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WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 1993

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 1993

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DECLARATION OF WATER CONTROL ZONES

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL DECLARE THE EASTERN AND WESTERN FRINGES OF THE VICTORIA HARBOUR AS WATER CONTROL ZONES (WCZ) WITH EFFECT FROM JUNE 1.

THIS WILL MEAN THAT DISCHARGES INTO WATER WITHIN THESE TWO ZONES, KNOWN AS THE EASTERN BUFFER AND WESTERN BUFFER CONTROL ZONES, WILL BE SUBJECT TO CONTROL OF A LICENSING SCHEME OPERATED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT.

THE EASTERN BUFFER WCZ COVERS INLAND AND MARINE WATERS OFF CHAI WAN AND SHAU KEI WAN AND THE WESTERN BUFFER WCZ COVERS TSING YI, PART OF TSUEN WAN, SHAM TSENG, ABERDEEN AND AP LEI CHAU.

CONTROL ON NEW DISCHARGES IN THESE TWO NEW WCZ'S WILL TAKE EFFECT FROM JUNE 1, 1993.

THE CONTROL WILL BE EXTENDED TO EXISTING DISCHARGES FOR WHICH LICENCE APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BETWEEN JUNE 1 AND DECEMBER 1 THIS YEAR.

ALSO WITH EFFECT FROM JUNE 1, A SUPPLEMENTARY WCZ WILL BE ADDED TO THE EXISTING TOLO HARBOUR AND SOUTHERN WCZ'S RESPECTIVELY TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY IN WATER GATHERING AREAS IDENTIFIED UNDER THE WCZ FRAMEWORK.

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60 VIETNAMESE TO RETURN HOME UNDER ORDERLY
REPATRIATION PROGRAMME

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ABOUT 60 VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS SCREENED OUT AS NON-REFUGEES WILL RETURN TO VIETNAM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) ON THE 11TH FLIGHT UNDER THE ORDERLY REPATRIATION PROGRAMME, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

A TOTAL OF 513 NON-REFUGEES HAVE SO FAR BEEN RETURNED TO VIETNAM UNDER THE PROGRAMME.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

THE FOLLOWING ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO FACILITATE MEDIA COVERAGE:

A FIXED POSITION WILL BE SET UP ON THE AIRPORT TARMAC WHERE JOURNALISTS CAN WITNESS THE RETURNEES BOARDING THE PLANE TO VIETNAM.

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES WISHING TO MAKE USE OF THE FACILITY SHOULD ASSEMBLE AT THE AIRPORT PRESS ROOM IN THE ARRIVAL HALL NOT LATER THAN 8.15 AM. TELEPHOTO LENSES WILL BE NECESSARY.

EDITORS ARE REMINDED THAT THEIR REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS MUST BE ABLE TO PRODUCE PROOF THAT THEY ARE BONA FIDE JOURNALISTS BEFORE THEY ARE ALLOWED TO USE THE FACILITY.

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CONTROLS ON TEXTILES TRANSHIPMENT TIGHTENED

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CARRIERS AND FORWARDERS ENGAGED IN TEXTILES TRANSHIPMENT BUSINESS ARE URGED TO JOIN THE TEXTILES TRADER REGISTRATION SCHEME (TTRS) NEWLY INTRODUCED BY THE TRADE DEPARTMENT.

THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF TRADE, MR KEVIN HO, TOLD A HONG KONG EXPORTERS' ASSOCIATION LUNCHEON TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE TRANSHIPMENT CARGO EXEMPTION SCHEME WOULD NO LONGER APPLY TO TEXTILES GOODS STARTING FROM JULY 1 THIS YEAR.

"WITH THE CHANGING TRADING PATTERN IN TEXTILES PRODUCTS, AND IN ORDER TO PROTECT OUR GOOD REPUTATION AND THE INTEGRITY OF HONG KONG'S CONTROL REGIME, WE MUST BE SEEN TO BE DOING OUR BEST TO SAFEGUARD OUR ORIGIN RULES AND OUR EXPORT QUOTAS.

"INSTEAD OF USING THE EXEMPTION SCHEME, CARRIERS AND FORWARDERS HANDLING TEXTILES THROUGH CARGO BUSINESS SHOULD REGISTER UNDER TTRS, AND SUBMIT TRANSHIPMENT NOTIFICATIONS TO COVER EACH CONSIGNMENT THAT THEY HANDLE," MR HO SAID.

HE ADMITTED THAT THE NEW SCHEME DEMANDED MORE WORK FOR CARRIERS AND FORWARDERS THAN THEY WERE REQUIRED TO PERFORM UNDER THE CURRENT EXEMPTION SCHEME.

"HOWEVER, IT WAS EXACTLY THOSE EXTRA DETAILS THAT WE ARE PROVIDED UNDER THE NEW TTRS WHICH ENABLE US TO TIGHTEN CONTROL OVER THESE TEXTILES CONSIGNMENTS. AND WE ARE DETERMINED TO PROTECT THE GOOD NAME OF HONG KONG," HE SAID.

THE CARRIERS AND FORWARDERS WERE ASSURED THAT THEY COULD CONTINUE TO ENJOY UNDER TTRS THE BENEFITS OF SMOOTH AND EXPEDITIOUS FLOW OF THROUGH CARGO ARRANGEMENTS THAT WERE PROVIDED UNDER THE TRANSHIPMENT CARGO EXEMPTION SCHEME.

THE PAPERWORK THEY HAD TO HANDLE WOULD INCREASE, BUT THIS WOULD PUT THE GOVERNMENT IN A MUCH BETTER POSITION TO UPHOLD THE INTEGRITY OF HONG KONG'S CONTROL SYSTEM.

MR HO SAID: "WHEN VIEWED IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF UPKEEPING HONG KONG'S IMAGE OVERSEAS AND THE OVERALL INTEREST OF HONG KONG'S TEXTILES TRADE, IT IS ONLY A SMALL PRICE TO PAY."

ACCORDING TO MR HO, A TOTAL OF 3.8 MILLION LICENCE APPLICATIONS, WHICH ARE NOW COVERED UNDER TTRS, WERE MADE BY TRADERS LAST YEAR.

"IF ALL THESE TRADERS SHOULD OPT TO JOIN THE TTRS, AND ALL OF THEM ARE ELIGIBLE, ALL THESE 3.8 MILLION LICENCE APPLICATIONS WILL DISAPPEAR. THERE IS NO MORE WAITING FOR LICENCE APPLICATIONS TO BE APPROVED.

/"THE TRADERS

"THE TRADERS WILL ACHIEVE GREAT SAVINGS NOT ONLY IN TIME BUT ALSO IN COSTS BECAUSE ALL THEY HAVE TO PAY IS THE ANNUAL REGISTRATION FEE OF \$2,000 AND TO BUY NOTIFICATION FORMS WHICH COST NO MORE THAN \$2 PER SET, NO MORE PAYMENT IS REQUIRED FOR EACH LICENCE APPLICATION," MR HO SAID.

MR HO BELIEVED THE GAIN IN EFFICIENCY WOULD ULTIMATELY HELP TO ENHANCE THE COMPETITIVE EDGE OF THE LOCAL TEXTILE AND CLOTHING TRADE VIS-A-VIS THE COMPETITORS.

FOR THE TRADE DEPARTMENT, ONCE THE TTRS WAS IMPLEMENTED, IT WOULD DEPLOY RESOURCES CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN LICENSING ACTIVITIES TO MORE STRATEGIC TASKS TO STEP UP CHECKS AND CONTROLS.

"WE HAVE IMPROVED OUR CONTROL SYSTEM WITH NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY. THE NEW SYSTEM WILL ALLOW USERS, INCLUDING THOSE AT THE BORDER CHECKPOINTS, TO HAVE ON-LINE AND REAL TIME ACCESS TO THE CENTRAL DATABASE.

"ALSO BUILT INTO THE SYSTEM ARE A MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM AND AN EXECUTIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM, WHICH TOGETHER WILL ASSIST IN THE SURVEILLANCE OF ANY MALPRACTICE," HE SAID.

MR HO CAUTIONED THAT IF ANY TRADER WAS FOUND TO HAVE COMMITTED ANY MALPRACTICE, LEGAL AS WELL AS ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS WOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST HIM.

"THE MAXIMUM PENALTY FOR AN OFFENCE IS A FINE OF \$500,000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR TWO YEARS.

"FURTHERMORE, THE TRADE DEPARTMENT WILL NOT HESITATE TO USE ITS POWERS PROVIDED UNDER THE LAW FOR SANCTIONING OFFENDERS, INCLUDING THE POWER TO SUSPEND AND REVOKE THE REGISTRATION UNDER THE SCHEME," HE SAID.

THE TTRS COVERS ALL TEXTILES IMPORTS, ALL TEXTILES RE-EXPORTS AND DOMESTIC TEXTILES EXPORTS TO NON-RESTRAINED MARKETS. IT WILL BEGIN OPERATION ON JULY 1, 1993 AND APPLICATIONS FOR REGISTRATION HAS STARTED SINCE MAY 1, 1993.

THE TTRS IS NOT COMPULSORY, BUT RATHER SUPPLEMENTS THE EXISTING LICENSING SYSTEM.

"A TRADER CAN CHOOSE TO CONTINUE TO TAKE OUT RELEVANT TEXTILES LICENCES TO COVER HIS TEXTILES CONSIGNMENTS, AS AT PRESENT.

"NEVERTHELESS, THE CURRENT SO-CALLED INSTANTANEOUS LICENSING SERVICE PROVIDED FOR THESE TEXTILES LICENCES WILL BE TERMINATED AS OF AUGUST 1, 1993.

