



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 842 8777

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1992

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1992

- 1 -

BILL TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM UNSAFE TOYS AND PRODUCTS PASSED
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A BILL AIMS TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM UNSAFE TOYS AND CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS WAS PASSED INTO LAW TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

TO PROMOTE CONSUMER AWARENESS AND FACILITATE COMPLIANCE BY SUPPLIERS OF TOYS AND CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS, A PUBLICITY PROGRAMME FOR THE LEGISLATION WILL BE LAUNCHED.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE BILL WOULD TAKE EFFECT FROM JULY NEXT YEAR.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON TOYS AND CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS SAFETY BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MS DENISE YUE, SAID A MULTIPLE-STANDARD-REGIME FOR TOYS, INSTEAD OF A SINGLE-STANDARD-REGIME, WOULD BE ADOPTED.

UNDER THE ADOPTED REGIME, THE ICTI STANDARD, THE ASTM STANDARD ADOPTED IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE EN71 STANDARD ADOPTED IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY WILL BE PRESCRIBED AS EQUALLY ACCEPTABLE STATUTORY SAFETY STANDARDS.

"WE BELIEVE THAT A MULTIPLE-STANDARD-REGIME WILL MEET THE NEEDS OF HONG KONG AS A SMALL TOY MARKET," THE SECRETARY SAID.

MS YUE ALSO SAID IT WOULD MAXIMISE THE CHOICE OF TOYS SUPPLIED IN HONG KONG AND PROVIDE THE NECESSARY FLEXIBILITY FOR TOY SUPPLIERS WITHOUT UNDERMINING THE PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN.

TO ENSURE AN EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT OF THE LEGISLATION, THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT WILL ACT EXPEDITIOUSLY UPON RECEIPT OF COMPLAINTS.

IN ADDITION, THE DEPARTMENT WILL CONDUCT SPOT CHECKS ON TOYS AND CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS.

A DEDICATED TEAM OF TRADE CONTROL OFFICERS WILL BE ESTABLISHED TO PERFORM THESE FUNCTIONS, SHE SAID.

THE LEGISLATION ALSO STATED THAT PRE-SALE TESTING SHOULD BE VOLUNTARY. IT IS IN VIEW OF LEGAL ADVICE THAT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SANCTIONS PROVIDED MAY BE REDUCED BY THE ADOPTION OF COMPULSORY PRE-SALE TESTING.

AS A POSITIVE STEP TO ENCOURAGE SUPPLIERS TO CONDUCT PRE-SALE TESTING, AN AMENDMENT TO THE ORIGINAL BILL WAS MOVED, STIPULATING THAT THE COURT MAY TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE EXISTENCE OF A TESTING CERTIFICATE SHOWING COMPLIANCE WITH THE STATUTORY SAFETY STANDARDS, WHEN CONSIDERING A SPECIAL DEFENCE OF DUE DILIGENCE BY A SUPPLIER OF TOYS AND CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS IN PROCEEDINGS AGAINST HIM.

MS YUE ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT SHARED THE VIEW THAT THE TOY INDUSTRY SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIND OUT EASILY WHICH LABORATORIES HAD BEEN APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF INDUSTRY FOR THE PURPOSE OF TESTING TOYS AND CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS.

/SHE SAID

SHE SAID THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO PUBLISH FROM TIME TO TIME SUCH LABORATORIES WHICH WOULD INCLUDE THOSE ACCREDITED UNDER THE HONG KONG LABORATORIES ACCREDITATION SCHEME.

MOVING AMENDMENTS AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY SAID IT REMAINED THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY INTENTION THAT THE PRIMARY APPLICATION OF THE BILL WOULD BE TO TOYS FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE 14 YEARS OF AGE OR BELOW.

"THIS IS WITHIN THE UPPER AGE LIMIT SPECIFIED IN ANY ONE SET OF THE PRESCRIBED SAFETY STANDARDS AND WILL PROVIDE A USEFUL GUIDELINE FOR THE ENFORCEMENT AGENCY AND TOYS SUPPLIERS WHEN DETERMINING WHETHER A TOY FALLS WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE BILL," SHE SAID.

