TAK FRATERNAL ASSOCIATION WAS A COMMENDABLE EXAMPLE OF SUCH ACTIVITIES.

THE GOVERNMENT, SHE SAID, ALSO ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THIS SERVICE AREA AND IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT A PLANNING RATIO OF ONE SOCIAL CENTRE FOR THE ELDERLY PER 30,000 POPULATION HAD BEEN INTRODUCED.

"AT PRESENT, THERE ARE 108 SUCH CENTRES AND THE NUMBER IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE TO 186 WITHIN FIVE YEARS.

"THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO REVIEWING AND REVISING THIS TYPE OF SERVICE REGULARLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY," SHE SAID.

CONCLUDING, MRS WONG COMPLIMENTED THE SHUN TAK FRATERNAL ASSOCIATION FOR ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY.

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AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES FACILITIES INSPECTED

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THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ANSON CHAN, SPENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SEEING AT FIRST HAND THE VARIOUS FACILITIES OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT.

ACCOMPANIED BY THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, DR LAWRENCE LEE, MRS CHAN STARTED HER FAMILIARISATION VISIT BY INSPECTING THE CHEUNG SHA WAN WHOLESALE VEGETABLE MARKET OF THE VEGETABLE MARKETING ORGANISATION WHERE SHE WAS BRIEFED ON THE SYSTEM FOR THE WHOLESALE MARKETING OF IMPORTED AND LOCALLY-PRODUCED VEGETABLES IN HONG KONG.

SHE NEXT WENT TO THE NEARBY CHEUNG SHA WAN WHOLESALE FISH MARKET, ONE OF THE SEVEN OPERATED BY THE FISH MARKETING ORGANISATION WHERE SHE DISCUSSED PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVING MARKETING FACILITIES TO MEET GROWING NEEDS.

THE PARTY THEN PROCEEDED TO YIM TIN TSAI FOR A BOAT TRIP TO INSPECT THE YIM TIN TSAI WEST FISH CULTURE ZONE, ONE OF THE 28 DESIGNATED UNDER THE MARINE FISH CULTURE ORDINANCE.

SHE WAS BRIEFED ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE MARICULTURE INDUSTRY AND THE DEPARTMENT'S CONTINUED EFFORT TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL AND EXTENSION SERVICES TO HELP MARICULTURISTS TO INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY.

MRS CHAN LATER WENT TO HOK TAU IN FANLING WHERE SHE WAS TAKEN ON A TOUR TO SEE THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA AND WAS BRIEFED ON ITS POTENTIAL FOR BRINGING FALLOW LAND BACK INTO PRODUCTIVE USE.

IN THE AFTERNOON, MRS CHAN TOURED THE DEPARTMENT'S TAI LUNG FARM WHERE SHE SAW FIELD TESTS ON THE USE OF PESTICIDES ON VEGETABLE CROPS AND THE VARIOUS NON-CHEMICAL METHODS BEING EXPERIMENTED WITH BY THE DEPARTMENT TO PROTECT CROPS FROM DAMAGE BY PESTS.

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GOVERNOR TO VISIT WAN CHAI

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THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, WILL VISIT WAN CHAI TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO SEE THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE DISTRICT.

SIR DAVID WILL FIRST HAVE A PANORAMIC VIEW OF WAN CHAI FROM THE ROOFTOP OF HOPEWELL CENTRE, FOLLOWED BY A VISIT TO A HOME FOR THE ELDERLY.

/HE WILL .....

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HE WILL THEN ATTEND AN AREA COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN THE WAN CHAI DISTRICT OFFICE, FOLLOWED BY A TOUR OF THE NEW URBAN COUNCIL COMPLEX IN LOCKHART ROAD, BEFORE ATTENDING A TEA RECEPTION WITH DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS AND OTHER LOCAL PERSONALITIES.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE GOVERNOR'S VISIT TO WAN CHAI TOMORROW (THURSDAY). MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES SHOULD ASSEMBLE AT THE 17TH FLOOR MAIN ENTRANCE OF THE HOPEWELL CENTRE AT 2 PM.

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DANGEROUS BUILDING TO BE CLOSED

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A FOUR-STOREY PRE-WAR BUILDING AT 156 SHANGHAI STREET, KOWLOON, WAS DECLARED DANGEROUS BY THE BUILDING AUTHORITY TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE AUTHORITY SAID THE BUILDING, CONSTRUCTED WITH REINFORCED CONCRETE FLOORS AND ROOF ON LOAD BEARING WALLS, HAD BEEN INSPECTED RECENTLY.

A WIDE VERTICAL FRACTURE HAS APPEARED BETWEEN THE REAR MAIN WALL AND THE PARTY WALL WITH NO. 154. SEVERAL OTHER FRACTURES HAVE ALSO APPEARED IN THE REAR MAIN WALL UNDERNEATH THE WINDOW OPENINGS AT THE SECOND AND THIRD FLOOR LEVELS, INDICATING CONTINUOUS LATERAL MOVEMENT OF THIS WALL TOWARDS THE REAR YARD, AND THE BUILDING AS A WHOLE IS DILAPIDATED.

