



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1989

OBJECTIVES OF INSURANCE COMPANIES BILL EXPLAINED

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AN AMENDMENT BILL WHICH SEEKS TO UPDATE CERTAIN PROVISIONS AND TO IMPROVE THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSURANCE COMPANIES ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE INSURANCE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, SAID THE MAIN PROVISIONS OF THE BILL DEALT WITH FOUR AREAS.

THESE WERE THE DEFINITION OF CONTROLLER, MINIMUM SOLVENCY MARGIN REQUIREMENTS, FREQUENCY OF ACTUARIAL REPORTS AND GROUNDS FOR EXERCISING POWERS OF INTERVENTION.

ON THE DEFINITION OF CONTROLLER, MR JACOBS SAID: "SECTION 8(1) OF THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE REQUIRES THAT A CONTROLLER OF A COMPANY APPLYING FOR AUTHORISATION TO CARRY ON INSURANCE BUSINESS MUST BE A FIT AND PROPER PERSON TO HOLD SUCH A POSITION.

"SECTION 9(1) DEFINES A CONTROLLER, IN PART, TO BE A PERSON WHO IS ABLE TO EXERCISE CONTROL, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, OVER ONE-THIRD OR MORE OF THE VOTING POWER OF THE COMPANY."

MR JACOBS EXPLAINED THAT THE DEFINITION WAS BASED UPON THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM INSURANCE COMPANIES ACT 1974, WHICH, HOWEVER, HAD SINCE BEEN AMENDED TO REDUCE THE TRIGGER POINT TO 15 PER CENT.

"TO FOLLOW THE UK PRACTICE AND TO BRING SIGNIFICANT SHAREHOLDERS WITHIN THE 'FIT AND PROPER' REQUIREMENTS, CLAUSE 2 SEEKS TO REDUCE THE TRIGGER POINT FROM ONE-THIRD TO 15 PER CENT," HE SAID.

TURNING TO MINIMUM SOLVENCY MARGIN REQUIREMENTS, MR JACOBS NOTED THAT INSURERS AUTHORISED TO CARRY ON GENERAL, THAT WAS NON-LIFE, BUSINESS WERE SUBJECT TO MINIMUM SOLVENCY MARGIN REQUIREMENTS SPECIFIED IN SECTION 10(1) OF THE ORDINANCE.

"THE CURRENT REQUIREMENTS ARE OUT OF DATE AND NO LONGER PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE SAFETY MARGIN," MR JACOBS REMARKED.

"CLAUSE 3 SEEKS TO INCREASE THESE REQUIREMENTS AND TO UPDATE THE LEVELS OF RELEVANT PREMIUM INCOME IN ORDER TO PROVIDE GREATER SECURITY TO EXISTING AND POTENTIAL POLICY HOLDERS."

HE SAID A GRACE PERIOD WOULD BE GIVEN TO ALLOW INSURANCE COMPANIES TIME TO COMPLY WITH THE NEW REQUIREMENTS.

THIS PERIOD, HOWEVER, SHOULD NOT BE TOO LONG BECAUSE THE NEW REQUIREMENTS WERE CONSIDERED THE MINIMUM NECESSARY AND WOULD, IF DELAYED FOR TOO LONG, BE OUT OF DATE BEFORE THEY WERE INTRODUCED.

/ "ON BALANCE

"ON BALANCE WE CONSIDER THAT THE NEW REQUIREMENTS SHOULD COME INTO EFFECT ON JANUARY 1, 1991 FOR EXISTING AUTHORISED INSURERS," MR JACOBS SAID.

"NEVERTHELESS, FOR INSURERS AUTHORISED AFTER THE ENACTMENT OF THIS BILL, THE NEW REQUIREMENTS WILL TAKE IMMEDIATE EFFECT."

MR JACOBS POINTED OUT THAT UNDER SECTION 18(1) OF THE ORDINANCE, AN INSURER AUTHORISED TO CARRY ON LONG TERM BUSINESS WAS REQUIRED TO CAUSE AN ACTUARIAL INVESTIGATION TO BE MADE INTO THE FINANCIAL CONDITION OF THE LONG TERM FUND ONCE EVERY TWO YEARS.

THE INSURER CONCERNED WAS ALSO REQUIRED TO SUBMIT AN ABSTRACT OF THE ACTUARY'S REPORT TO THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY.

"CLAUSE 4 SEEKS TO INCREASE THE FREQUENCY OF SUCH INVESTIGATIONS TO AT LEAST ONCE EVERY 12 MONTHS, WHICH IS IN LINE WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM LEGISLATION AND IS REGARDED AS NECESSARY FOR THE PURPOSES OF PRUDENTIAL SUPERVISION," MR JACOBS SAID.

AS REGARDS GROUNDS FOR EXERCISING POWERS OF INTERVENTION, HE NOTED THAT UNDER SECTIONS 34(1) AND 34(2) OF THE ORDINANCE, THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY MIGHT REQUIRE AN INSURER TO PROVIDE SPECIFIED INFORMATION AND TO PRODUCE SPECIFIED DOCUMENTS FOR INSPECTION.

BOTH POWERS MIGHT ONLY BE EXERCISED UPON THE SERIOUS GROUNDS SET OUT IN SECTION 26(1) WHICH INCLUDED A SUSPECTED BREACH OF THE ORDINANCE AND THE FAILURE TO MEET OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

THESE GROUNDS COULD NOT BE CALLED IN AID LIGHTLY AND OFTEN COULD NOT BE USED IN RESPECT OF A SIMPLE REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, HE SAID.

"BY CONTRAST, THE WIDER POWER OF INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 34(2) MAY ALSO BE EXERCISED ON THE LESS STRINGENT GROUNDS UNDER SECTION 26(3) NAMELY, THAT THE EXERCISE OF SUCH POWER IS DESIRABLE IN THE GENERAL INTERESTS OF EXISTING AND POTENTIAL POLICY HOLDERS," MR JACOBS SAID.

"THERE IS NO GOOD REASON FOR THIS DIFFERENCE OF TREATMENT."

TO REMOVE THE ANOMALY AND TO ENABLE THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT HIS DUTIES MORE EFFECTIVELY, CLAUSE 5 PROPOSED THAT THE SPECIFIC GROUND IN SECTION 26(3) SHOULD ALSO APPLY TO THE POWER UNDER SECTION 34(1).

"THIS NEW RESERVE POWER WILL BE USED ONLY SPARINGLY," MR JACOBS POINTED OUT.

"I BELIEVE THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY WILL IN THE VAST MAJORITY OF CASES BE ABLE, AS AT PRESENT, TO RELY UPON THE GOODWILL AND CO-OPERATION OF THE INSURERS."

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

FIXED PENALTIES FOR MOVING TRAFFIC OFFENCES INCREASED

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FIXED PENALTY LEVELS FOR MOST MOVING TRAFFIC OFFENCES WERE INCREASED FROM \$140 TO \$200, AND FROM \$200 TO \$280, UNDER A MOTION APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE NEW FINES WILL TAKE EFFECT FROM JULY 1.

THE MOTION ALSO EXTENDED FIXED PENALTY FINES TO COVER FAILURE OF DRIVERS AND FRONT SEAT PASSENGERS TO WEAR SEAT BELTS IN TAXIS, LIGHT BUSES AND GOODS VEHICLES.

MOVING THE MOTION, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID THE EXISTING FINES OF \$140 AND \$200 HAD REMAINED UNCHANGED SINCE 1984 AND 1980 RESPECTIVELY.

THE INCREASING NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED IN RECENT YEARS INDICATED THAT THE DETERRENT EFFECT OF THESE FINES HAD BEEN ERODED BY INFLATION.

THE NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED FOR DRIVING IN EXCESS OF THE SPEED LIMIT BY 15 KILOMETRES PER HOUR OR LESS HAD INCREASED FROM ABOUT 30,000 IN 1985 TO 64,000 IN 1988, AN INCREASE OF 110 PER CENT.

IN VIEW OF THE INCREASING NUMBER OF LICENSED VEHICLES, MR LEUNG SAID THE UPWARD TREND IN THE ISSUE OF FIXED PENALTY TICKETS WAS LIKELY TO CONTINUE.

MR LEUNG SAID SIX NEW FIXED PENALTY OFFENCES WOULD BE INTRODUCED, RELATING TO THE WEARING OF SEAT BELTS IN TAXIS, LIGHT BUSES AND GOODS VEHICLES.

THE NEW FIXED PENALTY OFFENCES WERE:

- * DRIVING TAXIS, LIGHT BUSES, GOODS VEHICLES WITHOUT FASTENING A SEAT BELT. THE FIXED PENALTY FOR THESE OFFENCES WOULD BE \$200.
- * DRIVING TAXIS, LIGHT BUSES, GOODS VEHICLES WHEN A FRONT SEAT PASSENGER UNDER 15 YEARS OLD HAD NOT FASTENED A SEAT BELT. THE FIXED PENALTY FOR THESE OFFENCES WOULD BE \$140.