"FROM THEN ON, LICENCES FOR CONSIGNMENTS WHICH MAY FALL UNDER THE SCOPE OF TTRS WILL BE ISSUED TWO CLEAR WORKING DAYS AFTER THE APPLICATIONS ARE REVIEWED," MR HO SAID.

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SCAFFOLD SAFETY URGED

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BUILDING CONTRACTORS ARE REMINDED OF THEIR STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS TO PROVIDE SAFE SCAFFOLDS AND WORKING PLATFORMS FOR THE WORKERS.

THE ACTING CHIEF FACTORY INSPECTOR, MR KAN HON-SANG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT UNDER THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE AND THE CONSTRUCTION SITES (SAFETY) REGULATIONS, CONTRACTORS OF CONSTRUCTION SITES WERE REQUIRED TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE PERSONS EMPLOYED ON THE SITES.

"THEY SHOULD ALSO ENSURE THAT THE SCAFFOLDS ARE SAFE AND SOUND, AND PROPERLY MAINTAINED," HE SAID.

MR KAN POINTED OUT THAT EVERY SCAFFOLD SHOULD, BEFORE USE, BE INSPECTED BY A COMPETENT PERSON TO ENSURE THAT IT WAS IN A STABLE CONDITION, THE MATERIALS USED WERE SOUND, SUFFICIENT AND SUITABLE FOR THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH IT WAS INTENDED, AND THE GUARDRAILS IN POSITION.

"THE SCAFFOLDS AND THE WORK PLATFORMS SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO FURTHER INSPECTION AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH OR AFTER EACH SPELL OF BAD WEATHER BY COMPETENT PERSONS TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE MAINTAINED IN GOOD AND PROPER CONDITION," MR KAN SAID.

SCAFFOLD DISMANTLING SHOULD ONLY BE DONE UNDER THE IMMEDIATE SUPERVISION OF A COMPETENT PERSON AND BY TRAINED WORKMEN.

"THE WORKERS SHOULD BE PROTECTED AGAINST FALL, THROUGHOUT THE DISMANTLING OPERATION, BY SAFETY BELTS WITH LANYARDS SECURED TO INDEPENDENT LIFE-LINE OR OTHER SUITABLE ANCHORAGES," HE ADDED.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH ANY OF THE PROVISIONS MAY LEAD TO PROSECUTION, AND THE MAXIMUM PENALTY IS A FINE OF \$50,000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR 12 MONTHS.

HE URGED BOTH CONTRACTORS AND WORKERS TO OBSERVE THE NECESSARY SAFETY PRECAUTIONS.

ENQUIRIES RELATING TO SCAFFOLD SAFETY CAN BE MADE TO THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE DIVISION OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT ON TEL 815 0678.

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LO WU VIETNAMESE CENTRE CLOSES

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THE FLAG OF THE ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE AT THE LO WU VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS DETENTION CENTRE WAS LOWERED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN A BRIEF CEREMONY TO MARK THE CLOSURE OF THE CENTRE.

THE CLOSING CEREMONY WAS OFFICIATED BY REGIONAL COMMANDER, NEW TERRITORIES NORTH, MR DOUGLAS LAU.

MR LAU SAID THE CLOSURE OF THE CENTRE WOULD ALLOW 97 POLICE OFFICERS TO BE POSTED BACK TO DISTRICTS WHERE THEY ARE SORELY NEEDED.

THE CENTRE WAS OPENED IN JUNE 1989 TO ACCOMMODATE VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS WHO OPTED TO JOIN THE VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION SCHEME.

EARLIER IN JANUARY, THE SHEK KONG CAMP WHICH WAS MANNED BY POLICE WAS CLOSED.

THE LAST BATCH OF 34 VIETNAMESE IN THE CAMP HAD RECENTLY BEEN RELOCATED TO WHITEHEAD DETENTION CENTRE AWAITING REPATRIATION, WHILE 35 OTHERS WHO WERE WORKING IN THE CENTRE WOULD CONTINUE WITH THEIR WORK IN OTHER CENTRES.

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FOUR LOTS OF LAND TO LET

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THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR THE SHORT-TERM TENANCY OF FOUR PIECES OF GOVERNMENT LAND.

THE FIRST LOT IN AREA 2B, SHA TIN NEW TOWN, HAS AN AREA OF ABOUT 865 SQUARE METRES.

IT IS FOR USE AS A FEE-PAYING CAR PARK FOR PRIVATE CARS AND LIGHT VANS. THE TENANCY IS FOR TWO YEARS, RENEWABLE QUARTERLY AFTERWARDS.

THE SECOND LOT IS IN AREA 18, TSEUNG KWAN O, SAI KUNG. WITH AN AREA OF ABOUT 5,700 SQUARE METRES, THE LOT IS INTENDED FOR STORING TENANT'S GOODS (EXCLUDING CONTAINERS AND CONTAINER VEHICLES), OR A PUBLIC FEE-PAYING CAR PARK (EXCLUDING CONTAINER VEHICLES) OR A COMMERCIAL GARDEN.

THE TENANCY IS FOR ONE YEAR, RENEWABLE MONTHLY AFTERWARDS.

THE THIRD LOT, LOCATED BETWEEN YAU TONG ROAD AND CHA KWO LING ROAD IN YAU TONG, HAS AN AREA OF ABOUT 6,500 SQUARE METRES.

IT IS INTENDED FOR USE AS OPEN STORAGE OF NON-DANGEROUS GOODS (EXCLUDING CONTAINERS) OR PARKING OF TENANT'S VEHICLES. THE TENANCY IS FOR THREE YEARS RENEWABLE QUARTERLY AFTERWARDS.

/THE REMAINING

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THE REMAINING LOT, AT FUNG SHING STREET, NGAU CHI WAN, HAS AN AREA OF ABOUT 2,730 SQUARE METRES FOR OPEN STORAGE OF TENANT'S GOODS AND UNLICENSED VEHICLES (EXCLUDING CONTAINERS).

THE TENANCY IS FOR TWO YEARS, RENEWABLE QUARTERLY AFTERWARDS.

CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDERS IS NOON ON JUNE 4.

TENDER FORMS, TENDER NOTICE AND CONDITIONS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE RESPECTIVE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE IN SHA TIN, SAI KUNG AND KOWLOON EAST; AND THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT, 14TH FLOOR, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD OR THE KOWLOON WEST DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, 10TH FLOOR, YAU MA TEI CARPARK BUILDING, 250 SHANGHAI STREET, KOWLOON.

PLANS OF THE TENDERS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION AT THE OFFICES.

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COURTESY CALL ON SOCIAL WELFARE DIRECTOR

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THE NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF YAN OI TONG TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PAID A COURTESY CALL ON THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MR IAN STRACHAN, TO DISCUSS THE ORGANISATION'S WELFARE SERVICE IN THE COMING YEAR.

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, MR MO CHI-SHING, SAID THE TONG WOULD LIKE TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN ITS SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY AND YOUTHS AS WELL AS HOME-HELP SERVICE.

MR STRACHAN COMMENDED THE GROUP FOR ITS CONTRIBUTION TO WELFARE SERVICES AND PLEDGED THAT THE DEPARTMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO CO-OPERATE WITH IT IN REALISING ITS TARGETS.

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FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETS ON FRIDAY

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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WILL HOLD A MEETING AT 2.30 PM ON FRIDAY (MAY 21) AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO OBSERVE THE PROCEEDINGS FROM THE PUBLIC GALLERY. THEY MAY RESERVE SEATS BY CALLING 869 9492.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING.

ADVANCE COPIES OF THE PAPERS FOR THE MEETING WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM 2.30 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE PRESS ROOM OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BUILDING, JACKSON ROAD, CENTRAL. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE PAPERS ARE NOT FOR USE UNTIL THE MEETING IS OVER.

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SALT WATER CUT IN KOWLOON CITY

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SALT WATER SUPPLY TO SOME PREMISES IN KOWLOON CITY WILL GO OFF FROM 9 AM TO 5 PM ON FRIDAY (MAY 21) TO FACILITATE CONNECTION WORK ON WATER MAINS.

THE SUSPENSION WILL AFFECT ALL THE PREMISES AT LANCASHIRE ROAD, NGA TSIN WAI ROAD, JUNCTION ROAD, PRINCE EDWARD ROAD WEST, ARGYLE STREET, WATERLOO ROAD AND GRAMPIAN ROAD.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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	\$ MILLION

OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,630
REVERSAL OF LAF	+520
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	2,150
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	-545
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,605
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER	TWI 112.5 *+0.0* 19.5.93

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS

TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	2.54 PCT	15 MONTHS	2408	4.375	100.99	3.58
1 MONTH	2.85 PCT	18 MONTHS	2411	4.625	101.35	3.72
3 MONTHS	2.90 PCT	21 MONTHS	2502	4.75	101.47	3.90
6 MONTHS	3.08 PCT	24 MONTHS	2505	3.75	99.47	4.07
12 MONTHS	3.39 PCT					

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 29,680 MN

CLOSED 19 MAY 1993

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ARTS POLICY REVIEW REPORT REALISTIC AND ACHIEVABLE

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS REAFFIRMED ITS COMMITMENT TO THE PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ARTS IN HONG KONG IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

TO THIS END, IT HAS PROPOSED IN THE ARTS POLICY REVIEW REPORT, WHICH IS NOW UNDER PUBLIC CONSULTATION, TO ADOPT A PRAGMATIC AND PRACTICAL APPROACH AND TO SET POLICY OBJECTIVES THAT ARE REALISTIC AND ACHIEVABLE.

SPEAKING DURING THE MOTION DEBATE ON ARTS POLICY REVIEW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE SECRETARY FOR RECREATION AND CULTURE, MR JAMES SO, REFUTED MEMBERS' CRITICISM OVER THE LACK OF FORWARD LOOKING POLICY OBJECTIVES IN THE REPORT.