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EXCHANGE FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL

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A BILL TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY (HKMA) AND FOR THIS PURPOSE EXTENDS THE FUNCTIONS OF THE EXCHANGE FUND BY INTRODUCING A SECONDARY ROLE OF MAINTAINING THE STABILITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE MONETARY AND FINANCIAL SYSTEMS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF EXCHANGE FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992, THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS, MR DAVID NENDICK, SAID UNDER THE PROPOSALS THE HKMA WOULD REMAIN AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE GOVERNMENT.

BUT MR NENDICK ASSURED THAT IT WOULD BE GIVEN A HIGH DEGREE OF DAY TO DAY AUTONOMY, INCLUDING THE NECESSARY FLEXIBILITY TO DEPLOY STAFF RESOURCES IN RESPONSE TO PRIORITIES AND TO ENABLE IT TO IMPLEMENT AND ACHIEVE EFFICIENTLY MONETARY POLICY OBJECTIVES DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

"THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FULLY INDEPENDENT MONETARY AUTHORITY IN HONG KONG SEPARATE FROM THE GOVERNMENT WOULD, I BELIEVE, BE INCONSISTENT WITH THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE BASIC LAW," HE SAID.

THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS IN THESE DOCUMENTS STIPULATE THAT THE EXCHANGE FUND SHALL BE MANAGED AND CONTROLLED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION PRIMARILY FOR REGULATING THE EXCHANGE VALUE OF THE HONG KONG DOLLAR.

AN INDEPENDENT MONETARY AUTHORITY SEPARATE FROM THE GOVERNMENT WOULD THUS NOT HAVE AVAILABLE TO IT THE RESOURCES OF THE EXCHANGE FUND, HE SAID.

THE SECRETARY SAID AS THE GOVERNOR EXPLAINED IN HIS ADDRESS TO THE LEGCO ON OCTOBER 7, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AUTHORITY WOULD HELP ENSURE THAT HONG KONG'S MONETARY POLICY WAS CONDUCTED WITH THE CONTINUITY AND PROFESSIONALISM NECESSARY TO COMMAND THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG AND THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL COMMUNITY.

TO EFFECT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AUTHORITY, CLAUSE 4 OF THE BILL EMPOWERS THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO APPOINT A MONETARY AUTHORITY.

LEGALLY, THE MONETARY AUTHORITY WOULD BE A PERSON RATHER THAN AN INSTITUTION.

BUT IN PRACTICE THE TERM "MONETARY AUTHORITY" WOULD BE REGARDED AS AN ORGANISATION SO THAT AN INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY WOULD BE PROMINENT.

THE AUTHORITY WOULD BE FORMED BY MERGING THE OFFICE OF THE EXCHANGE FUND WITH THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING.

THE STAFF AND OPERATING COSTS OF THE AUTHORITY WOULD BE CHARGED DIRECTLY TO THE EXCHANGE FUND INSTEAD OF TO THE GENERAL REVENUE, THUS TAKING THE AUTHORITY OUTSIDE THE RESOURCE ALLOCATION CONSTRAINTS APPLICABLE TO OTHER PARTS OF GOVERNMENT.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY WOULD RETAIN ALL HIS STATUTORY POWERS UNDER THE EXCHANGE FUND ORDINANCE.

HE WOULD, HOWEVER, DELEGATE SUCH POWERS AS HE SAW FIT TO THE MONETARY AUTHORITY AND OTHER SENIOR STAFF EMPLOYED TO HELP THE MONETARY AUTHORITY.

THE AUTHORITY WOULD BE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WHO WOULD CONTINUE TO BE ADVISED BY THE EXCHANGE FUND ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE CONTROL OF THE EXCHANGE FUND.

TO REFLECT THE WIDER AMBIT OF THE FUND AND THE INCREASED RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COMMITTEE, THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE WOULD BE SUITABLY EXPANDED TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE FINANCIAL AND RELATED SECTORS.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MONETARY AUTHORITY WOULD NOT AFFECT THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT WHO WOULD CONTINUE TO SUBJECT THE RESOURCES OF THE EXCHANGE FUND TO STRINGENT AND CONTINUOUS AUDITING.

THE PUBLICATION OF THE EXCHANGE FUND'S ACCOUNTS IN JULY THIS YEAR HAS ENHANCED THE TRANSPARENCY OF THE EXCHANGE FUND IN THAT THE PERFORMANCE OF THE FUND IS NOW SUBJECT TO PUBLIC SCRUTINY, HE SAID.