MR LEUNG EXPLAINED THAT THE VICARIOUS LIABILITY OF THESE DRIVERS WAS LIMITED TO PASSENGERS UNDER 15 BECAUSE IT WAS ACCEPTED, AFTER EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION WITH THE TRADE, THAT DRIVERS MIGHT HAVE DIFFICULTY IN REQUIRING PASSENGERS ABOVE THIS AGE TO WEAR THE SEAT BELT.

ON REASONS FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE SEAT BELT LEGISLATION, MR LEUNG SAID THAT IN THE 12 MONTHS AFTER THE INTRODUCTION OF THE COMPULSORY WEARING OF FRONT SEAT BELTS IN PRIVATE CARS, THE TOTAL FRONT SEAT CASUALTIES FELL BY 28 PER CENT, WHILE THE NUMBER OF FATAL AND SERIOUS CASUALTIES FELL BY 51 PER CENT.

MR LEUNG SAID THE INCREASES DID NOT APPLY TO TWO SPECIFIC MOVING OFFENCES.

FIRST, A HIGHER FINE OF \$450 WAS PROPOSED FOR OVERLOADING BECAUSE THE NUMBER OF OVERLOADING OFFENCES IN 1988 HAD SHOWN AN ALARMING INCREASE OVER THAT OF 1985, FROM ABOUT 1,600 TO 27,000.

OVERLOADING ALSO REDUCED BRAKING EFFICIENCY AND AFFECTED ROAD SAFETY.

SECOND, THE FINE FOR DRIVING PRIVATE CARS, TAXIS, LIGHT BUSES AND GOODS VEHICLES WHEN A FRONT SEAT PASSENGER WAS NOT SECURELY FASTENED WITH A SEAT BELT WOULD REMAIN AT \$140.

MR LEUNG SAID THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE HAD ADVISED THAT THE FIXED PENALTY IMPOSED ON DRIVERS IN RESPECT OF THEIR VICARIOUS LIABILITY FOR FRONT SEAT PASSENGERS' FAILURE TO WEAR A SEAT BELT SHOULD BE LOWER BECAUSE PASSENGERS RATHER THAN DRIVERS SHOULD BE PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OFFENCE.

THE MOTION WAS MOVED UNDER THE FIXED PENALTY (CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS) ORDINANCE.

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RIGHT MOVE ON SEAT BELTS
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IT IS RIGHT THAT FRONT SEAT PASSENGERS IN TAXIS, LIGHT BUSES AND GOODS VEHICLES SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO WEAR SEAT BELTS, DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF A MOTION MOVED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT UNDER THE FIXED PENALTY (CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS) ORDINANCE, DR IP SAID FRONT SEAT PASSENGERS WHO WERE OVER 15 YEARS OF AGE SHOULD BEAR FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY.

BUT SHE DISAGREED IN PRINCIPLE WITH THE INTENTION TO CHARGE A DEFAULTER BY WAY OF SUMMONS AND NOT BY FIXED PENALTY.

SUMMONSING THE DEFAULTER AND WITNESSES WOULD WASTE MAN HOURS AND ALSO VALUABLE COURT TIME.

IN VIEW OF THE PRESENT LABOUR SHORTAGE, HONG KONG SHOULD BE WORKING TOWARDS SAVING TIME AND EFFORT, SHE SAID.

"I CONSIDER IT JUSTIFIED THAT WE EXPAND THE PRESENT COMPUTER SYSTEM TO INCLUDE INFORMATION ON ALL RESIDENTS IN THE TERRITORY, SO THAT A FIXED PENALTY CAN BE ISSUED TO OFFENDING PASSENGERS," SHE SAID.

/DR IP

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DR IP SAID SUCH COMPUTER BACK-UP WOULD PAVE THE WAY FOR INTRODUCING A FIXED PENALTY FOR LITTERING, SPITTING, JAYWALKING, HAWKING AND SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES.

A LOT MORE COURT TIME COULD THEN BE SAVED.

BUT SHE AGREED THAT THIS WOULD TAKE TIME AND THEREFORE ACCEPTED THAT HONG KONG SHOULD GO AHEAD FIRST WITH CHARGING BY WAY OF SUMMONS.

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HEFTY INCREASES IN FIXED PENALTY FINES NOT JUSTIFIED
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SUBSTANTIAL INCREASES IN FIXED PENALTY TRAFFIC FINES ARE NOT JUSTIFIED, THE HON DAVID CHEUNG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE WAS SPEAKING AGAINST A MOTION MOVED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT UNDER THE FIXED PENALTY (CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS) ORDINANCE.

MR CHEUNG SAID HE WAS SCEPTICAL OF THE JUSTIFICATION FOR INCREASING THE FIXED PENALTY FINES EN BLOC, PARTICULARLY THOSE FOR MINOR TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS.

"INCREASES BY 40 PER CENT OR MORE IN FIXED PENALTY FINES, FROM \$140 TO \$200 AND FROM \$200 TO \$280, DO NOT SEEM TO BE JUSTIFIED BECAUSE GOVERNMENT CANNOT OFFSET ACCUMULATED INFLATIONARY EFFECT BY ONE SHOT," HE SAID.

HE DID NOT THINK THAT THE INCREASES WOULD ACHIEVE A RESTORATION OF THE DETERRENT VALUE OF THE FINES, FOR MOST DRIVERS DID NOT INTENTIONALLY CHOOSE TO VIOLATE THE LAW.

"VERY OFTEN, THEY ARE THE VICTIMS OF THE MANY ROAD WORKS AND ROAD RE-ROUTEINGS THAT TAKE PLACE ALL OVER HONG KONG AND THE FREQUENT CHANGES MADE TO ROAD SIGNS WHICH ESCAPE THEIR NOTICE.

"DRIVERS NOT FAMILIAR WITH SUCH ROAD CONDITIONS FALL PREY TO POLICE OFFICERS OR TRAFFIC WARDENS ON THE WATCH FOR UNINTENDING OFFENDERS," MR CHEUNG SAID.

HE SAID THE COUNCIL MUST NOT BE INDIFFERENT TO THE PLIGHT OF THE AVERAGE DECENT PROFESSIONAL DRIVER WHO WOULD LOSE A DAY'S WAGES BECAUSE OF AN UNINTENTIONAL MISTAKE UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

THOUGH SUPPORTING THE LEVEL OF PROPOSED FINES AGAINST SERIOUS TRAFFIC OFFENCES, MR CHEUNG URGED COUNCILLORS AND THE GOVERNMENT TO RECONSIDER THE FINES FOR MINOR OFFENCES, AND HAVE SYMPATHETIC REGARD TO THE PLIGHT OF THE DRIVING PUBLIC.

/MR CHEUNG

MR CHEUNG ALSO SPOKE AGAINST ANOTHER MOTION, WHICH CONCERNED THE INCREASE IN FIXED PENALTY FINES FOR ILLEGAL PARKING FROM \$140 TO \$200.

HE SAID THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF CASES OF ILLEGAL PARKING COULD NOT BE SAID TO SHOW THAT THE \$140 FINE HAD NO DETERRENT EFFECT.

"WHO, MAY I ASK, IN HIS OR HER RIGHT MIND WOULD RISK PAYING A FINE OF \$140 BY TRYING TO SAVE A FEW DOLLARS OR TEN DOLLARS ON PARKING?" HE QUESTIONED.

DRIVERS PARKED ILLEGALLY OFTEN BECAUSE THEY HAD TO PARK THEIR CARS UNDER VERY DESPERATE AND EXCEPTIONALLY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES. THERE WERE SIMPLY NOT ENOUGH PARKING SPACES, HE SAID.

"BECAUSE I FEEL THAT PARKING OFFENCES ARE COMMITTED DUE IN NO SMALL PART TO GOVERNMENT'S FAULT IN NOT PROVIDING ADEQUATE PARKING FACILITIES TO MEET THE NEED OF THE INCREASED MOTOR VEHICLES IT CONTINUES TO LICENSE, I DO NOT SUPPORT THE MOTION," HE SAID.

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PARKING FINE INCREASED TO \$200
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL APPROVED A MOTION TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE FIXED PENALTY FINE FOR PARKING OFFENCES BE INCREASED FROM \$140 TO \$200 TO RESTORE ITS DETERRENT EFFECT.

THE NEW PENALTY WILL TAKE EFFECT FROM JULY 1.

MOVING THE MOTION, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID THE EXISTING FINE OF \$140 HAD REMAINED UNCHANGED SINCE 1983.

THE NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED IN 1987 SHOWED THE BEGINNING OF A RISING TREND, FROM ABOUT 734,000 IN 1987 TO 836,000 IN 1988, AN INCREASE OF OVER 13 PER CENT, MR LEUNG SAID.

THE APPARENT REDUCTION IN THE DETERRENT EFFECT OF THE FINE COULD BE ATTRIBUTED TO INFLATION AND INCREASED PARKING CHARGES AT OFF-STREET CARPARKS.

THE NARROWING GAP BETWEEN PARKING CHARGES AND FIXED PENALTIES MIGHT ATTRACT MOTORISTS TO PARK ILLEGALLY, HE ADDED.

THE MOTION WAS MOVED UNDER THE FIXED PENALTY (TRAFFIC CONTRAVENTIONS) ORDINANCE.