"THE REPORT ONLY AIMS TO REVIEW THE PRESENT POSITION AND TRY TO SET OUT GOVERNMENT'S FUTURE ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARTS IN HONG KONG, HAVING REGARD TO CERTAIN FACTORS," HE EXPLAINED.

"IN DOING THIS, I CONSIDER IT PRUDENT TO TAKE A PRAGMATIC AND PRACTICAL LINE," HE ADDED.

MR SO SAID THE REPORT ALSO RIGHTLY AIMED TO TAKE STOCK OF WHAT HONG KONG HAD ACHIEVED IN THE PAST DECADE, AND TO MAKE SUGGESTIONS ON WHAT PRACTICAL NEXT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN MAPPING OUT THE WAY FORWARD, RATHER THAN TO PROPOSE CHANGES LIGHTLY TO THE WELL-TRIED AND SMOOTH WORKING PARTNERSHIP THAT HAD DEVELOPED BETWEEN THE EXISTING ARTS INSTITUTIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT.

EVEN IN ADOPTING THIS PRUDENT AND PRACTICAL APPROACH, HE POINTED OUT, THE GOVERNMENT HAD A CLEAR VISION OF WHAT NEW INITIATIVES SHOULD BE TAKEN TO DEVELOP THE ARTS IN HONG KONG IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

"WE BELIEVE THAT THE BEST POLICY IS TO MOVE AHEAD ONE STEP AT A TIME, TO ENSURE THAT THE OBJECTIVES WE SET FOR OURSELVES ARE NOT UNREALISTIC AND ARE ACHIEVABLE.

"THUS THE PROPOSED POLICY OBJECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE, AS SET OUT IN CHAPTER 7, ARE VERY CLEAR AND POSITIVE AND ARE IN NO WAY LACKING IN FORWARD VISION," HE STRESSED.

TURNING TO THE LACK OF IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS IN THE REPORT, THE SECRETARY SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE THIS SHOULD BE DONE AT THE PRESENT STAGE AS "THIS WOULD ONLY LEAD TO A RIGID AND STEREOTYPE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARTS".

HE FELT THAT THE BEST APPROACH AND ONE WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE BEST ACHIEVEMENT WAS TO ALLOW THE IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS ON THE GOVERNMENT'S BROAD POLICY OBJECTIVES TO EVOLVE IN THE LIGHT OF EXPERIENCE AND CHANGING SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND ARTISTIC TRENDS.

"THIS IS WHERE THE PROPOSED ARTS COUNCIL CAN PLAY A PROMINENT AND PIVOTAL ROLE IN ITS CO-ORDINATION AND ADVISORY WORK.

"INDEED, THIS IS THE APPROACH ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT IN IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY LAID DOWN IN 1981 FOR THE PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PERFORMING ARTS IN HONG KONG."

/MR SO

MR SO ASSURED MEMBERS THAT THE PROPOSED COUNCIL, ONCE ESTABLISHED, WOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE SOUND AND WISE COUNSEL TO THE GOVERNMENT, WORKING IN CLOSE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND THE ARTS COMMUNITY, ON HOW BEST TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY OBJECTIVES LAID DOWN.

SOME MEMBERS ALSO SPOKE AGAINST THE PROPOSAL IN THE REPORT TO TRANSFER THE MUSIC OFFICE TO A NON-GOVERNMENT BODY.

MR SO ATTRIBUTED THIS TO A MISUNDERSTANDING.

"THE REPORT DOES NOT ADVOCATE CLOSING DOWN THE MUSIC OFFICE," HE EMPHASISED. "WHAT IT SUGGESTS IS THAT THE WORK OF THE MUSIC OFFICE COULD BE MORE EFFECTIVELY, PROFESSIONALLY AND ECONOMICALLY DONE BY NON-GOVERNMENT BODIES, SUCH AS THE ACADEMY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS OR ANY OTHER BODIES WHICH ARE QUALIFIED AND ARE INTERESTED TO TAKE ON THIS TASK.

"OUR INTENTION IS NOT TO SAVE MONEY, AS WRONGLY CLAIMED BY MANY; BUT RATHER TO ENSURE THAT THE RESOURCES CURRENTLY USED ON THE MUSIC OFFICE ARE MORE EFFECTIVELY AND ECONOMICALLY APPLIED TO ACHIEVE BETTER VALUE FOR MONEY BY BODIES WHICH CAN OPERATE WITHOUT THE CONSTRAINTS AND FETTERS OF A GOVERNMENT OFFICE."

TO WORRIED PARENTS AND YOUNG MUSICIANS, MR SO SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TRY ITS BEST TO ENSURE THAT THE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES PRESENTLY ORGANISED BY THE MUSIC OFFICE AND ITS REGIONAL CENTRES WOULD BE MAINTAINED.

ON GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR THE ARTS, MR SO AGREED THAT DIRECT SUBSIDIES GIVEN OUT TO PERFORMING ARTS GROUPS HAD REMAINED AT JUST OVER \$35 MILLION FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS.

HOWEVER, HE NOTED THAT BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS HAD SPENT HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF VENUES, THE PROVISION OF ARTS EDUCATION AND THE PRESENTATION OF ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES AND PROMOTIONS.

IN ADDITION, A GRANT OF \$30 MILLION HAS JUST BEEN APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO HELP NEW AND DEVELOPING ART FORMS AND ARTISTIC GROUPS.

"I HOPE TO SEEK MORE FUNDING NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR TO ENABLE ME TO PUSH AHEAD WITH THE NEW INITIATIVES OUTLINED IN THE POLICY OBJECTIVES SET OUT IN THE REPORT," HE ADDED.

CONCLUDING, MR SO REITERATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS COMMITTED TO PROMOTE AND DEVELOP THE ARTS IN HONG KONG AND THAT IT HAD A VERY CLEAR SET OF POLICY OBJECTIVES.

"THE ADMINISTRATION THEREFORE CANNOT SUPPORT THE FIRST PART OF THE MOTION THAT THE ARTS POLICY REVIEW REPORT HAS FAILED TO PROVIDE FORWARD LOOKING POLICY OBJECTIVES.

"THE REPORT HAS CLEARLY PROPOSED THAT WE ADOPT A PRAGMATIC AND PRACTICAL APPROACH BY SETTING POLICY OBJECTIVES THAT ARE REALISTIC AND ACHIEVABLE," HE STATED.

THE CONSULTATION PERIOD FOR THE ARTS POLICY REVIEW REPORT IS SCHEDULED TO CLOSE BY THE END OF NEXT MONTH.

THE GOVERNMENT WILL COLLATE AND ANALYSE ALL VIEWS EXPRESSED BEFORE DRAWING UP A DEFINITIVE SET OF POLICY PROPOSALS.

SINCE THE CURRENT CONSULTATION EXERCISE HAS ATTRACTED AND IS STILL ATTRACTING A WIDE RANGE OF PUBLIC OPINIONS FROM ALL QUARTERS AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS YET TO FIRM UP ITS POLICY PROPOSALS, THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HAD ABSTAINED FROM VOTING ON TODAY'S MOTION.

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MOTION DEBATE ON REHABILITATION SERVICES

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FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT OF THE SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TONIGHT (WEDNESDAY) IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON INTEGRATION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES:

MR PRESIDENT,

JUST AS WE, EARLIER ON, STOOD IN SILENT TRIBUTE TO OUR DEAR FRIEND THE LATE HON STEPHEN CHEONG KAM-CHUEN, SO WE NOW STAND UP TO BE COUNTED. ON 26 FEBRUARY THE LEGCO WELFARE PANEL PLEDGED THEIR UNANIMOUS SUPPORT TO IMPLEMENT REHABILITATION SERVICES IN TUNG TAU ESTATE AND AT LAGUNA CITY. I NOW CALL ON THE WHOLE COUNCIL TO DO LIKEWISE. I THANK THE HONOURABLE FRED LI AND MANY OTHER HONOURABLE MEMBERS FOR THEIR STAUNCH SUPPORT OF GOVERNMENT'S WELL-ESTABLISHED POLICY AND STANCE ON REHABILITATION AND INTEGRATION AND SO MOVINGLY AND SINCERELY EXPRESSED. HERE, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE TODAY'S OPPORTUNITY TO THANK ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY, THE MEDIA AND THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS WHO HAVE STOOD SO FIRMLY BEHIND THE POLICY.

INTEGRATION

INTEGRATION IS THE VERY CORNER-STONE OF OUR REHABILITATION POLICY. THIS IS NOT SOMETHING NEW. IT HAS BEEN AN OBJECTIVE FOR 16 YEARS. IT WAS LAID DOWN IN THE FIRST WHITE PAPER ON REHABILITATION ENTITLED "INTEGRATING THE DISABLED INTO THE COMMUNITY : A UNITED EFFORT", PUBLISHED IN 1977. THIS POLICY WAS REAFFIRMED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EXTENSIVE PUBLIC CONSULTATIVE EXERCISE ON THE GREEN PAPER ON REHABILITATION, PUBLISHED LAST YEAR.

SUPPORT FOR INTEGRATION IS NOT LIP-SERVICE BUT REAL ACTION. IT IS NOT A CONCEPT BUT A CULTURE. IT IS NOT A PRETEXT BUT A PRACTICE. IT SHOULD NOT BE A POINT OF CONTROVERSY. IT SHOULD BE A WAY OF LIFE. FOR A SOCIETY IS JUDGED BY THE WAY IT TREATS THE VULNERABLE IN ITS MIDST.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

REHABILITATION SERVICES ARE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY. THESE SERVICES RANGE FROM EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF DISABILITY, PREVENTION, EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO REHABILITATION, EMPLOYMENT AND OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES TO FACILITATE TRUE INTEGRATION IN SOCIETY.