TO FURTHER ENHANCE PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY, IT IS INTENDED THAT THE AUTHORITY'S ANNUAL REPORTS SHOULD BE TABLED IN THE LEGCO, MR NENDICK SAID.

CLAUSE 3 OF THE BILL GIVES STATUTORY RECOGNITION TO THE MONETARY POLICY OBJECTIVES OF HONG KONG.

IT PROVIDES THAT, APART FROM THE PRIMARY USE OF THE EXCHANGE FUND TO AFFECT THE HONG KONG DOLLAR EXCHANGE RATE, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY MAY USE THE EXCHANGE FUND TO MAINTAIN THE STABILITY AND THE INTEGRITY OF THE MONETARY AND FINANCIAL SYSTEMS OF HONG KONG, WITH A VIEW TO MAINTAINING HONG KONG AS AN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL CENTRE.

"I SHOULD EMPHASISE THAT THIS SECONDARY USE OF THE FUND WOULD BE STRICTLY LIMITED TO DEALING WITH PROBLEMS WITH SYSTEMIC IMPLICATIONS AND NOT FOR BAILING OUT INDIVIDUAL BANKS PER SE.

"WHILE THERE MIGHT BE OCCASIONS WHERE THE RESCUE OF AN INDIVIDUAL BANK PROVED NECESSARY TO PREVENT A DOMINO EFFECT ACROSS THE WHOLE BANKING SYSTEM, EACH CASE WOULD CONTINUE TO BE EXAMINED ON ITS MERITS."

THIS SECONDARY PURPOSE WOULD BE SUBORDINATE TO THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF MAINTAINING EXCHANGE RATE STABILITY.

SHOULD THERE BE ANY CONFLICT, THE PRIMARY PURPOSE WOULD PREVAIL, HE SAID.

CLAUSES 6 TO 45 OF THE BILL CONTAIN CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO A NUMBER OF ORDINANCES TO TRANSFER THE STATUTORY POWERS PRESENTLY VESTED IN THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING AND THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS IN SUCH ORDINANCES TO THE MONETARY AUTHORITY.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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DISTRICT COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 INTRODUCED

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PROPOSED LEGISLATION WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY TO IMPROVE THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN THE DISTRICT COURT.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE DISTRICT COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR JEREMY MATHEWS, SAID AT PRESENT, A DISTRICT JUDGE WHO HAD DELIVERED A JUDGEMENT OR MADE AN ORDER IN CIVIL PROCEEDINGS WAS ENTITLED, OF HIS OWN MOTION OR UPON APPLICATION, TO RE-OPEN A CASE AND REVERSE OR VARY HIS JUDGEMENT OR ORDER.

FURTHERMORE, WHERE A DISTRICT JUDGE SUBSEQUENTLY RECORDED IN WRITING THE REASONS HE DELIVERED ORALLY, HE MIGHT MODIFY HIS LEGAL REASONING.

"THE COURT OF APPEAL COMMENTED IN 1990, AND I AGREE, THAT SUCH POWERS DO NOT ENHANCE GENERAL CONFIDENCE IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE. BY CLAUSES 2 AND 3 THE BILL REPEALS THESE POWERS," MR MATHEWS SAID.

WHERE A DISTRICT JUDGE DELIVERED ORAL REASONS IN A CIVIL CASE, THE REASONS NEEDED ONLY BE RECORDED IN WRITING IN LIMITED CIRCUMSTANCES.

GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE OF LEGAL PROCEEDINGS IN THE DISTRICT COURT, THIS WAS CLEARLY INAPPROPRIATE, MR MATHEWS SAID.

/"THE BILL

"THE BILL THEREFORE PROVIDES THAT IN FUTURE ALL JUDGEMENTS WILL HAVE TO BE REDUCED TO WRITING."

BY CLAUSE 4, THE TIME LIMIT FOR APPEALING AGAINST A DECISION IN A CIVIL CASE WAS EXTENDED WITH A VIEW TO ENSURING THAT A PARTY WOULD HAVE RECEIVED THE JUDGE'S WRITTEN REASONS BEFORE HAVING TO DRAFT THE GROUNDS FOR ANY APPEAL.

AT PRESENT THE TIME LIMIT FOR APPEALING MIGHT EXPIRE BEFORE THE WRITTEN REASONS FOR THE JUDGMENT WERE AVAILABLE.