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AMENDMENT REGULATIONS UNDER ROAD TRAFFIC LAW APPROVED
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TWO AMENDMENT REGULATIONS UNDER THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE, BOTH OF WHICH RELATE TO THE ONUS OF PROOF, WERE APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE MOTION SEEKING APPROVAL, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID THE ROAD TRAFFIC (PARKING ON PRIVATE ROADS) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1989 AND THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TRAFFIC CONTROL) (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) REGULATIONS 1989 HAD BEEN MADE BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL ON JANUARY 17.

MR LEUNG SAID THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE ALLOWED ANY REGULATION MADE UNDER THE ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE THAT IN ANY CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS THE ONUS OF PROOF SHOULD REST WITH THE PERSON BEING PROSECUTED OR CERTAIN FACTS SHOULD BE PRESUMED UNTIL THE CONTRARY WAS PROVED.

THE ROAD TRAFFIC (PARKING ON PRIVATE ROADS) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1989 PROVIDED THAT ANY TRAFFIC SIGN OR ROAD MARKING PLACED ON A PRIVATE ROAD SHOULD BE DEEMED TO BE LAWFULLY SO PLACED IF IT WAS SIMILAR TO THAT SPECIFIED IN SCHEDULE 1.

A CODE OF PRACTICE WOULD BE PUBLISHED TO GIVE GUIDANCE TO PRIVATE ROAD OWNERS FOR PLACING SIGNS AND MARKINGS SPECIFIED IN THAT SCHEDULE.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS AMENDMENT WAS TO ENABLE THESE OWNERS TO PLACE AND USE SUCH SIGNS AND MARKINGS TO CONTROL UNAUTHORISED PARKING ON THEIR ROADS EFFECTIVELY.

MR LEUNG SAID THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TRAFFIC CONTROL) (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) REGULATIONS 1989 GAVE THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT SUFFICIENT POWERS TO REQUIRE THE OWNER OF A PRIVATE ROAD TO REMOVE ANY IMPROPER TRAFFIC SIGN OR ROAD MARKING ON THAT ROAD.

THESE REGULATIONS PROVIDED THAT IN ANY CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST THE OWNER OF A PRIVATE ROAD IN RESPECT OF AN IMPROPER TRAFFIC SIGN OR ROAD MARKING PLACED ON THAT ROAD, THE ONUS WAS ON THE OWNER TO PROVE THAT THE SIGN OR MARKING WAS UNAUTHORISED AND HAD BEEN PLACED ON OR AFTER THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) ORDINANCE 1988 WITHOUT HIS PERMISSION.

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DECLINE IN CRIMES COMMITTED BY ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

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THERE IS NO INDICATION OF ANY OVERALL INCREASE IN CRIMES COMMITTED BY ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS OVER THE LAST YEAR, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON GEOFFREY BARNES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON POON CHI-FAI, MR BARNES SAID THAT WHILE THERE HAD BEEN SMALL INCREASES IN VIOLENT CRIMES, THERE HAD BEEN A 32 PER CENT DROP IN OVERALL REPORTED CRIME COMMITTED BY ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS, NOT INCLUDING SERIOUS IMMIGRATION OFFENCES.

"INCLUDING THE LATTER, THE DROP IS 34 PER CENT," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN REPORTS OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS BEING IMPORTED BY LOCAL CRIMINAL GANGS, OR ARRIVING OF THEIR OWN VOLITION TO COMMIT CRIMES, HE WAS NOT AWARE OF EXTENSIVE PUBLIC CONCERN ON THE ISSUE.

MR BARNES SAID THAT EXTENSIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE MEASURES INVOLVING SECURITY FORCES WERE EMPLOYED AGAINST ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION.

"THESE INCLUDE CONSTANT VIGILANCE ON THE LAND BORDER, ROUND THE CLOCK MARITIME PATROLS BY THE MARINE POLICE AND THE ROYAL NAVY, ROAD BLOCKS AND IDENTITY CARD CHECKS BY THE POLICE AND SPECIFIC OPERATIONAL ACTION BY THE POLICE, IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT AND LABOUR DEPARTMENT AGAINST THE EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITHOUT IDENTITY CARDS.

"IN ADDITION, CLOSE LIAISON IS MAINTAINED BY THE POLICE WITH THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN CHINA," HE SAID.

NOTING THAT HE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE ACTION CURRENTLY BEING TAKEN, MR BARNES SAID THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT THESE MEASURES HAD BEEN EFFECTIVE IN THE PAST YEAR.

"DURING 1988, NEARLY 21,000 ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WERE CAUGHT EITHER ENTERING THE TERRITORY OR SUBSEQUENTLY, AND IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS OF THE YEAR THE MONTHLY AVERAGE OF SUCH ARRESTS, AT 1,200, REPRESENTED A 50 PER CENT DECLINE OVER THE SAME PERIOD IN 1987.

"ANOTHER INDICATOR IS THE AVERAGE DAILY ARREST FIGURE WHICH SHOWS A DROP FROM 104 A DAY IN APRIL 1988 TO 29 A DAY SO FAR THIS YEAR," HE SAID.

COMBINED WITH THE OVERALL DROP IN THE CRIME FIGURES AND THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO RELAXATION OF EFFORT OR DEPLOYMENT BY THE SECURITY FORCES, MR BARNES SAID THERE WAS NO REASON TO SUPPOSE THAT THERE WAS ANY PARTICULAR DEFICIENCY IN THE MEASURES EMPLOYED BY THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AGAINST ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION OR THE CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

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LEGAL AID APPLICANTS MUST SATISFY MEANS TEST

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LEGAL AID IS GRANTED IF THE APPLICANT SATISFIES THE MEANS TEST AND CAN SHOW THAT HE HAS REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR BRINGING, CONTINUING OR DEFENDING PROCEEDINGS.

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION, THE HON ELAINE CHUNG, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON SELINA CHOW.

MRS CHOW HAD ASKED WHETHER THE CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES ADOPTED IN THE GRANTING OF LEGAL AID WOULD BE REVIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF THE COMMENTS MADE BY A JUDGE IN A RECENT CASE IN THE HIGH COURT.

MISS CHUNG SAID THE CRITERIA FOR GRANTING LEGAL AID WERE CONTAINED IN THE LEGAL AID ORDINANCE.

"IN THE CASE TO WHICH MRS CHOW HAS REFERRED, THE APPLICANT MADE A STATUTORY DECLARATION THAT HE HAD BEEN DISMISSED FROM HIS EMPLOYMENT AS A BANK CLERK AND WAS, AT THE TIME OF MAKING THE APPLICATION, UNEMPLOYED," MISS CHUNG SAID.

"ON THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE AS TO HIS ACTUAL AND ANTICIPATED INCOME AND COMMITMENTS HE SATISFIED THE MEANS TEST," SHE ADDED.

MISS CHUNG SAID AS REGARDS THE MERITS OF THE CASE, THE DECISION BY A LEGAL AID OFFICER TO DETERMINE IF THERE WERE REASONABLE GROUNDS WAS A MATTER OF PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT SUBJECT TO APPEAL IN THE EVENT OF REFUSAL.

THAT JUDGEMENT WAS OFTEN SUPPORTED BY AN OPINION OF COUNSEL IN PRIVATE PRACTICE.

SHE NOTED THAT IN THE PRESENT CASE, IT WAS THE OPINION OF COUNSEL THAT THE APPLICANT HAD A DEFENCE TO THE PROCEEDINGS BROUGHT AGAINST HIM. AND THE FACT THAT HE HAD SUSTAINED A LOSS IN THE FUTURES MARKET WAS NOT A GROUND FOR REFUSAL OF LEGAL AID IN THE LIGHT OF THE PROPOSED DEFENCE.

"THE ADMINISTRATION DOES NOT CONSIDER THAT THERE IS A NEED TO REVIEW THE CRITERIA FOR THE GRANT OF LEGAL AID IN THE LIGHT OF THIS PARTICULAR CASE," MISS CHUNG SAID.

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ANTI-TRIAD ACTION A POLICE RESPONSIBILITY

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IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE TO TRANSFER TO THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (ICAC) THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANTI-TRIAD LAW ENFORCEMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON GEOFFREY BARNES, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON ELSIE TU, MR BARNES SAID HE HAD CONSULTED THE ICAC COMMISSIONER ABOUT THE MATTER AND THE COMMISSIONER SHARED THIS VIEW.

"PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTION AGAINST TRIADS HAS ALWAYS RESTED WITH THE POLICE," HE SAID.

MR BARNES SAID THE TRIAD PROBLEM WAS ONE OF LAW AND ORDER AND OF ORGANISED CRIME; AND THE APPROPRIATE BODY TO DEAL WITH THESE MATTERS WAS THE ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE.

THE STRUCTURE, TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT OF THE POLICE HAD BEEN CONSTANTLY EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS TO ENSURE THAT IT REMAINED EFFECTIVE FOR THIS PURPOSE; HE SAID.

MR BARNES POINTED OUT THAT THE ICAC WAS AN INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION OUTSIDE THE CIVIL SERVICE.