TRUE INTEGRATION WILL TURN DISABILITY INTO ABILITY. IT WILL ENABLE PERSONS WITH VARIOUS DISABILITIES TO ACHIEVE INDEPENDENCE IN THEIR DAILY LIFE, TO LIVE WITH DIGNITY AND TO SHARE IN THE PROSPERITY OF THE SOCIETY WHICH IS OURS.

KEY TARGETS

AN ISSUE OF WIDESPREAD CONCERN WHICH EMERGED FROM THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE LAST YEAR ON THE GREEN PAPER ON REHABILITATION WAS THE SIGNIFICANT SHORTFALL IN REHABILITATION SERVICES. THE GOVERNMENT HAS RESPONDED QUICKLY TO THE CALL FOR SERVICES. THE NECESSARY FUNDS HAVE NOW BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO MEET IN FULL THE KEY TARGETS IN THE GREEN PAPER BETWEEN NOW AND 1996/97.

WE ARE FIRMLY COMMITTED TO MEETING THESE TARGETS ON TIME. WE ARE VERY ENCOURAGED BY THE STRENGTH OF HONOURABLE MEMBERS' SUPPORT IN THIS DEBATE FOR EARLY AND SMOOTH IMPLEMENTATION.

PREJUDICE

HOWEVER, THE RECENT OBJECTIONS BY CONCERNED RESIDENTS TO THE SETTING UP OF REHABILITATION FACILITIES IN THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD CALLS FOR A MORE CONCENTRATED AND IMMEDIATE EFFORT IN OUR PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMMES. WE NEED TO DEMOLISH THE SHAMEFUL WALL OF EXCLUSION; TO TURN STUMBLING BLOCKS INTO STEPPING STONES; AND TO LIBERALIZE SOCIETY FROM THE SHACKLES OF PREJUDICE UNDER WHATEVER GUISE.

RIGHT TO KNOW

I FULLY SHARE THE VIEWS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RIGHT TO KNOW. IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT RESIDENTS SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING AND WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN IN THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD. THE SETTING UP OF REHABILITATION FACILITIES IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, IN THE SAME WAY AS EDUCATIONAL AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, MUST BE THE MAJOR INTEREST OF LOCAL RESIDENTS. PARTICULARLY BECAUSE THESE FACILITIES ARE RESOURCES VALUABLE TO PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES. WE WILL CONTINUE TO BE VIGILANT TO ALLAY ANXIETIES OVER THE LACK OF INFORMATION AND TO ENSURE THAT THE PUBLIC IS AWARE OF PLANNED REHABILITATION FACILITIES AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY. THIS WILL LEAD TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING.

/HERE, I

HERE, I WOULD LIKE TO STRESS THAT WHILST IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE RESIDENTS' SENSITIVITIES TOWARDS CERTAIN REHABILITATION PROJECTS, IT WOULD BE IMPROPER TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN SERVICES. TO DO SO WOULD SUPPORT SEGREGATION, RATHER THAN INTEGRATION.

CONSULTATION

LET US NOW TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE WAY IN WHICH REHABILITATION SERVICES ARE PLANNED AND IMPLEMENTED. THE REHABILITATION DEVELOPMENT CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE (RDCC) WHICH COMPRISES REPRESENTATIVES FROM RELATED GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, ORGANIZATIONS AND INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS IS THE GOVERNMENT'S PRINCIPAL ADVISORY BODY ON REHABILITATION MATTERS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACTIVITY CENTRES FOR DISCHARGED MENTAL PATIENTS AND THE REQUIREMENT FOR FOUR SUCH CENTRES IN THE TERRITORY WAS RECOMMENDED BY RDCC WAY BACK IN 1987. FURTHERMORE, AFTER A SITE FOR THE FACILITY IS IDENTIFIED, IT IS OUR WELL-ESTABLISHED PRACTICE TO CONSULT RELEVANT BOARDS AND COMMITTEES AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL.

IN OTHER WORDS, GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, LOCAL CONSULTATIVE BODIES, DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONS AND WELFARE AGENCIES ARE ALWAYS INVOLVED IN THE CONSULTATION PROCESS. IT IS OUR CONVICTION THAT THROUGH EARLY DISCUSSION WITH INTERESTED PARTIES, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANNED REHABILITATION PROJECTS CAN BE FACILITATED. BOTH THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY AND RESIDENTS' RIGHT TO KNOW CAN THUS BE SAFEGUARDED. WE SHOULD NEVERTHELESS BE KEEPING AN EVER OPEN MIND ON NECESSARY IMPROVEMENTS FOR FUTURE REFERENCE. HONOURABLE MEMBERS HAVE ASKED FOR DIALOGUE WITH CONCERNED RESIDENTS. FOR OUR PART, WE HAVE IN THE PAST AND WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP OUR DOOR OPEN TO HAVE DIALOGUE WITH CONCERNED RESIDENTS TO FIND WAYS AND MEANS TO ALLAY THEIR FEARS.

AS REGARDS CRITICISMS ABOUT MALADMINISTRATION IN THE PLANNING OF THE ACTIVITY CENTRE PROJECT NEAR LAGUNA CITY AND ALSO CRITICISM ABOUT UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICES FOR DISCHARGED MENTAL PATIENTS IN KWUN TONG, I WOULD LIKE TO REFER MEMBERS TO THE FINAL RESULTS REPORT COMPILED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINTS. THIS REPORT FOUND THAT THESE SERVICES ARE FAIRLY, EVENLY DISTRIBUTED ON A DISTRICT BASIS. FURTHERMORE, IN PARAGRAPH 51 OF THE SAME REPORT, IT IS SAID AND I QUOTE: "I SINCERELY HOPE THAT THE RESIDENTS WOULD WITHDRAW THEIR OBJECTIONS TO THE ACTIVITY CENTRE AS THEIR DEFIANT ATTITUDE WOULD HELP NEITHER THEM NOR THE PROSPECTIVE CLIENTS OF THE CENTRE IN ACHIEVING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT. SINCE THE ACTIVITY CENTRE WILL ONLY ADMIT EX-MENTAL PATIENTS WHO HAVE SUBSTANTIALLY RECOVERED FROM THEIR ILLNESS, THE RESIDENTS MAY EVENTUALLY AGREE THAT THE RISK OF THE PATIENTS RUNNING AMUCK THEREBY THREATENING THEIR SAFETY IS MORE IMAGINARY THAN REAL." FINDINGS OF THIS REPORT ARE BASED ON AN INDEPENDENT AND THOROUGH INVESTIGATION BY THE COMMISSIONER IN RESPONSE TO A COMPLAINT LODGED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ESTATE OWNERS' COMMITTEE OF LAGUNA CITY. I HAVE NOTHING TO ADD TO THE REPORT.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION

WITH THE DEEPEST RESPECT TO SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS, I WAS VERY DISTURBED TO HEAR REPEATEDLY REFERENCES TO OUR CLIENTS AT THESE DAY ACTIVITY CENTRES AND IN THAT CONTEXT AS MENTAL PATIENT. PLEASE AND OH PLEASE DON'T CALL THEM MENTAL PATIENTS. THEY ARE NOT. THIS VERY MISUNDERSTANDING IS PREJUDICIAL TO THE DIGNITY OF THE INDIVIDUALS CONCERNED AND MAY I ALSO HUMBLY ASKED HONOURABLE MEMBERS NOT TO PERPETUATE THE DISSEMINATION OF SUCH MISINFORMATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE REFERENCES TO WHICH THEY ARE MADE. IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED IN SOME QUARTERS THAT ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION SHOULD BE ENACTED TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY. SUCH LEGISLATION I THINK IS THE PROVERBIAL BIG STICK. SUCH LEGISLATION IS AN ADMISSION OF DEFEAT I THINK THAT ALL ELSE HAS FAILED. IT WOULD, INDEED, BE A SORRY DAY FOR HONG KONG IF WE HAD TO RESORT TO THIS BIG STICK TO TRY TO CHANGE MINDS AND ATTITUDES. BUT WE MAY WELL HAVE TO DO IT.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

THIS BRINGS ME TO PUBLIC EDUCATION WHICH I FIRMLY BELIEVE IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO ERADICATE PREJUDICE. AS RECENTLY AS 17 MARCH, I ANNOUNCED IN THIS CHAMBER THE LAUNCHING OF A SPECIAL PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN TO ERADICATE PREJUDICE. INDEED, AS FAR BACK AS 1983, THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC EDUCATION IN REHABILITATION WHICH INCLUDES REPRESENTATIVES FROM NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE HAS DEVOTED ITSELF TO PROMOTING COMMUNITY ACCEPTANCE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY. PUBLIC EDUCATION HAS CLEARLY WORKED OVER THE YEARS. PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE RIGHTS, THE ABILITIES AND THE DIGNITY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY HAVE CERTAINLY INCREASED. FOR INSTANCE, I THINK PEOPLE NOWADAYS NO LONGER OBJECT TO ELDERLY SERVICES OR CHILDREN OR YOUTH CENTRES. IT WOULD BE AN INJUSTICE I THINK TO SAY THAT PUBLIC EDUCATION HAS ACHIEVED TOO LITTLE TOO LATE.

CONCLUSION

HONG KONG IS A CARING COMMUNITY. IT IS OUR CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY TO PITCH IN TO HELP THE VULNERABLE AND THE DISADVANTAGED IN OUR MIDST. WE MUST TAKE THE LEAD TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT. LIFE IS FRAGILE. WE MUST ACT NOW. TOGETHER, WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

MR PRESIDENT, I COMMEND THE MOTION FOR HONOURABLE MEMBERS' SUPPORT. IN SUPPORTING THE MOTION, HONOURABLE MEMBERS ARE SUPPORTING THE EARLY AND STEADFAST IMPLEMENTATION OF REHABILITATION PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE IN FULFILMENT OF OUR KEY TARGETS.