THE BILL ALSO ADDRESSED THE QUESTION OF RECORDING VERDICTS AND JUDGEMENTS IN CRIMINAL CASES. THE EXISTING PROVISION IN SECTION 80 OF THE DISTRICT COURT ORDINANCE WAS LOOSELY WORDED.

CLAUSE 5 OF THE BILL SUBSTITUTED A NEW SECTION. THIS REQUIRED THE VERDICT AND ANY SENTENCE, TOGETHER WITH THE REASONS, TO BE ANNOUNCED ORALLY. THIS WAS FOR THE BENEFITS OF THE ACCUSED.

THE CLAUSE ALSO PROVIDED THAT THE VERDICT AND SENTENCE BE FORMALLY RECORDED AT THE TIME OF HANDING DOWN, AND THE REASONS REDUCED TO WRITING WITHIN 21 DAYS.

MR MATHEWS SAID THE JUDICIARY AND THE LEGAL PROFESSION HAD EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR THE PRINCIPLES OF THE BILL.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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FORESTS AND COUNTRYSIDE BILL INTRODUCED TO LEGCO

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A BILL THAT SEEKS TO UPDATE THE FORESTS AND COUNTRYSIDE ORDINANCE HAS BEEN INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ONE OF THE PROPOSALS IS THE REMOVAL OF COLLECTIVE LIABILITY IMPOSED ON VILLAGERS COMMITTING THE OFFENCES OF FELLING, CUTTING, BURNING OR OTHERWISE DAMAGING OR DESTROYING TREES ON GOVERNMENT LAND.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE FORESTS AND COUNTRYSIDE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, EXPLAINED THAT BECAUSE OF CHANGES IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES, TREES WERE NO LONGER USED AS A SOURCE OF FUEL.

MOST IF NOT ALL OF THE IMPORTANT FORESTS AND PLANTATIONS ARE NOW PROTECTED UNDER THE COUNTRY PARKS ORDINANCE, HE SAID.

ANOTHER PROPOSAL SEEKS THE INCLUSION OF MORE DETAILED PROVISIONS IN RELATION TO POWERS OF INSPECTION, SEARCH, ARREST AND SEIZURE BY AUTHORISED OFFICERS AND THE ISSUE OF SEARCH WARRANTS.

MR EASON SAID THEY FOLLOWED THE PROVISIONS RECENTLY INTRODUCED INTO THE POLICE FORCE ORDINANCE AND WERE CONSISTENT WITH THE BILL OF RIGHTS.

THE BILL ALSO SEEKS TO REVISE THE MAXIMUM FINE FOR OFFENCES UNDER THE ORDINANCE FROM \$2,000 TO \$25,000 TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE GRAVITY OF THE OFFENCE AS WELL AS INFLATION, AND TO MAINTAIN THE DETERRENT EFFECT.

REFERRING TO ACTIVITIES SUCH AS CUTTING GRASS OR PLANTS AND REMOVING TURF OR EARTH IN FORESTS AND PLANTATIONS, MR EASON SAID SUCH ACTS WERE SOMETIMES NECESSARY FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH PURPOSES.

THE BILL THEREFORE PROPOSES TO EMPOWER THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES TO ISSUE SPECIAL PERMITS TO ALLOW THESE ACTS FOR SUCH PURPOSES, HE SAID.

THE BILL ALSO PROPOSES THE POWERS TO MAKE REGULATIONS UNDER SECTION 3 OF THE ORDINANCE BE VESTED IN THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS INSTEAD OF THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL SINCE THESE INVOLVE PURELY ROUTINE AND TECHNICAL MATTERS.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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MOTIONS UNDER COMPANIES AND BANKRUPTCY ORDINANCES PASSED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED TWO MOTIONS TO INCREASE CERTAIN FEES PAYABLE IN RELATION TO PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE COMPANIES AND THE BANKRUPTCY ORDINANCES.

THE FEES PAYABLE IN THE HIGH COURT IN RELATION TO PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE WERE LAST REVISED IN 1988.

THOSE PAYABLE IN RELATION TO PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE BANKRUPTCY ORDINANCE WERE LAST REVISED IN 1985, 1988 AND 1989 RESPECTIVELY.