IT WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1974 SPECIFICALLY TO FIGHT CORRUPTION AND OPERATED UNDER THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION ORDINANCE, THE PREVENTION OF BRIBERY ORDINANCE AND THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES ORDINANCE.

"IN THE COURSE OF ITS INVESTIGATIONS THE ICAC BRINGS TO COURT OFFENDERS WHO MAY ALSO BE INVOLVED IN TRIAD ACTIVITIES, BUT THESE ONLY FEATURE IN THE ICAC CASES AS A RESULT OF SUSPECTED OFFENCES UNDER ONE OR MORE OF THE THREE ICAC ORDINANCES," HE SAID.

"IN OTHER WORDS, ICAC CASES ARE CORRUPTION BASED AND THE TRIAD INVOLVEMENT, AND POSSIBLE OFFENCES UNDER THE SOCIETIES ORDINANCE AND OTHER LAWS, ARE INCIDENTAL TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF INQUIRIES.

"INDEED THE MAJORITY OF ICAC CASES DO NOT HAVE ANY APPARENT TRIAD INVOLVEMENT," HE SAID.

MR BARNES NOTED THAT THERE WAS CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE ICAC AND THE POLICE IN ANTI-TRIAD WORK IN AREAS NOT INVOLVING CORRUPTION OFFENCES.

BUT FOR THE ICAC ITSELF TO TAKE ON ALL ANTI-TRIAD INVESTIGATIONS WOULD MEAN THE TRANSFER FROM THE POLICE TO THE ICAC OF A VERY EXTENSIVE AREA OF LAW ENFORCEMENT WHICH WOULD HAVE NO DIRECT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OBJECTIVES AND WORK OF THE COMMISSION, HE SAID.

/"THIS WOULD

"THIS WOULD RESULT IN A DILUTION OF ANTI-CORRUPTION WORK WHICH WOULD NOT BE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST OR IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE ICAC.

"IT WOULD ALSO CUT ACROSS THE WORK OF THE POLICE TO AN EXTENT WHICH WOULD BE DAMAGING TO BOTH THE POLICE FORCE AND THE ICAC," MR BARNES SAID.

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CODE OF PRACTICE FOR REMOTE CONTROLLED GATES PLANNED
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THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO PRODUCE A CODE OF PRACTICE TO COVER THE SAFE OPERATION OF ELECTRICALLY OPERATED REMOTE CONTROL SLIDE GATES.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON MIRIAM LAU.

"AT THE SAME TIME, WE WILL ALSO BE LOOKING AT HOW BEST TO LEGISLATE TO ENFORCE SAFETY IN THIS FIELD," MR BARNES SAID.

RECORDS SHOWED THAT THERE WERE TWO INCIDENTS INVOLVING INJURIES CAUSED BY THESE GATES OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS.

MR BARNES SAID THERE WAS AT PRESENT NO LEGISLATION CONTROLLING THE INSTALLATION OR USE OF SUCH GATES OR REQUIRING THE USE OF SAFETY DEVICES.

THE GATES COULD BE MADE RELATIVELY SAFE BY ADDING ONE OF A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT DEVICES ALREADY ON THE MARKET, HE ADDED.

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NO APPROACH TO BRITAIN ON FLAG
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THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT WILL NOT APPROACH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WITH A VIEW TO ENSURING THAT NO OFFICIAL FLAG UNDER THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT'S CONTROL IS FLOWN AT HALF MAST IN HONG KONG ON FRIDAY (FEBRUARY 24) TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PASSING OF EMPEROR HIROHITO OF JAPAN.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS INFORMED OF THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION, THE HON ELAINE CHUNG, WHEN SHE ANSWERED A QUESTION ON THE SUBJECT FROM THE HON JAMES MCGREGOR.

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FUTURE OF HMS TAMAR NOT YET DECIDED

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A DECISION ON THE FUTURE OF HMS TAMAR HAS NOT YET BEEN TAKEN.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON RONALD ARCULLI.

"OBVIOUSLY HMS TAMAR HAS A SIGNIFICANT BEARING ON THE RECLAMATION PROPOSALS AND THIS IS BEING ADDRESSED IN THE PRESENT COMPREHENSIVE FEASIBILITY STUDY INTO THE CENTRAL - WAN CHAI RECLAMATION," MR BARNES SAID.

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO ELECTION FUNDS NOT RESTRICTED

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO INTENTION OF RESTRICTING FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO ELECTION FUNDS BUT THERE IS A POLICY TO RESTRICT THE AMOUNT EACH CANDIDATE MAY SPEND ON CAMPAIGNING, THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON RONALD CHOW, MR LIAO SAID THAT LIMITS ON ELECTION EXPENSES WERE PRESCRIBED BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL UNDER THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES ORDINANCE.

THE RESTRICTION WAS TO REMOVE ANY UNDUE DISADVANTAGE FOR LESS WELL OFF INDIVIDUALS IN STANDING FOR ELECTION, HE EXPLAINED.

MR LIAO ALSO CONFIRMED THAT IN LINE WITH THE POLICY OF KEEPING HONG KONG'S TAXATION SYSTEM AS SIMPLE AS POSSIBLE, THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT PREPARED TO GRANT TAX EXEMPTION FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO ELECTION FUNDS.

HE NOTED THAT AT PRESENT TAX DEDUCTIONS WERE ALLOWED ONLY FOR EXPENSES INCURRED IN DERIVING ASSESSABLE INCOME AND FOR DONATIONS TO CHARITIES.

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CHANGING TRADE PATTERN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

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THE CHANGING PATTERN OF HONG KONG'S TRADE WAS ONE OF THE FACTORS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT NOT ONLY IN RESPECT OF TRADE PROMOTION BUT IN OTHER FIELDS SUCH AS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL PLANNING, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON MARTIN BARROW, MR JACOBS SAID THE EXISTING LEVEL OF RE-EXPORT TRADE DID NOT HAVE ANY MORE SPECIFIC IMPLICATIONS FOR HONG KONG'S BASIC TRADE POLICY.

"WE REMAIN FIRMLY COMMITTED TO FREE TRADE AND TO THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM," HE SAID.

MR JACOBS SAID THAT WITH REGARD TO SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RE-EXPORT TRADE BY EXPANDING THE ROLE OF THE TRADE AND INDUSTRY BRANCH, THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRADE PROMOTION RESTED WITH THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, ALTHOUGH THERE WAS INPUT FROM THE TRADE AND INDUSTRY BRANCH.

"THE BRANCH WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE GENERALLY, AND THIS INCLUDES THE RE-EXPORT TRADE," HE SAID.

IN HIS QUESTION, MR BARROW NOTED THAT THE VALUE OF RE-EXPORTS EXCEEDED THAT OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS LAST YEAR, AND ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT HAD CONSIDERED THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS DEVELOPMENT IN FORMULATING LONG TERM TRADE POLICY.

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APPEAL TRIBUNAL MAY GO PUBLIC

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THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING AMENDING THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE SO THAT THE APPEAL TRIBUNAL MAY ORDER THE PUBLICATION OF ITS DELIBERATIONS AND HOLD INQUIRIES IN PUBLIC IF SUCH ACTIONS ARE WARRANTED.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS INFORMED OF THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON CHENG HON-KWAN, MR BARNES SAID THE APPEAL TRIBUNAL UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE NOW DID NOT MEET IN PUBLIC AND ITS DELIBERATIONS WERE LIKEWISE NOT PUBLICLY DISCLOSED AS IT WAS CONVENED TO CONSIDER APPEALS BY PRIVATE PERSONS.

BUT IT RECOGNISED THAT SOME OF ITS DECISIONS MIGHT BE OF INTEREST TO THE PUBLIC, HE ADDED.

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ALTERNATIVES TO OATHS BY JP'S BEING CONSIDERED

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THE ADMINISTRATION IS AT PRESENT CONSIDERING THE PROVISION OF ALTERNATIVES TO THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE AND THE JUDICIAL OATH SO THAT JUSTICES OF THE PEACE MAY CHOOSE TO PLEDGE TO SERVE THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG.

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION, THE HON ELAINE CHUNG, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON HUI YIN-FAT.

MISS CHUNG SAID IT WAS HOPED THAT A PROPOSAL ON THIS WOULD BE PRESENTED TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

UNDER THE OATHS AND DECLARATIONS ORDINANCE, A JUSTICE OF THE PEACE WAS REQUIRED TO TAKE THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE AND THE JUDICIAL OATH AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER APPOINTMENT, SHE SAID.

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NOISY SHIPYARDS TO BE RELOCATED

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THE SHIPYARDS WHICH HAVE BEEN THE SOURCE OF NOISE NUISANCE TO RESIDENTIAL ESTATES ALONG THE TSING YI NORTH SHORE WILL BE MOVED FURTHER AWAY FROM THE ESTATES IN 1992-93.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS INFORMED OF THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON DANIEL LAM, MR BARNES POINTED OUT THAT MOST OF THE SHIPYARDS AT TSING YI HAD MOVED FROM CHEUNG SHA WAN OVER 20 YEARS AGO.