THANK YOU, MR PRESIDENT.

MORE PROTECTION PROPOSED FOR INSURED

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A BILL PROPOSING TO ENHANCE THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY'S POWERS OF SUPERVISION AND TO REQUIRE LONG-TERM INSURERS TO MAINTAIN AN ENHANCED SOLVENCY MARGIN WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE INSURANCE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993 ALSO SEEKS TO DELEGATE THE POWER TO APPROVE CERTAIN MINOR OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FROM THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL TO THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES, MR MICHAEL CARTLAND, SAID AN INSURER WOULD BE REQUIRED TO NOTIFY THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY IN ADVANCE OF EVENTS INDICATIVE OF THE COMPANY'S INSOLVENCY.

AND, IN THE CASE OF AN OVERSEAS INSURER, THAT THE COMPANY INTENDS TO CEASE BUSINESS IN HONG KONG, HE ADDED.

AT PRESENT, AN INSURER INCORPORATED OUTSIDE HONG KONG IS NOT REQUIRED TO NOTIFY THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY WHEN IT CLOSES ITS PLACE OF BUSINESS IN HONG KONG.

"ALTHOUGH THE AUTHORITY WILL EVENTUALLY BE NOTIFIED THROUGH THE COMPANIES REGISTRY, HE IS UNABLE TO TAKE TIMELY ACTION TO PROTECT POLICY HOLDERS' INTERESTS.

"NOR IS THE AUTHORITY NOTIFIED OF INSOLVENCY AND LIQUIDATION PROCEEDINGS TAKEN AGAINST AN INSURER OUTSIDE HONG KONG OR OF SIMILAR PROCEEDINGS," HE SAID.

MR CARTLAND SAID SUCH PROCEEDINGS MAY ADVERSELY AFFECT THE INTERESTS OF HONG KONG POLICY HOLDERS.

THIS IS BECAUSE THE INSURER'S ASSETS IN HONG KONG MAY BE AT RISK OR, IN THE CASE OF AN OVERSEAS INSURER, MAY BE SEIZED BY AN OVERSEAS LIQUIDATOR FOR THE BENEFIT OF PREFERENTIAL CREDITORS OVERSEAS.

"THE AUTHORITY SHOULD BE NOTIFIED OF SUCH EVENTS EARLY ON," HE SAID.

IN ADDITION, THE BILL PROPOSES THE AUTHORITY CAN ADJUST THE LEVEL OF SOLVENCY MARGIN TO REFLECT CURRENT MONETARY VALUES AND INTRODUCE TWO ADDITIONAL, HIGHER LEVELS OF SOLVENCY MARGIN BELOW WHICH THE AUTHORITY WOULD REQUIRE AN INSURER TO SUBMIT FOR APPROVAL; AND IMPLEMENT, A FINANCIAL PLAN OR SHORT-TERM SCHEME.

UNDER THE PRESENT ORDINANCE, A LONG-TERM INSURER IS REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN A SOLVENCY MARGIN, THAT IS, A MINIMUM EXCESS OF ASSETS OVER LIABILITIES, OF HK\$2 MILLION.

"THIS MINIMUM, SET IN 1983, IS NO LONGER ADEQUATE TO PROTECT POLICY HOLDERS AGAINST THE RISK THAT THE INSURER MAY BE UNABLE TO MEET ITS OBLIGATIONS IN FULL, PARTICULARLY WHERE THE VOLUME OF BUSINESS WRITTEN BY THE INSURER IS SUBSTANTIAL," HE SAID.

THE AMOUNTS OF SOLVENCY MARGIN TO BE MAINTAINED BY A LONG-TERM INSURER WILL BE PRESCRIBED IN REGULATIONS TO BE MADE UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILLS FOR BETTER CONTROL OF LIFTS AND ESCALATORS INTRODUCED
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TWO BILLS SEEKING TO BRING MORE EFFECTIVE CONTROL TO LIFT AND ESCALATOR WORKS FOR THE GREATER SAFETY OF THE PUBLIC WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1993 AND THE LIFTS AND ESCALATORS (SAFETY) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, SAID THE BILLS WILL RATIONALISE AND STRENGTHEN THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE CONTROL OF LIFT AND ESCALATOR WORKS.

THE BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1993 PROPOSES THAT ONE SINGLE AUTHORITY, NAMELY THE DIRECTOR OF ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES, SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTROL OVER THE DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE AS WELL AS SPECIFICATION OF TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF LIFTS AND ESCALATORS.

THE LIFTS AND ESCALATORS (SAFETY) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993 PROPOSES THAT THE DIRECTOR OF ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES SHOULD BE GIVEN THE POWER TO PUBLISH FROM TIME TO TIME CODES OF PRACTICE GIVING GUIDANCE AND DIRECTIONS ON THE DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE AND TESTING OF LIFTS AND ESCALATORS.

MR EASON SAID THE BILL PROPOSED THAT INSPECTION AND CHECKING OF LIFTS AND ESCALATORS SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT BY COMPETENT PERSONS TO STRENGTHEN CONTROL OVER THEIR SAFE OPERATION.

"IN ADDITION, REGISTERED LIFT OR ESCALATOR CONTRACTORS WILL BE REQUIRED TO ASSIST THE DIRECTOR OF ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES IN INVESTIGATIONS RELATING TO LIFT OR ESCALATOR ACCIDENTS BY, FOR EXAMPLE, SUBMITTING ACCIDENT REPORTS," HE SAID.

"THE SUB-CONTRACTING OR ASSIGNMENT OF LIFT OR ESCALATOR MAINTENANCE WORKS TO NON-REGISTERED CONTRACTORS WILL BE REGULATED," HE SAID.

DEBATES ON THE TWO BILLS WERE ADJOURNED.

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EVENTFUL YEAR FOR BROADCASTING AUTHORITY

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THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY HAS PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN PURSUIT OF ITS POLICY TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF BROADCASTING SERVICES FOR HONG KONG AUDIENCE.

IT WILL CONTINUE TO STRIVE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF AN EQUITABLE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK SO AS TO ENSURE FAIR AND HEALTHY COMPETITION AMONG EXISTING AND FUTURE BROADCASTERS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR RECREATION AND CULTURE, MR JAMES SO, WHEN TABLING THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING AUGUST 1992 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR SO NOTED THAT DURING THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW, THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY OF HONG KONG WENT THROUGH SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS.

HE SAID A COMPREHENSIVE TELEVISION BROADCASTING REVIEW WAS CONDUCTED AND THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR FREE-TO-AIR WIRELESS AND SATELLITE TELEVISION WAS ALSO REVIEWED TO ENABLE THESE MEDIA TO COPE WITH THE CHANGING BROADCASTING ENVIRONMENT BROUGHT ABOUT BY NEW TECHNOLOGY AND MORE COMPETITION.

IN ADDITION, THE LEGISLATION ON SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION WAS ENACTED IN MARCH THIS YEAR.

"WE ARE NOW READY TO ISSUE A SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION LICENCE AND WE EXPECT TO SEE THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION SERVICE BY OCTOBER THIS YEAR," HE ADDED.

A WORKING GROUP HAS ALSO BEEN SET UP TO REVIEW THE CODES OF PRACTICE ON PROGRAMME, ADVERTISING AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR BOTH TELEVISION AND RADIO BROADCASTS SO AS TO ENSURE THESE STANDARDS REFLECT CHANGING SOCIAL NEEDS AND ATTITUDES AND FAST DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGY.

MAJOR REVISIONS TO THE CODES ENDORSED BY THE AUTHORITY INCLUDED GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN THE SHOWING OF FEATURE FILMS, REPEATS OF CHILDREN PROGRAMMES, AND ADVERTISING FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES, PROPERTY, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PUBLICATIONS.

FURTHERMORE, A NEW SET OF STANDARDS ON PROGRAMME SPONSORSHIP FOR WIRELESS TELEVISION AND A NEW CODE OF PRACTICE ON TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR SOUND BROADCASTING WERE DRAWN UP.

ON THE REGULATION OF THE QUALITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED, MR SO TOLD COUNCILLORS THAT THE AUTHORITY'S COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE HAD DURING THE YEAR DEALT WITH 648 COMPLAINTS AND ISSUED 21 WARNING LETTERS TO REMIND BROADCASTERS OF THE NEED TO OBSERVE MORE CLOSELY THE DIFFERENT CODES OF PRACTICE.

IT HAD ALSO FINED LICENSEES ON TWO OCCASIONS WITH FINES RANGING FROM \$10,000 TO \$50,000.

LOOKING AHEAD, MR SO SAID THE AUTHORITY WOULD BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE REGULATION OF THE SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION SERVICE WHEN IT WAS INTRODUCED, IN THE RADIO BROADCASTING REVIEW NOW UNDER WAY AND IN THE PREPARATION OF AN OMNIBUS BROADCASTING BILL.

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LEGCO TO BE GIVEN TIME TO DISCUSS ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

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THE GOVERNMENT'S AIM IS TO GIVE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE TO DISCUSS THE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR 1994/95 ALTHOUGH IT WILL BE A MATTER FOR THE COUNCIL TO DETERMINE WHEN THIS PROCESS WILL BE COMPLETED.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SZE, WHEN HE REPLIED TO A QUESTION BY THE HON YEUNG SUM AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ON THE QUESTION OF THE TIMING OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE REMAINING LEGISLATION, MR SZE SAID THERE WERE A NUMBER OF FACTORS TO BE BALANCED.

THESE INCLUDE THE NEED TO GIVE THE CURRENT TALKS WITH CHINA A FAIR WIND TO HELP ENSURE THAT THEY ARE BROUGHT TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION.