MOVING THE MOTIONS, THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS, MR DAVID NENDICK, SAID THE REVISION REFLECTED THE INCREASES IN THE COST OF PROVIDING THESE SERVICES SINCE THE DATES.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1992

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MEASURES TO IMPROVE VENTILATION IN AIRPORT'S ARRIVAL KERBSIDE

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A NUMBER OF MEASURES HAD RECENTLY BEEN IMPLEMENTED TO TRY AND ALLEVIATE THE PROBLEM OF FOUL AIR IN THE ARRIVAL KERBSIDE AREA AT KAI TAK AIRPORT, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ANSON CHAN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HOWARD YOUNG, MRS CHAN SAID THE PROBLEM WAS CAUSED BY INADEQUATE CIRCULATION OF AIR IN THE ENCLOSED SECTION OF THE ARRIVALS KERBSIDE AREA, AND WAS AGGRAVATED BY THE TENDENCY FOR VEHICLES - IN PARTICULAR COACHES - TO KEEP THEIR ENGINES AND AIR-CONDITIONING SYSTEMS RUNNING WHILE WAITING TO PICK UP ARRIVING PASSENGERS.

"IN ORDER TO IMPROVE VENTILATION A NEW FRESH AIR SUPPLY SYSTEM WAS COMMISSIONED IN AUGUST. THIS DRAWS AIR DOWN FROM THE ROOF OF THE PASSENGER TERMINAL TO VENTILATE THE ARRIVALS KERBSIDE AREA.

"THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN REQUESTED TO CARRY OUT TESTS TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER THE AIR QUALITY IN THE VICINITY NOW MEETS ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS," SHE SAID.

MRS CHAN SAID TO REDUCE THE NUISANCE CAUSED BY EXHAUST EMISSIONS FROM VEHICLES A NEW CONDITION WAS INCLUDED IN THE PERMIT FOR COACHES HAVING ACCESS TO THE ARRIVALS FORECOURT REQUIRING THEM TO SWITCH OFF THEIR ENGINES WHILE PARKED AT THE KERBSIDE.

"AS A FURTHER MEASURE, THE CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT IS CONSULTING THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY COUNCIL ON THE FEASIBILITY OF INTRODUCING A SYSTEM WHEREBY COACHES WOULD WAIT IN A HOLDING AREA, AWAY FROM THE ARRIVALS FORECOURT, UNTIL CALLED TO THE KERBSIDE TO PICK UP WAITING PASSENGERS.

"A FURTHER BENEFIT OF THIS APPROACH IS THAT PASSENGERS COULD REMAIN IN THE AIR-CONDITIONED BUFFER HALL UNTIL THEIR TRANSPORT ARRIVES," SHE ADDED.

MRS CHAN SAID THE CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION CLOSELY AND EXPLORE ALL POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT.

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1,493 ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS CAUGHT ON CONSTRUCTION SITES

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THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THE POLICE ARRESTED 1,493 ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS ON CONSTRUCTION SITES BETWEEN NOVEMBER 1, 1990 AND SEPTEMBER 30 THIS YEAR.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG, HE SAID THE OVERALL PERCENTAGE OF MULTIPLE EVADERS OUT OF ALL ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS ARRESTED WAS NOW MORE THAN 40 PER CENT.

"OUR DATA DOES NOT ENABLE ME, IN THE SHORTAGE OF TIME, TO SPECIFY FURTHER HOW CLOSELY THIS PERCENTAGE IS MATCHED ON CONSTRUCTION SITES, BUT THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE RATIO IS MUCH DIFFERENT," HE ADDED.

SECTION 38A OF THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE CREATES AN OFFENCE FOR AN ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT TO BE ON A CONSTRUCTION SITE. IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO PROVE THAT HE IS WORKING ON THE SITE.

IN RELATION TO THIS SECTION, 29 PROSECUTIONS HAVE BEEN INSTITUTED AGAINST CONSTRUCTION SITE CONTROLLERS.

OF THESE, 13 HAVE PLEADED GUILTY; NINE HAVE BEEN CONVICTED AFTER TRIAL; FIVE SUMMONSES HAVE NOT BEEN PROCEEDED WITH; AND TWO ARE AWAITING TRIAL.

THE PENALTIES IMPOSED ON THE 22 CONVICTIONS HAVE BEEN FINES RANGING FROM \$10,000 TO \$125,000. THE MAXIMUM PENALTY IS \$250,000.