"PREVIOUSLY THEY WERE LARGELY INVOLVED IN BUILDING AND REPAIRING WOODEN JUNKS, THE NOISE LEVEL OF WHICH WAS NOT TOO SERIOUS," HE SAID.

"HOWEVER, DUE TO THE DECLINE IN THE TRADITIONAL SHIPBUILDING BUSINESS, THESE SHIPYARDS HAVE INCREASINGLY TURNED TO REPAIRING LIGHTERS WHICH INVOLVE INTENSE HAMMERING OF METAL HULLS, THUS CREATING A NOISE NUISANCE.

"OF THE 30 ODD SHIPYARDS THERE, ALL BUT THREE ARE ON SHORT-TERM TENANCIES.

"ALTHOUGH IT IS POSSIBLE TO TERMINATE THESE TENANCIES WHEN THEIR TERMS ARE UP, THEIR HISTORY IS COMPLEX, AND WE CONSIDER THAT IN ALL FAIRNESS, THEY SHOULD ONLY BE CANCELLED WHEN ALTERNATIVE SITES ARE AVAILABLE."

/MR BARNES

MR BARNES SAID BEFORE RELOCATION COULD TAKE PLACE, SOME RECLAMATION WORK AND AN ACCESS ROAD WOULD HAVE TO BE COMPLETED FIRST.

IT WAS PLANNED TO ADVANCE THE UNDERTAKING OF THESE WORKS TO MARCH 1991 FOR COMPLETION IN SEPTEMBER 1992.

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ANNOUNCED INTENTION TO RELOCATE OIL DEPOTS
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IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S ANNOUNCED INTENTION THAT IT WILL RELOCATE OIL DEPOTS AWAY FROM THE RESIDENTIAL AREAS IN NORTHEAST TSING YI TO THE SOUTH AND WEST OF THE ISLAND OR ELSEWHERE WHICH IS SEPARATED FROM RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS BY A MOUNTAIN RIDGE, WHEN THE OPPORTUNITY ARISES.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON PEGGY LAM.

"WE HAVE IN HAND VARIOUS PLANS IN THIS REGARD," MR BARNES SAID.

MR BARNES ALSO POINTED OUT THAT MEASURES TO PREVENT AND DEAL WITH GAS LEAKAGE ACCIDENTS WERE REGULARLY REVIEWED AND IMPROVEMENTS MADE.

"IN ADDITION, THE TSING YI HAZARD REASSESSMENT STUDY WILL SOON BE COMPLETED.

"IT WILL SUGGEST WHAT FURTHER MEASURES NEED TO BE TAKEN TO AFFORD GREATER PROTECTION TO LIFE AND PROPERTY," HE SAID.

REFERRING TO THE INCIDENT THAT OCCURRED AT THE HONG KONG OIL CO.LTD. DEPOT AT TSING YI ON FEBRUARY 11, MR BARNES SAID: "OUR RESEARCH INTO THE RECORDS OF THE PAST FIVE YEARS HAS NOT REVEALED ANY SIMILAR INCIDENTS, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE HAD RECORDS OF TWO OTHER INCIDENTS INVOLVING DAMAGE BY FIRE."

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ONE BILL PASSED
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THE SUPREME COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 WAS PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE INSURANCE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989 WAS INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS. DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

THE COUNCIL ALSO PASSED THREE MOTIONS MOVED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT UNDER THE FIXED PENALTY (CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS) ORDINANCE, THE FIXED PENALTY (TRAFFIC CONTRAVENTIONS) ORDINANCE AND THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE.

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INCREASE IN SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS IN APRIL

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RECIPIENTS OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE (PA) AND SPECIAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE WILL GET AN 11 PER CENT INCREASE IN PAYMENT EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 1, A SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"THE ADJUSTMENT OF THE BASIC PA RATES IS AIMED AT RESTORING THE PURCHASING POWER OF PA PAYMENT," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"THE LAST REVISION BY 10 PER CENT UPWARDS WAS MADE IN APRIL LAST YEAR."

FOLLOWING THE REVISION, THE BASIC PA RATES FOR A SINGLE PERSON WILL BE RAISED TO \$620 FROM \$560 PER MONTH.

THE NEW PA RATE FOR A THREE-MEMBER FAMILY WILL BE INCREASED TO \$1,385 FROM \$1,250, A FOUR-MEMBER FAMILY TO \$1,840 FROM \$1,660, AND A FIVE-MEMBER FAMILY TO \$2,285 FROM \$2,060.

THE ALLOWANCE FOR EACH ADDITIONAL FAMILY MEMBER THEREAFTER WILL BE INCREASED FROM \$400 TO \$445.

THE NEW RATE FOR OLD AGE SUPPLEMENT FOR A PA RECIPIENT AGED 60-69 AND WHO IS NOT IN RECEIPT OF AN OLD AGE ALLOWANCE WILL BE INCREASED TO \$310 FROM \$280 PER MONTH.

THE NEW RATE FOR A RECIPIENT AGED 70 OR ABOVE AND IS NOT IN RECEIPT OF AN OLD AGE ALLOWANCE WILL BE INCREASED TO \$355 FROM \$320.

THE NEW RATE FOR DISABILITY SUPPLEMENT FOR A PARTIALLY DISABLED PA RECIPIENT WILL BE \$310 PER MONTH INSTEAD OF \$280.

THE EXISTING LONG-TERM SUPPLEMENT IS \$710 PER MONTH FOR A SINGLE PERSON, \$1,420 FOR A TWO TO FOUR MEMBERS FAMILY AND \$2,130 FOR A FAMILY OF FIVE OR MORE MEMBERS.

THE NEW RATE FOR A SINGLE PERSON WILL BE \$790, FOR A TWO TO FOUR MEMBERS FAMILY \$1,580, AND FOR A FAMILY OF FIVE OR MORE \$2,370.

THE MEAL ALLOWANCE FOR STUDENTS ATTENDING FULL-DAY SCHOOLS AND REQUIRING TO TAKE LUNCH AWAY FROM HOME WILL ALSO BE ADJUSTED TO \$106 FROM THE EXISTING \$96 PER MONTH.

UNDER THE SPECIAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE SCHEME, THE EXISTING NORMAL RATE FOR OLD AGE ALLOWANCE FOR THE 65-69 AGE GROUP IS \$280. THE NEW RATE WILL BE \$310 PER MONTH.

CORRESPONDINGLY, THE HIGHER RATE FOR THOSE AGED 70 AND ABOVE WILL BE REVISED TO \$355 FROM \$320.

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THE NEW NORMAL RATE FOR DISABILITY ALLOWANCE WILL BE \$620 INSTEAD OF THE EXISTING \$560. THE HIGHER RATE WILL BE INCREASED TO \$1,240 FROM \$1,120.

THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT THE ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE AROSE FROM THE REVISION WOULD BE \$279.3 MILLION.

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GATT REMAINS VITAL TO WORLD TRADE

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THE FUTURE OF THE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE AND THE PROSPECT OF A MORE UNIFIED EUROPEAN MARKET IN 1992 ARE OF PRIME IMPORTANCE TO HONG KONG BUSINESSMEN, THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR HAMISH MACLEOD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR MACLEOD WAS ADDRESSING A LUNCHEON OF THE HONG KONG EXPORTERS' ASSOCIATION AT A LOCAL HOTEL.

HE REJECTED CLAIMS THAT "GATT IS DEAD", SAYING, "MOST OF THOSE INVOLVED IN THE GATT DON'T BELIEVE THIS IS TRUE".

"ALTHOUGH THE URUGUAY ROUND APPEARED TO HAVE RUN INTO DIFFICULTIES DURING TALKS IN MONTREAL IN DECEMBER, IN FACT, CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE ON A WIDE RANGE OF TOPICS," HE SAID.

"MORE COULD HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED IN NEGOTIATIONS ON TEXTILES, SAFEGUARDS AND, DEBATABLELY INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE BREAKDOWN OVER AGRICULTURE."

THE POSITION THAT NO PROGRESS COULD BE MADE IN ANY SUBJECT UNLESS PROGRESS WAS MADE IN ALL, ONE PUT PARTICULARLY STRONGLY BY THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY IN THE PAST, HAD BEEN SHOWN TO BE WRONG, MR MACLEOD SAID.

HE CAUTIONED THAT THERE WERE SHADOWS OVER THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM - INCLUDING EUROPE IN 1992, THE UNITED STATES/CANADA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT AND OTHER MOVES TOWARDS REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROUPINGS.

THERE WAS NO SHORTAGE OF ADVOCATES OF ALTERNATIVE MODELS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE, HE SAID.

"THOSE OUTSIDE FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS OR CUSTOMS UNIONS ARE WORSE OFF THAN THOSE INSIDE.

/"THE DANGER

"THE DANGER OF TEXTILES PROTECTIONISM IN THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN, DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE U.S. INDUSTRY IS DOING WELL, AND THE ESTIMATED COST TO U.S. CONSUMERS OF EXISTING QUOTAS IS RUNNING AT US\$20 BILLION A YEAR."