"BUT WE DO NOT HAVE AN INFINITE AMOUNT OF TIME," HE SAID.

"THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION MUST BE IN PLACE WELL BEFORE THE ELECTIONS ARE DUE," HE ADDED.

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SALE FLAT SCHEME TO SITTING TENANTS SHELVED

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THE GOVERNMENT, AFTER CAREFUL DELIBERATION, DECIDED IN MARCH THIS YEAR THAT THE REVISED APPROACH TO OFFER PUBLIC RENTAL FLATS TO SITTING TENANTS SHOULD NOT BE PURSUED FOR THE PRESENT, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON LAM KUI-CHUN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR EASON SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONCERNED THAT THE REVISED TERMS OF OFFER MIGHT NOT BE SUFFICIENTLY ATTRACTIVE TO PERSUADE SITTING TENANTS TO MOVE INTO HOME OWNERSHIP IN THE NUMBERS REQUIRED TO MAKE THE SCHEME VIABLE.

AS A RESULT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION, THE PROPOSED SCHEME HAS BEEN SHELVED.

"THE HOUSING AUTHORITY IS NOW CONSIDERING OTHER WAYS OF ACHIEVING THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF INCREASING HOME OWNERSHIP AMONG SITTING TENANTS," HE SAID.

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EXCESSIVE EMPLOYERS REJECTED IN FOREIGN LABOUR BIDS

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ALL THE 3,537 EMPLOYERS, WHO WERE FOUND TO HAVE SET UNREASONABLY RESTRICTIVE JOB REQUIREMENTS WHEN REGISTERING THEIR VACANCIES WITH THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT UNDER THE GENERAL LABOUR IMPORTATION SCHEME, HAD THEIR APPLICATIONS REJECTED, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN ADDITION, THERE HAVE BEEN TWO CASES IN WHICH EMPLOYERS STIPULATED UNREASONABLE REQUIREMENTS WHEN APPLYING UNDER THE SPECIAL LABOUR IMPORTATION SCHEME FOR THE NEW AIRPORT AND RELATED PROJECTS.

THESE LATTER EMPLOYERS SUBSEQUENTLY AGREED TO RELAX THEIR REQUIREMENTS UPON THE ADVICE OF THE GOVERNMENT, MR CHAN SAID.

HE WAS SPEAKING IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MICHAEL HO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR CHAN SAID OUT OF A TOTAL OF 14,336 APPLICANTS IN THE LAST TWO ROUNDS OF APPLICATIONS FOR QUOTAS UNDER THE GENERAL SCHEME, 3,537 WERE FOUND TO HAVE SET HARSH JOB REQUIREMENTS IN TERMS OF AGE, EDUCATION AND WORK EXPERIENCE.

"THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO REJECT APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED BY EMPLOYERS WHO IMPOSE UNREASONABLY RESTRICTIVE JOB REQUIREMENTS WHEN REGISTERING THEIR VACANCIES WITH THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT," THE SECRETARY STRESSED.

"IN ADDITION, EMPLOYERS WHO ARE KNOWN TO HAVE REFUSED TO ENGAGE SUITABLE LOCAL WORKERS WITHOUT REASONABLE GROUNDS WILL ALSO HAVE THEIR APPLICATIONS REJECTED," HE SAID.

MR CHAN ALSO TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT EMPLOYERS WERE MADE AWARE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS BOTH THROUGH GENERAL PUBLICITY AND IN THE GUIDANCE PAMPHLETS ON THE LABOUR IMPORTATION SCHEMES.

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NO EXPIRY DATE FOR WATER SUPPLY AGREEMENT WITH CHINA

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THERE IS NO EXPIRY DATE OF THE CURRENT AGREEMENT WITH CHINA CONCERNING THE SUPPLY OF WATER TO HONG KONG.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR WORKS, MR JAMES BLAKE, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ALLEN LEE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE YEARLY QUANTITIES HAVE BEEN AGREED UP TO YEAR 2000 AND THE DESIGNED MAXIMUM CAPACITY OF THE SUPPLY SYSTEM IS 1,100 MILLION CUBIC METRES A YEAR.

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"THE TWO SIDES WILL DECIDE IN DUE COURSE THROUGH MUTUAL CONSULTATION THE ANNUAL INCREMENTS OF SUPPLY BEYOND 2000," MR BLAKE SAID.

THE CURRENT UNIT PRICE OF WATER SUPPLIED BY CHINA WHICH IS APPLICABLE FOR THE PERIOD MARCH 1, 1993 TO FEBRUARY 28, 1994 IS HK\$1.772 PER CUBIC METRE.

AS AT APRIL 30 THIS YEAR, THE TOTAL WATER STORAGE WAS 302.062 MILLION CUBIC METRES.

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PUTONGHUA TRAINING FOR CIVIL SERVANTS INCREASING

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SOME 4,600 CIVIL SERVANTS HAVE UNDERGONE PUTONGHUA TRAINING SINCE 1985/86 AND 545 ARE TAKING PUTONGHUA LESSONS AT PRESENT, THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, MRS ANSON CHAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN ADDITION TO A THREE-FOLD INCREASE IN TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES SINCE 1985, THE GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGES THE USE OF PUTONGHUA BY CIVIL SERVANTS THROUGH VISITS TO CHINA FOR WHICH INTERPRETATION SERVICE IS NOT PROVIDED.

"TO A LARGE EXTENT, LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY COMES WITH PRACTICE," SHE EXPLAINED.

"ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CHINESE STUDIES COURSES IN BEIJING IS ALSO TO IMPROVE THE PUTONGHUA PROFICIENCY OF CIVIL SERVANTS THROUGH IMMERSION TRAINING."

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MARTIN BARROW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MRS CHAN SAID PUTONGHUA TRAINING IS COMPULSORY FOR LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS.

"PUTONGHUA PROFICIENCY TESTS ARE CARRIED OUT ON ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE OFFICERS ON COMPLETION OF EACH STAGE OF TRAINING," SHE ADDED.

CERTIFICATES OF ATTENDANCE ARE ISSUED ON COMPLETION OF EACH STAGE OF TRAINING AND RECOGNITION OF THE LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY ATTAINED BUT THERE IS NO MONETARY REWARD FOR PASSING LANGUAGE TESTS, SHE SAID.

"WE DO NOT THINK IT IS APPROPRIATE FOR CIVIL SERVANTS TO EXPECT A REWARD FOR ACQUIRING A LANGUAGE SKILL THROUGH TRAINING WHICH IS PROVIDED FREE AND WHICH WILL MAKE THEM MORE EFFECTIVE AT THEIR WORK," SHE SAID.

ON THE CHECK ON THE PROFICIENCY OF CIVIL SERVANTS AT SENIOR LEVELS, MRS CHAN SAID A SURVEY WAS BEING CARRIED OUT ON THE CHINESE LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OF THE EXECUTIVE GRADE AND A SIMILAR SURVEY WOULD BE CONDUCTED AMONG SENIOR DEPARTMENTAL OFFICERS.

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TWO PRINCIPLES GUIDE ACCEPTANCE OF PRIVATE DONATION

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THE GOVERNMENT ONLY ACCEPTS A DONATION OR SPONSORSHIP FOR ITS PROJECTS FROM A REPUTABLE INDIVIDUAL OR ORGANISATION IN A MANNER WHICH WILL NOT IMPAIR THE IMAGE OF THE GOVERNMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR DONALD TSANG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MOSES CHENG, MR TSANG SAID THE OTHER BROAD PRINCIPLE WAS THAT THE DONATION MUST NOT RESULT IN AN UNACCEPTABLE RECURRENT COMMITMENT ON PUBLIC FUNDS.

FOR EXAMPLE, IF A PRIVATE DONOR WISHED TO PAY FOR A MAJOR PIECE OF EQUIPMENT, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NEED TO ENSURE THAT IT COULD MEET THE COST OF SERVICING THAT EQUIPMENT BEFORE IT ACCEPTED THE DONATION, HE SAID.

"THE SAME GENERAL PRINCIPLE APPLIES TO DONATIONS TO PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN BY SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS," HE SAID.

ON THE WAY TO ACKNOWLEDGE A DONATION, MR TSANG EXPLAINED THAT IT DEPENDED UPON THE WISHES OF THE DONOR AND THE VALUE OF THE DONATION.

"CUSTOMARILY, THE MORE IMPORTANT THE DONATION, THE MORE ELABORATE THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT," HE SAID.

HOWEVER, AS A GENERAL RULE, PUBLICITY MUST BE IN GOOD TASTE, HE ADDED.

HE SAID PUBLIC RECOGNITION COULD TAKE A VARIETY OF FORMS, INCLUDING A MENTION IN SPEECHES OR THE PARTICIPATION OF DONORS IN CEREMONIES MARKING THE KEY STAGES OF A PROJECT'S DEVELOPMENT.

"IF A DONOR WISHES TO HAVE THE HONOUR OF NAMING A GOVERNMENT PROJECT, HE OR SHE WOULD NORMALLY BE REQUIRED TO CONTRIBUTE AT LEAST 50 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL COST OF THAT PROJECT.

"SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS FOLLOW EVEN MORE FLEXIBLE RULES. THEY ARE GENERALLY FREE TO SELECT NAMES FOR THEIR PROJECTS AND TO PUBLICISE DONATIONS AS THEY SEE FIT," HE SAID.

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GUIDELINES ON TREATING POLITICAL ISSUES FOR TEACHERS

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TEACHERS ARE ADVISED TO BE OBJECTIVE AND BALANCED WHEN TEACHING OR DISCUSSING POLITICAL ISSUES AND TO COVER THE PROS AND CONS OF ANY IDEAS, SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES.