IT IS THEREFORE CONSIDERED THAT THERE IS A RISK OF COLLAPSE AT THE REAR AND IT IS NECESSARY TO CLOSE AND DEMOLISH THE BUILDING.

A NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR CLOSURE ORDER AT KOWLOON DISTRICT COURT ON JULY 22 WAS POSTED ON THE BUILDING TODAY.

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REVIEW OF SERVICES FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED  
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THE SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE OF THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT BOARD WILL DISCUSS THE FIFTH REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP FOR REVIEWING SERVICES FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED IN TUEN MUN AT A MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

TO CONCLUDE THE WORK OF THE WORKING GROUP, MEMBERS WILL DISCUSS THE NUMBER OF MENTALLY HANDICAPPED PERSONS IN TUEN MUN, THE PROVISION OF VARIOUS TYPES OF SERVICES FOR DIFFERENT AGE-GROUPS, AND THE 17 RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT.

MEMBERS WILL ALSO DISCUSS CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES IN THE SIU HONG COURT, THE INSTALLATION OF ASBESTOES IN TUEN MUN HOSPITAL, DEPARTURE AND ENTRY MEASURES INTRODUCED BY THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT, FORMATION OF A FIRE WATCH TEAM AND REPLENISHMENT OF FIRE EQUIPMENT, AND APPLICATION FOR DB FUNDS FROM THE CIVIC EDUCATION ACTIVITIES ORGANISING COMMITTEE.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING OF THE TUEN MUN DB'S SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT 2.30 PM IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE DB SECRETARIAT ON THE 3/F., TUEN MUN GOVERNMENT OFFICES BUILDING, NO. 1, TUEN HI ROAD.

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CLOSURE OF BOUNDARY STREET, BRIDE'S POOL ROAD  
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BRIDE'S POOL ROAD BETWEEN SAN TAU YIU AND LUK KENG, TAI PO WILL BE CLOSED FROM 5.30 AM TO 9.30 AM ON FRIDAY (JUNE 26) FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CYCLING COMPETITION TO BE HELD.

HOWEVER, ACCESS OF VILLAGERS AND GOODS VEHICLES CARRYING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE TO AND FROM THE VILLAGES IN THE AREA WILL BE PERMITTED.

MEANWHILE, FROM JUNE 27 TO JULY 11 BETWEEN 1 AM AND 5 AM DAILY, THE NORTHERN KERBSIDE CARRIAGEWAY OF BOUNDARY STREET BETWEEN CHEUNG SHA WAN ROAD AND SAI YEE STREET WILL BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC FOR FLYOVER CONSTRUCTION.

HOWEVER, THROUGH ACCESS WILL BE MAINTAINED AT THE SOUTHERN KERBSIDE CARRIAGEWAY OF THE SAME SECTION OF BOUNDARY STREET.

/DURING THE .....

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DURING THE CLOSURE, VEHICLES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO TURN LEFT FROM THE SOUTHBOUND CARRIAGEWAY OF SAI YEUNG CHOI STREET NORTH ONTO BOUNDARY STREET; OR TURN LEFT FROM BOUNDARY STREET ONTO THE NORTHBOUND CARRIAGEWAY OF SAI YEUNG CHOI STREET NORTH.

MOTORISTS ON TAI PO ROAD SOUTHBOUND HEADING FOR BOUNDARY STREET WILL BE DIVERTED VIA POPLAR STREET WESTBOUND, CHEUNG SHA WAN ROAD AND BOUNDARY STREET.

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COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER FUNDS FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS

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MEMBERS OF THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT BOARD'S COMMUNITY BUILDING COMMITTEE WILL MEET TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO CONSIDER APPLICATIONS FOR DISTRICT BOARD FUNDS TO ORGANISE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROJECTS.

THESE INCLUDE THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL LANTERNS CARNIVAL, LOK SIN TONG CUP BASKETBALL COMPETITION, ELDERLY TELEMATCH FUN DAY, OUTING AND VEGETARIAN DINNER FOR THE ELDERLY, AND PRINTING PUBLICITY MATERIAL TO PROMOTE THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT BOARD NIGHT-TIME TELEPHONE RECORDING SERVICE SCHEME.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING AT 2.15 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT OFFICE, 141 KAU PUI LUNG ROAD, TO KWA WAN. THE MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED IN CHINESE AND NO SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION SERVICE WILL BE AVAILABLE.

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URBAN CLEARWAY RESTRICTIONS IN CAUSEWAY BAY

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TO FACILITATE ROAD WORKS, THE SOUTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF JARDINE'S BAZAAR IN CAUSEWAY BAY BETWEEN HOUSES NO. 23 AND 35, AND BETWEEN HOUSES NO. 51 AND 57 WILL BE MADE 7 AM TO MIDNIGHT DAILY URBAN CLEARWAYS FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (JUNE 26).

THE MEASURE WILL BE IN FORCE FOR ABOUT TWO MONTHS.

NO VEHICLE OTHER THAN FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP WITHIN THE URBAN CLEARWAYS FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS.

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