THERE WAS NOTHING INHERENTLY OBJECTIONABLE ABOUT THE EEC CARRYING UNION TO ITS LOGICAL CONCLUSION - ABOLITION OF ALL INTERNAL BARRIERS WAS PROVIDED FOR IN THE TREATY OF ROME IN 1957. ON THE FACE OF IT THERE SHOULD BE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR HONG KONG.

BUT, SAID MR MACLEOD, CONCERN HAD ARISEN PARTLY BECAUSE OF TALK BY THE EEC OF RECIPROCITY.

FURTHER CONCERN AROSE OVER SUSPICIONS BY SOME THAT MEMBER STATES MIGHT ABUSE THE NEW SET-UP BY EMPLOYING METHODS SUCH AS CHANGING STANDARDS OR RULES WITHOUT ADEQUATE NOTICE.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE USE OF ANTI-DUMPING ACTIONS HAD GIVEN RISE TO MUCH CONCERN AND THESE WOULD BE FOLLOWED UP, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF HONG KONG'S NEWLY-APPOINTED ADVISERS.

THE MAIN INSTITUTION IN PREVENTING ANY ABUSES OF RECIPROCITY, OR OF ANTI-DUMPING RULES, WAS, OF COURSE, THE GATT.

MR MACLEOD SAID HE DID NOT THINK THAT A CRISIS POINT HAD YET BEEN REACHED IN RELATION TO THE FUTURE OF THE GATT. SOME FLEXIBILITY HAD BEEN SHOWN BY THE EEC AND THE U.S. IN RELATION TO AGRICULTURE.

"IT IS WORTH REMINDING OURSELVES THAT GATT IS SUBSCRIBED TO BY OVER 90 GOVERNMENTS ACCOUNTING TOGETHER FOR MORE THAN FOUR-FIFTHS OF WORLD TRADE," HE SAID.

"WHEN IT COMES TO THE CRUNCH, THE VAST MAJORITY DO NOT WANT TO SEE THE GATT FAIL."

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1991 CENSUS PRE-TEST THIS WEEK

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THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT WILL CONDUCT A PRE-TEST THIS WEEK TO TEST THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF A CENSUS OPERATION FOR PLANNING THE CENSUS IN MARCH 1991.

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAS DECIDED THAT A POPULATION CENSUS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED IN MARCH 1991 TO OBTAIN UP-TO-DATE BENCHMARK INFORMATION ON THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION.

SUCH INFORMATION IS VITAL FOR GOVERNMENT PLANNING, PARTICULARLY IN SUCH AREAS AS HOUSING, EDUCATION, TRANSPORT, MEDICAL AND HEALTH, AND SOCIAL SERVICES. IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR BUSINESS AND RESEARCH PURPOSES.

THE PRE-TEST WILL COVER A SAMPLE OF 12,000 HOUSEHOLDS. EACH PERSON IN THE SELECTED HOUSEHOLDS WILL BE ASKED TO PROVIDE BASIC INFORMATION, SUCH AS AGE, SEX AND RELATIONSHIP TO HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD.

IN ADDITION, ONE-SEVENTH OF THESE HOUSEHOLDS HAVE BEEN SELECTED FOR DETAILED ENUMERATION ON QUESTIONS CONCERNING HOUSEHOLD, SUCH AS HOUSING AND RENT, AND QUESTIONS CONCERNING EACH MEMBER, SUCH AS MARITAL STATUS, EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, PLACE OF BIRTH AND NATIONALITY, DURATION OF RESIDENCE, LABOUR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS AND INCOME.

"ENUMERATORS, WHO WILL IDENTIFY THEMSELVES WITH AN ENUMERATOR IDENTITY CARD ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT, WILL VISIT THE SAMPLED HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN FEBRUARY 24 AND MARCH 5," A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID.

ONE OBJECTIVE OF THE PRE-TEST IS TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF USING SELF-ENUMERATION IN COLLECTING BASIC INFORMATION. QUESTIONNAIRES WILL BE SENT TO SOME SAMPLED HOUSEHOLDS BEFORE THE PRE-TEST TO LET THEM FILL IN THE FORMS THEMSELVES. THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES WILL BE COLLECTED BY THE ENUMERATORS.

HOUSEHOLDS ARE ADVISED TO ASK THE ENUMERATORS TO PRODUCE THEIR ENUMERATOR IDENTITY CARD FOR INSPECTION BEFORE ADMITTING THEM INTO THEIR HOME.

THE SPOKESMAN URGED ALL SAMPLED HOUSEHOLDS TO CO-OPERATE AND PARTICIPATE IN THE PRE-TEST BY PROVIDING FULL AND ACCURATE INFORMATION.

HE ASSURED THE PUBLIC THAT THE INFORMATION THEY SUPPLY WILL BE TREATED AS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

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MEDICAL STAFF HONOURED WITH LONG SERVICE CERTIFICATES

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A TOTAL OF 127 STAFF MEMBERS OF THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT WERE PRESENTED WITH MERITORIOUS SERVICE CERTIFICATES THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON FOR THEIR DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE DEPARTMENT.

THEY INCLUDED DOCTORS, NURSES, PARAMEDICAL STAFF, WORKERS, WARD ATTENDANTS AND ELECTRICAL TECHNICIANS.

UNDER THE MERITORIOUS SERVICE CERTIFICATE SCHEME, STAFF WITH SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE WITHIN THE PAST 30 YEARS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THE AWARD.

/SINCE THE

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SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SCHEME IN 1986, A TOTAL OF 614 STAFF HAD RECEIVED THE AWARD.

THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, DR S.H. LEE, AND OTHER DIRECTORATE STAFF TODAY PRESENTED THE CERTIFICATES AT A CEREMONY HELD AT THE KWAI CHUNG HOSPITAL ASSEMBLY HALL.

IN HIS SPEECH, DR LEE PRAISED THE RECIPIENTS FOR THEIR DEDICATED SERVICE AND HARD WORK IN THE PAST 30 YEARS.

THE DEPARTMENT HAD CONTINUED TO EXPAND IN THE PAST 10 YEARS, HE SAID.

DURING THIS PERIOD, THE TOTAL NUMBER OF BEDS IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS HAD INCREASED FROM 9,300 IN 1978 TO 12,700 IN 1988, WHILE THE ESTABLISHMENT HAD ALSO INCREASED FROM 15,945 STAFF MEMBERS TO 27,216.

"PEOPLE HERE ARE, IN GENERAL, ENJOYING GOOD HEALTH WHICH IS COMPARABLE TO WORLD STANDARDS AS REFLECTED BY THE HEALTH INDEX OF THE COMMUNITY," DR LEE SAID.

DURING THE PAST 10 YEARS, THE CRUDE DEATH RATE HAD DROPPED FROM 4.9 TO 4.8 PER THOUSAND POPULATION AND THE INFANT MORTALITY RATE HAD COME DOWN FROM 11.8 TO 7.6 PER THOUSAND LIVE BIRTHS.

AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY IS NOW 74.2 FOR MALES AND 79.7 FOR FEMALES.

"TO FURTHER IMPROVE THE STANDARD IN MEDICAL SERVICE AND TO ENSURE BETTER USE OF OUR MANPOWER AND RESOURCES, THE DEPARTMENT WILL BE RE-ORGANISED BEGINNING APRIL 1," DR LEE SAID.

TWO NEW DEPARTMENTS - THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE HOSPITAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT - WILL BE SET UP AS A RESULT.

THE DIRECTOR FIRMLY BELIEVED THAT THE RE-ORGANISATION WILL FURTHER IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFICACY OF THE EXISTING SERVICE.

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NEW CHILDREN AND YOUTH CENTRE ON AP LEI CHAU

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THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) CALLED ON YOUNG PEOPLE ON AP LEI CHAU IN SOUTHERN DISTRICT TO MAKE FULL USE OF THE YOUTH FACILITIES THERE.

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING OF THE LEI TUNG CHILDREN AND YOUTH CENTRE OF THE TUNG WAH GROUP OF HOSPITALS, MRS WONG ALSO SUGGESTED PARENTS TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUTH CENTRES SO THAT WORKERS THERE COULD PLAN SERVICES TO MEET THEIR NEEDS.

MRS WONG NOTED THAT YOUTH FACILITIES, SUCH AS CHILDREN AND YOUTH CENTRES, PROVIDED ANOTHER PLACE OF LEARNING OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL AND THE FAMILY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED BETWEEN SIX AND 24.

"THE ACTIVITIES AT THESE CENTRES HELP YOUNG PEOPLE TO DEVELOP THEIR SOCIAL SKILLS, BUILD UP THEIR PERSONAL INTEGRITY, GROOM THEIR LEADERSHIP AND PROMOTE THEIR UNDERSTANDING AND CARE FOR THE COMMUNITY.

"WORKERS AT THESE CENTRES SHOULD PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO ORGANISE COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS BY THEMSELVES IN A BID TO GROOM YOUNG LEADERS FOR OUR COMMUNITY," SHE SAID.

THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE LEI TUNG CHILDREN AND YOUTH CENTRE HAS INCREASED TO OVER 1,700 SINCE IT STARTED OPERATION IN MAY LAST YEAR.