THEY ARE ALSO ASKED TO HELP STUDENTS ACCEPT DIFFERENT VIEWS AND STRIVE FOR CO-OPERATION AND HARMONY WITH OTHERS WHO DO NOT NECESSARILY SHARE THEIR VIEWS.

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"THE OVERALL OBJECTIVE IS TO HELP STUDENTS FORM THEIR OWN OPINIONS ON MATTERS TAUGHT OR DISCUSSED," THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, SAID IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHIM PUI-CHUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"TEACHERS WHO WISH TO EXPRESS THEIR OWN PERSONAL OPINION ARE SPECIFICALLY INVITED TO MAKE THIS CLEAR TO THE STUDENTS," HE ADDED.

IN THIS REGARD, MR CHAN SAID, THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAD ISSUED GENERAL GUIDELINES TO TEACHERS.

MORE SPECIFIC CURRICULUM GUIDANCE ON SUBJECTS INVOLVING THE DISCUSSION OF POLITICAL ISSUES, SUCH AS SOCIAL STUDIES, GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, ECONOMIC AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND LIBERAL STUDIES, ARE ALSO GIVEN TO THEM.

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TOWN PLANNING BOARD MEMBERSHIP EXPLAINED

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THE BACKGROUND, BUSINESS ACTIVITIES AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OF EACH MEMBER OF THE TOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD ARE ALL CAREFULLY CONSIDERED BEFORE AN APPOINTMENT IS OFFERED TO MAINTAIN A BALANCE OF INTEREST.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LAU CHIN-SHEK IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR EASON SAID THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD SHOULD PROVIDE A RANGE OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE IN MATTERS RELATING TO URBAN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT.

"MEMBERS ARE APPOINTED ON THE BASIS OF INDIVIDUAL EXPERTISE AND INVOLVEMENT IN VARIOUS FIELDS OF RELEVANT WORK.

"THEY ARE NOT, HOWEVER, REQUIRED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE BOARD PURELY FROM THE NARROW STANDPOINT OF THEIR PARTICULAR EXPERTISE, BUT TO TAKE A BROADER VIEW BASED ON COMMON SENSE," HE SAID.

AT PRESENT, THE BOARD HAS 30 MEMBERS, AMONG WHOM SIX ARE OFFICIAL AND 24 ARE NON-OFFICIAL MEMBERS CATEGORISED BY TRADE AND PROFESSION.

MR EASON SAID IN LINE WITH THE PRACTICE OF OTHER MAJOR PUBLIC BODIES, ALL BOARD MEMBERS WERE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE A REGISTRATION FORM DECLARING THE PECUNIARY INTERESTS THEY HOLD.

THESE REGISTRATION FORMS ARE INCLUDED IN A REGISTER WHICH IS AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC PERSUAL ON REQUEST.

THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD PROCEDURES AND PRACTICE INCLUDED GUIDELINES REQUIRING MEMBERS TO DECLARE THEIR INTEREST IN ANY RELEVANT DISCUSSION ITEM BEFORE THE BOARD, HE SAID, ADDING THAT THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS HAD BEEN CONSULTED ON THESE PROCEDURES.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 1993

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTHEAST NEW TERRITORIES LANDFILL

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THE SOUTH EAST NEW TERRITORIES LANDFILL ENCROACHED ONTO THE CLEAR WATER BAY COUNTRY PARK BECAUSE IT INCREASED THE CAPACITY OF THE LANDFILL BY ABOUT 20 PER CENT AND SUBSTANTIALLY EXTENDED ITS POTENTIAL LIFE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON EMILY LAU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IT PERMITTED A MORE NATURAL LANDFILL DESIGN WHICH, UPON COMPLETION, WOULD BLEND MORE READILY WITH THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE AND WOULD REDUCE THE UNIT COST OF DISPOSAL, HE SAID.

MR EASON SAID THE OBJECT OF PUBLIC WORKS SUB-COMMITTEE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE PAPERS WAS TO SEEK FUNDING APPROVAL FOR PROJECTS FOR WHICH ALL NECESSARY CONSULTATION PROCEDURES HAD BEEN COMPLETED AND STATUTORY OR ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS HAD BEEN OBTAINED.

"THE PAPERS ARE INTENDED TO BE COMPREHENSIVE BUT CONCISE AND TO FOCUS ON THE KEY ISSUES REQUIRING DECISION, NAMELY THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL THEY COVER.

"SUFFICIENT INFORMATION SHOULD BE INCLUDED TO ENABLE MEMBERS TO UNDERSTAND THE BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT AND THE PRIMARY USES TO WHICH THE FUNDS BEING SOUGHT WILL BE PUT.

"MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO SEEK ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT IF NECESSARY," HE SAID.

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STUDY ON CHANGING AIRPORT HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS

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THE PLANNING, TRAFFIC, INFRASTRUCTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGING AIRPORT HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS, PARTICULARLY AFTER THE RELOCATION OF THE AIRPORT, ARE CURRENTLY BEING STUDIED IN THE "REVIEW OF BUILDING DENSITY AND HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS IN KOWLOON AND NEW KOWLOON".

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON SZETO WAH IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"SINCE THE STUDY IS STILL IN PROGRESS, IT IS PREMATURE TO SAY WHETHER THE EXISTING PLOT RATIO RESTRICTIONS WILL BE CHANGED OR NOT," MR EASON SAID, ADDING THAT THE STUDY WOULD BE COMPLETED THIS YEAR.

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THE KWUN TONG INDUSTRIAL AREAS ARE AT PRESENT SUBJECT TO AIRPORT HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS UNDER THE HONG KONG AIRPORT (CONTROL OF OBSTRUCTIONS) ORDINANCE.

DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY IN THE AREA IS ALSO SUBJECT TO RESTRICTIONS UNDER THE TEMPORARY CONTROL OF DENSITY OF BUILDING DEVELOPMENT (KOWLOON AND NEW KOWLOON) ORDINANCE.

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WATER SEEPAGE IN PRIVATE DOMESTIC PREMISES

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COLOUR DYE TESTING IS CONSIDERED THE MOST PRACTICABLE AND EFFECTIVE MEANS TO TRACE THE SOURCE OF WATER SEEPAGE IN PRIVATE DOMESTIC PREMISES WHERE LEAKAGE SOURCE IS UNKNOWN.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON VINCENT CHENG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR EASON SAID THE INVESTIGATION OF SUCH SEEPAGE COMPLAINTS WAS UNDERTAKEN PRIMARILY BY THE TWO MUNICIPAL SERVICES DEPARTMENTS.

MORE SERIOUS CASES WHICH CONSTITUTE A POTENTIAL HEALTH HAZARD OR RISK TO THE STRUCTURE OF THE BUILDING ARE REFERRED TO THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT AND THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT FOR ACTION.

MR EASON SAID WATER SEEPAGE TENDED TO BE A COMPLEX PROBLEM AND TIME TAKEN TO IDENTIFY THE SOURCE VARIED DEPENDING ON THE COMPLEXITY OF THE CASE AND THE CO-OPERATION OF THE OCCUPANTS CONCERNED.

"HOWEVER, THE DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS AREA, FOR INSTANCE, ON THE AVAILABILITY OF EQUIPMENT CAPABLE OF DETECTING EMBEDDED LEAKING PIPES WITHIN BUILDINGS," HE SAID.

MR EASON SAID THE REFERRAL SYSTEM AMONG THE DEPARTMENTS HAD BEEN IMPROVED RECENTLY AND THIS SHOULD HELP SPEED UP THE TIME TAKEN TO INVESTIGATE CASES.

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62 CHINESE MOTHERS ALLOWED TO STAY IN HONG KONG
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THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID 62 OF THE 70 "ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT MOTHERS" WHO WERE REPATRIATED TO CHINA IN JANUARY 1988 HAD RETURNED TO HONG KONG ON ONE-WAY PERMITS ISSUED BY THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LAU CHIN-SHEK IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), HE SAID THEY HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO REMAIN HERE.

THE REMAINING EIGHT WHO HAVE NOT YET OBTAINED THEIR ONE-WAY EXIT PERMITS ARE FROM HAIFENG, GUANGZHOU, PANYU, SHANTOU AND SHANWEI.

"THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT HAS ASKED THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES TO CONSIDER SYMPATHETICALLY THE CASE OF THIS GROUP FOR THE EARLY ISSUE OF ONE-WAY EXIT PERMITS," MR ASPREY SAID.

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STUDY ON TSEUNG KWAN O CLINIC SITE
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THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY IS WORKING WITH THE RELEVANT GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS TO IDENTIFY A SUITABLE SITE FOR THE PROVISION OF A SPECIALIST CLINIC IN TSEUNG KWAN O, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN HER WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON EMILY LAU, MRS WONG SAID SHE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE CONCERN OF THE TSEUNG KWAN O AND SAI KUNG RESIDENTS FOR ADDITIONAL MEDICAL FACILITIES.

"HOWEVER, ANY PROPOSAL FOR A NEW MEDICAL FACILITY MUST BE CAREFULLY EXAMINED AND FULLY JUSTIFY ON ITS OWN MERITS TO ENSURE THAT PUBLIC FUNDS ARE SPENT IN A COST-EFFECTIVE MANNER TO CATER FOR THOSE IN NEED," SHE SAID.

"IN THE CASE OF TSEUNG KWAN O, WE MUST ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE PACE OF POPULATION BUILD-UP AND THE INTERFACE WITH OTHER EXISTING AND FACILITIES UNDER PLANNING," SHE NOTED.

ON THE QUESTION OF WHEN A SPECIALIST CLINIC WILL BE BUILT IN THE AREA, MRS WONG SAID IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO BE PRECISE UNTIL A SUITABLE SITE HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED.