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CHINA RESPONSIBLE FOR ONE-WAY PERMIT QUOTA ALLOCATION

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THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ALLOCATION WITHIN THE ONE-WAY PERMIT QUOTA OF 75 IMMIGRANTS A DAY FROM CHINA UNDER AN AGREEMENT DATING FROM 1982.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, IN HIS REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HENRY TANG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"ANY CHANGE IN THE QUOTA WOULD NEED TO BE DISCUSSED WITH THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES BEFORE IT COULD BE IMPLEMENTED," HE SAID.

HE SAID THE ADMINISTRATION HAD STARTED A REVIEW ON THE EXISTING QUOTA.

/"UNTIL THIS

"UNTIL THIS REVIEW HAS BEEN COMPLETED I CANNOT ADVISE THIS COUNCIL WHETHER OR NOT WE WOULD WISH TO CHANGE ANY ASPECT OF THE QUOTA," HE ADDED.

NINETY PER CENT OF THE PRESENT QUOTA IS ALREADY USED IN PRACTICE FOR FAMILY REUNION.

NEARLY HALF OF THESE PLACES ARE FILLED BY THE WIVES OF HONG KONG MEN WHO MARRIED IN CHINA, AND WHOSE WIVES HAD THEREFORE TO WAIT IN THE QUOTA QUEUE.

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PILOT SCHEME TO HELP IMPLEMENT TTRA

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A TARGET AND TARGET-RELATED ASSESSMENT (TTRA) PILOT SCHEME WAS INTRODUCED IN 20 PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR TO OBTAIN PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IN ITS OPERATION AND TO IDENTIFY POSSIBLE PROBLEMS WHICH MIGHT BE ENCOUNTERED IN LAUNCHING THE SYSTEM.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

INTRODUCED AT THE SUGGESTION OF THE OMELCO EDUCATION PANEL, THE PILOT SCHEME SHOULD HELP MAKE THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF TTRA AS SMOOTH AS POSSIBLE.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TIK CHI-YUEN, MR CHAN SAID TTRA WOULD BE LAUNCHED INITIALLY AT PRIMARY 4 COVERING THE CORE SUBJECTS OF CHINESE, ENGLISH AND MATHEMATICS IN MAY 1993.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PILOT SCHEME, HE NOTED, SHOULD BE JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT EITHER CONFIRMS THAT THE SCHEME CAN BE IMPLEMENTED SMOOTHLY OR IDENTIFIES AREAS WHERE IMPROVEMENTS AND CHANGES ARE NECESSARY.

TO ASSESS THIS, QUESTIONNAIRES FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS, PUPILS AND PARENTS WILL BE ISSUED; AND FEEDBACK SESSIONS AND INTERVIEWS WITH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS AND PUPILS WILL BE ORGANISED AT REGULAR INTERVALS.

IN ADDITION, THERE WILL BE CLASSROOM OBSERVATION AND SCHOOL VISITS.

AT PRESENT, THE PILOT SCHEME IS BEING RUN WITHIN THE EXISTING RESOURCES OF THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS.

HOWEVER, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES HAVE BEEN PROVIDED WITHIN THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO DEVELOP THE NECESSARY SYSTEMS AND MATERIALS AS WELL AS TO TRAIN TEACHERS IN THEIR NEW TASKS.

THESE AMOUNT TO \$18 MILLION IN 1992/93 RISING TO \$33 MILLION IN 1995/96.

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MEANWHILE, THE GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING A RANGE OF IMPROVEMENTS TO ENABLE TEACHERS TO DEVOTE MORE INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION TO STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS.

"THESE MEASURES, IN PARTICULAR THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL TEACHERS, WILL CONTRIBUTE TO MAKING TTRA WORK IN THE DESIRED MANNER," HE ADDED.

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CLASS SIZES TO BE REDUCED ONE LEVEL AT A TIME

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ALL LEVELS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS WILL HAVE THEIR CLASS SIZES REDUCED TO 35 PER CLASS BY 1998, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, SAID.

THE SMALLER CLASSES WILL THEN BE EXTENDED TO SECONDARY 1 AS FROM 1999, HE ADDED.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG MAN-KWONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR CHAN SAID THE REDUCTION IN CLASS SIZES, STARTING WITH PRIMARY 1 IN SEPTEMBER 1993, IS PART OF A COHERENT AND INTEGRATED PACKAGE OF MEASURES AIMED AT IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION.