APART FROM THIS CENTRE, THERE ARE TWO OTHER CHILDREN'S CENTRES AND THREE YOUTH CENTRES SERVING THE 65,000 POPULATION ON AP LEI CHAU.

MRS WONG ALSO COMMENDED THE TUNG WAH GROUP OF HOSPITALS FOR PROVIDING A WIDE RANGE OF MEDICAL, EDUCATIONAL AND WELFARE SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY.

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HSU TAKES OVER AS NEW REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR NT

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MR ADOLF HSU WILL TAKE OVER FROM MR MICHAEL SUEN AS THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

MR HSU, AGED 50, JOINED THE CIVIL SERVICE IN 1958 AND WAS APPOINTED TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE GRADE IN 1968.

HE HAS HELD VARIOUS POSTS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE BRANCH, THE FORMER NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION, ADMINISTRATION BRANCH, AND THE GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT.

/MORE RECENTLY

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MORE RECENTLY HE HAS SERVED AS DISTRICT COMMISSIONER (TSUEN WAN), CNTA (1983-84); DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION (1985-87); AND COMMISSIONER, SURVEY OFFICE (1987). HE BECAME DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE IN DECEMBER 1987.

MR HSU WAS PROMOTED TO HIS PRESENT RANK OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER STAFF GRADE B1 IN DECEMBER LAST YEAR.

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CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS REMAIN AN IMPORTANT LINK

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THE CHAIRMAN OF THE LIVESTOCK WASTE DISPOSAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE, MR LEO KWAN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) CALLED ON CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO KEEP UP THEIR IMPORTANT WORK IN PROMOTING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND LIVESTOCK BREEDERS.

HE ALSO HOPED MEMBERS WOULD CONTINUE TO PUT FORWARD THEIR VIEWS ON THE DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS ON PRIVATE FARMS AND ON THE REVIEW OF RELATED REGULATIONS SO THAT THE LIVESTOCK WASTE CONTROL SCHEME COULD ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVE IN CONTRIBUTING TO A BETTER LIVING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

SPEAKING AT A SPRING RECEPTION HOSTED BY THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE, MR KWAN POINTED OUT THAT SINCE THE FORMATION OF THE LIVESTOCK WASTE DISPOSAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MORE THAN A YEAR AGO, THE COMMITTEE AND ITS SUB-GROUPS HAD HELD 27 MEETINGS AND CONDUCTED MORE THAN 10 VISITS.

"THERE WERE THREE VISITS TO GOVERNMENT FARMS IN TA KU LING, THREE VISITS TO PRIVATE FARMS RECOMMENDED FOR TAKING UP THE DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS AND FOUR VISITS TO THE SELECTED FARMS TO MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF THE DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS," HE NOTED.

MR KWAN WAS PLEASED TO SEE THAT COMMITTEE MEMBERS HAD ALWAYS BEEN ACTIVE IN PUTTING FORWARD THEIR VIEWS, AND AS A RESULT, A NUMBER OF ISSUES HAD BEEN SATISFACTORILY RESOLVED.

HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO ANOTHER YEAR OF USEFUL DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE, HE SAID.

THE GUESTS ATTENDING TODAY'S SPRING RECEPTION INCLUDED THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES (DESIGNATE), MR ADOLF HSU, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS LIVESTOCK BREEDING ORGANISATIONS.

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DB COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS LION ROCK TUNNEL TRAFFIC

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THE SHA TIN DISTRICT BOARD'S TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE WILL MEET ON FRIDAY (FEBRUARY 24) TO DISCUSS A NUMBER OF TRAFFIC ISSUES RELATING TO THE LION ROCK TUNNEL.

A DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER, THE REV FUNG CHI-WOOD, WILL ASK THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT TO CONSIDER EXTENDING THE BUS LANE ON LION ROCK TUNNEL ROAD TO TAI CHUNG KIU ROAD AND THAT ON HUNG MUI KUK ROAD TO LION ROCK TUNNEL ROAD, AND TO EXTEND THE OPERATING HOURS OF THE BUS LANES TO 10 AM.

MEMBERS WILL BE INVITED TO COMMENT ON A PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THE OPERATING PERIOD OF THE BUS LANE ON LION ROCK TUNNEL CORRIDOR TO COVER THE HOURS BETWEEN 4 PM AND 7 PM.

THEY WILL ALSO COMMENT ON A PROPOSAL PUT FORWARD BY DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS MR WONG HONG-CHUNG AND MR LAU KONG-WAH FOR THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TIDAL FLOW SCHEME AT THE LION ROCK TUNNEL.

ON THE PROVISION OF RAIL SERVICES, DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER MR WONG FUK-WAH WILL ASK WHY THE TRAIN SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION IS MUCH MORE FREQUENT THAN THAT PROVIDED BY THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION, WHICH NECESSARILY ENTAILS LONGER WAITING TIME ON THE PART OF PASSENGERS WHEN USING THE LATTER'S SERVICE.

ANOTHER MEMBER, MR LI PO-MING, WILL WANT TO KNOW THE PROGRESS OF THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT'S PLAN ON THE PROVISION OF OVERNIGHT OFF-DISTRICT TRANSPORT SERVICES FOR MA ON SHAN.

MR CHOY KAN-PUI WILL URGE THE AUTHORITIES CONCERNED TO EXTEND THE BUS SERVICE BETWEEN NEW TOWN PLAZA IN SHA TIN AND SAI KUNG MARKET TO WEEKDAYS TO BENEFIT RESIDENTS OF THE TWO DISTRICTS.

OTHER TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED INCLUDE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING FACILITIES AT THE JUNCTION OF CHE KUNG MIU ROAD AND HUNG MUI KUK ROAD; TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES IN CONNECTION WITH LEARNER DRIVERS' ACTIVITIES IN SHA TIN; AND THE FORMATION OF A WORKING GROUP ON TAXI ISSUES.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

THE SHA TIN DISTRICT BOARD'S TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE WILL HOLD A MEETING AT THE DISTRICT BOARD'S CONFERENCE ROOM ON THE SIXTH FLOOR, KCR HOUSE, SHA TIN ON FRIDAY (FEBRUARY 24).

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING WHICH WILL BEGIN AT 9.30 AM.

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FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION SERVICES ON DB COMMITTEE AGENDA
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MEMBERS OF THE WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT BOARD'S SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE WILL BE BRIEFED ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION SERVICES IN HONG KONG WHEN THEY MEET TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE COMMITTEE ON FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION OF THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE WILL ATTEND THE MEETING TO DISCUSS WITH MEMBERS ISSUES RELATING TO FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION SERVICES.

AT THE MEETING, MEMBERS WILL DISCUSS THE SETTING UP OF A WORKING GROUP ON UNISESSIONAL SCHOOLING IN THE DISTRICT'S PRIMARY SCHOOLS, AND THE PROCEDURES FOR VETTING APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDS SUBMITTED BY NON-SPECIFIED LOCAL ORGANISATIONS.

THEY WILL ALSO CONSIDER THE ALLOCATION OF ABOUT \$15,000 FOR PRINTING ADDITIONAL COPIES OF A DIRECTORY OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND SOCIAL SERVICES ORGANISATIONS IN THE DISTRICT.

OTHER ITEMS ON THE AGENDA INCLUDE REPORTS ON THE 1988-89 ELDERLY FESTIVAL IN THE DISTRICT, THE FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION DAY CAMP, AS WELL AS DOOR-TO-DOOR VISITS AND REGISTRATION FOR THE FEE REDUCTION SCHEME FOR THE ELDERLY IN THE DISTRICT.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING OF THE WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT BOARD'S SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE, WHICH WILL BEGIN AT 2.30 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT OFFICE, FOURTH FLOOR, SAN PO KONG GOVERNMENT OFFICES BUILDING, KING FUK STREET.

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DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON DB AGENDA

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THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT BOARD WILL DISCUSS THE TIN SHUI WAI/YUEN LONG DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (1988 EDITION) AT A MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE PUBLICATION, PREPARED BY THE TERRITORY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, GIVES A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 1988-89, PROJECTS IN PROGRESS AND PROJECTS SCHEDULED TO START IN 1989-90 IN YUEN LONG NEW TOWN, TIN SHUI WAI AND THE NORTHWEST NEW TERRITORIES.

MEMBERS WILL ALSO STUDY THE PROPOSED TIMETABLE OF DISTRICT BOARD MEETINGS FOR 1989-90.

A DECISION WILL BE MADE ON WHETHER TO RE-APPOINT SERVING DISTRICT BOARD COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN OR TO ELECT NEW CHAIRMEN.

A MEMBER WILL RAISE A QUESTION CONCERNING MEASURES TO IMPROVE POSTAL SERVICE IN YUEN LONG.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT BOARD MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE DB CONFERENCE ROOM, 13TH FLOOR, TAI KIU GOVERNMENT OFFICES BUILDING, 2 KIU LOK SQUARE, YUEN LONG. THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 9.30 AM.