"MEMBERS MAY WISH TO KNOW THAT ONCE A SITE IS IDENTIFIED AND SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES, IT WOULD TAKE TWO TO THREE YEARS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CLINIC," SHE ADDED.

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SOCIAL WORKERS MAY TAKE PART IN POLITICS

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SOCIAL WORKERS IN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS HAVE THE RIGHT TO TAKE PART IN PUBLIC LIFE, JUST LIKE OTHER HONG KONG CITIZENS, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN HER WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHIM PUI-CHUNG, MRS WONG SAID SUCH RIGHT INCLUDED STANDING FOR ELECTION OR BEING APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO PUBLIC OFFICES SUCH AS MEMBERS OF DISTRICT BOARDS OR THE URBAN OR REGIONAL COUNCIL.

SHE SAID SINCE 1989, THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE HAD DEVELOPED A SET OF ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES OR POINTERS WITH REGARD TO STAFF TAKING PUBLIC OFFICES FOR THE GENERAL REFERENCE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS.

"THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THESE GUIDELINES IS TO FACILITATE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND TO CLARIFY EXPECTATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS BETWEEN AGENCIES AND THEIR STAFF," SHE SAID.

MRS WONG ALSO NOTED THAT AS THE FUNDING BODY, THE GOVERNMENT MONITORED THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS THROUGH THE USE OF OUTPUT MEASURES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS.

THIS IS TO ENSURE THAT THE SUBVENTED SERVICES ARE PROVIDED AT THE INTENDED STANDARDS, SHE ADDED.

AS REGARDS SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE SECRETARY SAID GUIDELINES WERE PROVIDED TO CIVIL SERVANTS ON JOINING POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS OR PARTICIPATING IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.

"THERE IS NO OBJECTION TO NON-DIRECTORATE GOVERNMENT SOCIAL WORKERS IN ENGAGING IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, EXCEPT FOR STANDING FOR ELECTION, PROVIDED SUCH ACTIVITIES DO NOT AFFECT THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR OWN DUTIES AND DO NOT TAKE PLACE DURING THEIR NORMAL WORKING HOURS," SHE SAID.

"HOWEVER, AS A GENERAL PRINCIPLE, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE CIVIL SERVICE SHOULD REMAIN POLITICALLY NEUTRAL IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT GOVERNMENT BUSINESS IS CONDUCTED IMPARTIALLY," SHE ADDED.

ASKED ABOUT THEIR NUMBER, MRS WONG SAID THERE WERE ABOUT 1,250 SOCIAL WORKERS EMPLOYED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT IN THE SOCIAL WORK ASSISTANT GRADE AND THE SOCIAL WORK OFFICER GRADE.

IN ADDITION, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS EMPLOY ABOUT 2,800 SOCIAL WORKERS IN SUBVENTED POSTS.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 1993

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NEW CLINIC PLANNED FOR LANTAU

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A NEW HEALTH CLINIC WILL BE CONSTRUCTED IN TUNG CHUNG TO CATER FOR THE PROJECTED POPULATION INCREASE ON LANTAU ISLAND.

SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION IN 1997, IT WILL PROVIDE A GENERAL OUT-PATIENT DEPARTMENT, A FAMILY HEALTH SERVICE CENTRE, A DENTAL CLINIC AND A CHEST CLINIC.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON LEONG CHE-HUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

AS REGARDS DISCOVERY BAY, MRS WONG NOTED THAT IT WAS BEING SERVED BY A PRIVATE CLINIC WITH THREE DOCTORS PROVIDING GENERAL OUT-PATIENT CONSULTATIONS AND 24-HOUR HOME VISIT SERVICES.

IT IS ALSO SERVED BY TWO CLINICS UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ON PENG CHAU AND MUI WO.

THESE TWO CLINICS PROVIDE GENERAL OUT-PATIENT CONSULTATIONS, MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES, AS WELL AS AN ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY SERVICE.

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POLICE RESOURCES ADEQUATE TO DEAL WITH EMERGENCIES

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THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, ASSURED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE RESOURCES OF THE POLICE WERE SUFFICIENT TO RESPOND TO ALL EMERGENCIES, INCLUDING SEVERAL INCIDENTS HAPPENING SIMULTANEOUSLY IN ONE DISTRICT.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID LI KWOK-PO, MR ASPREY SAID HONG KONG HAD A HIGH POLICE TO POPULATION RATIO.

"POLICE OFFICERS ON BEAT PATROL ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO INCIDENTS ON THE STREET BUT THEY MAY CALL ON OTHER POLICE FORMATIONS FOR SUPPORT," HE SAID.

IN THE VARIOUS POLICE REGIONS, SUPPORT FORMATIONS INCLUDE MOTORCYCLE AND MOBILE PATROL UNITS, EMERGENCY UNITS AND POLICE TACTICAL UNITS.

THE MAIN FUNCTION OF THE EMERGENCY UNITS IN EACH POLICE REGION IS TO PROVIDE A FAST RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES AND PROVIDE ENHANCED POLICE PRESENCE ON THE GROUND TO COMBAT CRIME.

THE POLICE TACTICAL UNITS ALSO PROVIDE BACKUP CAPABILITY.

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"WHEN THE NEED ARISES, SPECIALIST FORMATIONS FROM POLICE HEADQUARTERS MAY ALSO BE CALLED IN FOR SERVICE TO ASSIST," MR ASPREY SAID.

THE SECRETARY ALSO NOTED THAT THE POLICE FORCE WAS WELL-EQUIPPED AND WELL-TRAINED.

MOREOVER, MR ASPREY SAID THE POLICE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS ENABLED SPEEDY TRANSMISSION AND RETRIEVAL OF INFORMATION AND QUICK ANALYSIS OF INCIDENTS.

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NEW GROUP TO CO-ORDINATE ELDERLY SERVICES

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A WORKING GROUP ON CARE FOR THE ELDERLY WILL BE ESTABLISHED NEXT YEAR TO CO-ORDINATE AND MONITOR THE PROVISION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID.

SHE NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNISED THE NEED TO REVIEW THE POLICIES ON ELDERLY SERVICES TO ENSURE THAT THEY CONTINUED TO MEET THE CHANGING NEEDS OF HONG KONG.

"WE ARE ALREADY GOING FULL STEAM AHEAD TO IMPLEMENT TARGETS SET OUT IN THE 1991 WHITE PAPER 'SOCIAL WELFARE INTO THE 1990'S AND BEYOND' FOR SERVICES FOR ELDERLY PERSONS, SUCH AS RESIDENTIAL CARE SERVICES AND SOCIAL CENTRES FOR THE ELDERLY TO ENSURE TIMELY COMPLETION OF THESE PROJECTS," MRS WONG SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON YEUNG SUM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), SHE SAID: "WE ARE ALSO EXAMINING THE FEASIBILITY OF THE INTRODUCTION OF A SENIOR CITIZENS CARD IN HONG KONG."

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INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT STATISTICS ACCURATELY REFLECT SITUATION

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A TOTAL OF 55,343 INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS OCCURRED LAST YEAR, RESULTING IN 65 FATALITIES.

OF THE ACCIDENTS, 15,138 TOOK PLACE IN THE CATERING INDUSTRY WITH ONE FATALITY, 18,815 IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY WITH 48 FATALITIES, AND 21,390 IN THE MANUFACTURING AND OTHER INDUSTRIES WITH 16 FATALITIES.

AMONG THE FATAL CASES, 26 RELATED TO FALL FROM HEIGHT; 10 WERE CONNECTED WITH MACHINERY; AND EIGHT WERE KILLED BY STEPPING ON, STRIKING AGAINST OR STRUCK BY OBJECTS.

THE STATISTICS WERE RELEASED BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR CHAN NOTED THAT THE ACCIDENT RATE FOR LAST YEAR WAS 57.23 PER 1,000 WORKERS.

AS FOR THE FIRST FOUR MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, 41,480 ACCIDENTS WERE REPORTED, OF WHICH 6,006 WERE IDENTIFIED AS MAJOR ACCIDENTS.

THE SECRETARY EXPLAINED THAT THE METHODOLOGY FOR PREPARING INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT STATISTICS FOLLOWED THAT ADOPTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION.

"PRACTICALLY ALL INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS ARE REPORTED DUE TO THE OPERATION OF THE COMPULSORY EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION INSURANCE SYSTEM," HE SAID, ADDING THAT THE STATISTICS ACCURATELY REFLECT THE SITUATION.

AS REGARDS INSPECTIONS, MR CHAN SAID THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT MADE 78,364 INSPECTIONS LAST YEAR.

THE DEPARTMENT ALSO TOOK OUT 2,811 PROSECUTIONS AND THE AVERAGE FINE FOR EACH CONVICTION WAS \$5,302.

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LEGCO PASSES TWO MOTIONS

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A MOTION CALLING FOR A FIRM COMMITMENT TO ARTS DEVELOPMENT WAS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AFTER A TWO-HOUR DEBATE.

A TOTAL OF 16 MEMBERS SPOKE IN THE MOTION DEBATE PROPOSED BY THE HON CHRISTINE LOH. THE SECRETARY FOR RECREATION AND CULTURE, MR JAMES SO, REPLIED FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

A MOTION MOVED BY THE HON FRED LI WAH-MING URGING THE GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE THE SMOOTH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY OF INTEGRATING REHABILITATION SERVICES INTO THE COMMUNITY WAS ALSO PASSED AFTER TWO AND A HALF HOURS OF DEBATE.

A TOTAL OF 20 MEMBERS SPOKE. THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT.

THREE BILLS WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS. DEBATES ON THEM WERE ADJOURNED.

THEY WERE BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1993; LIFTS AND ESCALATORS (SAFETY) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993 AND INSURANCE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993.

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