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HOSPITAL AUTHORITY ON DB COMMITTEE AGENDA

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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH BOSHER, WILL TALK ABOUT THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY AT A MEETING OF THE CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICT BOARD'S PUBLIC OPINION AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE COMMITTEE WILL ALSO EXAMINE THE PROGRESS OF AN OPINION SURVEY ON MATTERS OF CONCERN IN THE DISTRICT.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING OF THE CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICT BOARD'S PUBLIC OPINION AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE TO BE HELD TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN ROOM 1416, HARBOUR BUILDING, 38 PIER ROAD, CENTRAL.

THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 4 PM.

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SURVEY ON YAU TSIM'S COMMUNITY NEEDS

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THE YAU TSIM DISTRICT BOARD'S COMMUNITY BUILDING COMMITTEE WILL DISCUSS THE ALLOCATION OF \$70,000 FOR CONDUCTING A SURVEY ON COMMUNITY NEEDS IN THE DISTRICT AT ITS MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE SURVEY WILL INCLUDE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESIDENTS AND THEIR OPINION ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE DISTRICT, SUCH AS THE ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE, SPORTS AND SOCIAL SERVICES.

MEMBERS WILL ALSO DISCUSS APPLICATIONS BY VARIOUS LOCAL ORGANISATIONS FOR FUNDS FOR ORGANISING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROJECTS.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING OF THE YAU TSIM DISTRICT BOARD'S COMMUNITY BUILDING COMMITTEE WHICH WILL BEGIN AT 2.30 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE YAU TSIM DISTRICT OFFICE, SECOND FLOOR, 490 NATHAN ROAD.

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CHILDREN VIE FOR SINGING HONOUR ON SATURDAY

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ABOUT 500 KWUN TONG CHILDREN WILL TAKE PART IN THE NINTH KWUN TONG CHILDREN SINGING CONTEST ON SATURDAY (FEBRUARY 25).

THE CONTEST IS ORGANISED BY THE KWUN TONG CHILDREN CHORUS, WITH THE AIM OF PROMOTING CHILDREN'S INTEREST IN SINGING AND DISCOVERING SINGING TALENTS IN THE DISTRICT. IT IS SPONSORED BY THE DISTRICT BOARD.

CHILDREN AGED BETWEEN EIGHT AND 13 WILL COMPETE IN THREE CATEGORIES SOLO, GROUP AND CHORUS.

THE CONTEST WILL BEGIN AT 1.30 PM AT THE SKH KEI LOK PRIMARY SCHOOL, LOK WAH ESTATE IN NGAU TAU KOK. ADMISSION IS FREE AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND.

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GRAND FEAST FOR THE ELDERLY IN TUEN MUN

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ABOUT 1,800 ELDERLY PEOPLE IN TUEN MUN DISTRICT WILL TAKE PART IN A GRAND FEAST AT A LOCAL RESTAURANT ON FRIDAY (FEBRUARY 24) TO CELEBRATE THE SPRING FESTIVAL.

THERE WILL BE A TALENT SHOW BY THE AGED AND SINGING PERFORMANCE DURING THE BANQUET, WHICH IS ORGANISED BY THE DISTRICT'S RESPECT FOR THE AGED ASSOCIATION AND SPONSORED BY THE DISTRICT BOARD.

EACH PARTICIPANT WILL RECEIVE A LAI-SEE PACKET WHILE THE OLDEST MAN AND WOMAN WILL EACH RECEIVE A GOLD MEDAL AS SOUVENIR.

OFFICIATING AT THE BANQUET WILL BE TUEN MUN DISTRICT OFFICER, MR JOHN WAN; LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR, MR LAU WONG-FAT; DISTRICT SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICER, MR STEPHEN LAM; THE REV HAU PO-WOON OF CHING CHUNG KOON MONASTERY; AND MANAGER OF YAN OI TONG COMMUNITY AND INDOOR SPORTS CENTRE, MR AU PING-HUNG.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT BANQUET FOR THE AGED TO BEGIN AT 6 PM ON FRIDAY (FEBRUARY 24) AT THE TUEN MUN PALACE RESTAURANT, 126 TUEN MUN HEUNG SZE WUI ROAD.

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MEASURES TO IMPROVE ROAD SAFETY IN YUEN LONG

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT TO IMPROVE ROAD SAFETY AT THE EASTERN JUNCTION OF KAM SHEUNG ROAD WITH KAM TIN ROAD, YUEN LONG, THE FOLLOWING RIGHT-TURN MOVEMENTS WILL BE BANNED FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (FEBRUARY 25) :

- * THE RIGHT-TURN FROM SHEUNG TSUEN CARPARK TO KAM TIN ROAD WESTBOUND; AND
- * THE RIGHT-TURN FROM KAM TIN ROAD EASTBOUND TO KAM SHEUNG ROAD SOUTHBOUND.

AFFECTED VEHICLES ARE ADVISED TO U-TURN AT SHEUNG TSUEN ROUNDABOUT WHICH IS ABOUT 130 METRES EAST OF THE KAM TIN ROAD/KAM SHEUNG ROAD JUNCTION.

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AT THE SAME TIME, YUEN LONG-BOUND KMB ROUTE 54 WILL ALSO BE DIVERTED VIA SHEUNG TSUEN ROUNDABOUT.

IN ADDITION, THE SPEED LIMIT ON KAM TIN ROAD BETWEEN A POINT ABOUT 220 METRES WEST OF ITS EASTERN JUNCTION WITH KAM SHEUNG ROAD AND A POINT ABOUT 740 METRES WEST OF THE SAME JUNCTION WILL BE REDUCED FROM 70 TO 50 KILOMETRES PER HOUR.

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TEMPORARY URBAN CLEARWAYS IN CENTRAL, SHEUNG WAN
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FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (FEBRUARY 24), SEVERAL ROAD SECTIONS IN CENTRAL DISTRICT AND SHEUNG WAN WILL BE DESIGNATED URBAN CLEARWAYS FOR ABOUT 10 MONTHS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF RUMSEY STREET FLYOVER, THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED.

THE FOLLOWING ROAD SECTIONS WILL BE MADE 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY URBAN CLEARWAYS:

- * THE SOUTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL BETWEEN GILMAN STREET AND WING WO STREET.
- * THE WESTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF WING WO STREET BETWEEN CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL AND DES VOEUX ROAD CENTRAL.
- * THE EASTBOUND CARRIAGEWAY OF CONNAUGHT ROAD WEST BETWEEN DES VOEUX ROAD WEST AND MORRISON STREET.

IN ADDITION, THE WESTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF HILLIER BETWEEN CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL AND DES VOEUX ROAD CENTRAL WILL BECOME A PEAK HOUR (7 AM - 10 AM AND 4 PM - 7 PM) DAILY URBAN CLEARWAY.

NO VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS WITHIN THE RESTRICTED AREAS.

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URBAN CLEARWAYS IN KWUN TONG, WONG CHUK HANG

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TWO SECTIONS OF HIP WO STREET IN KWUN TONG WILL BE DESIGNATED URBAN CLEARWAYS FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (FEBRUARY 25) FOR ABOUT THREE MONTHS FOR ROADWORKS, THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED.

THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF HIP WO STREET BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH MUT WAH STREET AND A POINT ABOUT 90 METRES SOUTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION WILL BE MADE AN URBAN CLEARWAY ROUND-THE-CLOCK.

IN ADDITION, THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF HIP WO STREET BETWEEN A POINT ABOUT 20 METRES SOUTH OF ITS JUNCTION WITH TUNG YAN STREET AND A POINT ABOUT 36 METRES SOUTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION WILL BECOME A PEAK HOUR (7 AM - 10 AM AND 4 PM - 7 PM) DAILY URBAN CLEARWAY.

NO VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS WITHIN THE RESTRICTED AREAS.

AT THE SAME TIME, IN WONG CHUK HANG, PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS ALONG THE EASTERN KERBSIDE OF NAM LONG SHAN ROAD FROM A POINT ABOUT 70 METRES SOUTH OF ITS JUNCTION WITH HEUNG YIP ROAD TO A POINT ABOUT 92 METRES SOUTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION BETWEEN 7 AM AND 7 PM DAILY.

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN WONG TAI SIN, YUEN LONG

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT THREE ROAD SECTIONS IN WONG TAI SIN WILL BE CLOSED BETWEEN 9 AM AND 1 PM ON SATURDAY (FEBRUARY 25) FOR HOLDING THE "NINE DRAGON RACE".

THE CLOSED SECTIONS WILL BE SHA TIN PASS ROAD BETWEEN TSZ WAN SHAN ROAD AND FEI NGO SHAN ROAD; JAT'S INCLINE BETWEEN FEI NGO SHAN ROAD AND NGAU CHI WAN STREET; AND FEI NGO SHAN ROAD BETWEEN AN UNNAMED PASS AND SHA TIN PASS ROAD.

MEANWHILE, FROM 10 AM ON THE SAME DAY (SATURDAY), ALL PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE FOLLOWING ROAD SECTIONS IN YUEN LONG:

* TONG YAN SAN TSUEN ROAD FROM A POINT ABOUT 220 METRES SOUTH OF ITS JUNCTION WITH CASTLE PEAK ROAD (PING SHAN); AND

* PING HONG LANE.

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