"PRIMARY 1 HAS BEEN CHOSEN AS THE STARTING POINT FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS: IT IS LOGICAL; IT ACCORDS WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN EDUCATION COMMISSION REPORT NO. 5 WHICH HAVE BEEN WIDELY SUPPORTED; IT IS LIKELY TO PRODUCE THE GREATEST BENEFITS IN THE LONG TERM; AND IT IS PRACTICABLE," HE POINTED OUT.

"THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN IS TO WORK THROUGH THE SYSTEM ONE LEVEL AT A TIME."

TO REDUCE SECONDARY 1 CLASSES TO 35 AS FROM NEXT YEAR WOULD BE UNREALISTIC AND WILL REQUIRE THE GOVERNMENT TO BUILD 65 ADDITIONAL SCHOOLS DURING THE NEXT NINE MONTHS.

NOTING THAT THERE IS NO QUESTION OF PARTIALITY OR UNFAIRNESS OF TREATMENT, THE SECRETARY EXPLAINED THAT SECONDARY SCHOOLS ARE DIFFERENT FROM PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MANY RESPECTS.

FOR EXAMPLE, SECONDARY SCHOOLS ARE BIGGER BY 17 PER CENT. 70 PER CENT OF THE TEACHING POSTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS ARE AT GRADUATE LEVEL, COMPARED TO NONE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS AT THE MOMENT.

IN ADDITION, SECONDARY SCHOOLS ENJOY A MORE FAVOURABLE STAFF TO CLASS RATIO.

"THESE DIFFERENCES APART, SECONDARY SCHOOLS WILL ALSO BENEFIT FROM THE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR REMEDIAL TEACHING AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS ARISING FROM EDUCATION COMMISSION REPORT NO. 4.

"THEY WILL ALSO BE PROVIDED WITH ADDITIONAL TEACHERS AS ANNOUNCED IN THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS," SAID MR CHAN.

MR CHAN ALSO REAFFIRMED THE GOVERNMENT'S UNDERTAKING TO RESTORE, BY 1996, THE TWO REPEATED PLACES PER CLASS WHICH WERE WITHDRAWN FROM THE MAJORITY OF SECONDARY 1 CLASSES AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS SCHOOL YEAR.

HE EMPHASISED THAT THE PACKAGE OF MEASURES THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE TAKING WILL ADDRESS SPECIFIC AREAS OF NEED AND CONTRIBUTE TO AN OVERALL UPGRADING OF QUALITY AND STANDARDS.

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MEASURES TO MINIMISE SICK BUILDING SYNDROME
IN GOVERNMENT'S PROPERTIES

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THE GOVERNMENT AS A DEVELOPER AND BUILDING OWNER HAS TAKEN STEPS TO MINIMISE THE RISK OF SICK BUILDING SYNDROME WITHIN PROPERTIES IT CONTROLS.

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

IN PARTICULAR, AIR-CONDITIONING DESIGNS MUST COMPLY WITH APPROPRIATE BRITISH AND AMERICAN STANDARDS, WHERE THE PROBLEM OF SICK BUILDING SYNDROME IS ALSO BEING STUDIED, MR BLAKE SAID.

"ADDITIONALLY, STANDING INSTRUCTIONS TO ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT DEAL WITH BUILDING ENGINEERING SYSTEMS INCLUDING THEIR DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE, WITH A VIEW TO AVOIDANCE OF THE SICK BUILDING SYNDROME IN GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS," HE SAID.

SO FAR THERE HAVE BEEN BNO NOTIFICATIONS OF CASES OF "SICK BUILDING SYNDROME" HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

MR BLAKE ALSO THREW SOME LIGHT ON GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS:

- * A SPECIALIST CONSULTANT WAS ENGAGED IN 1990/91 TO INVESTIGATE THE SEVERITY OF THE PROBLEM IN A FULLY AIR-CONDITIONED GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL WHICH HAD BEEN IN OPERATION FOR SIX YEARS. NO SERIOUS PROBLEM WAS FOUND;
- * OUT OF MORE THAN TWO THOUSAND AIR-CONDITIONED GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS WE HAVE RECEIVED COMPLAINTS FROM THE OCCUPANTS OF ONLY THREE BUILDINGS WHICH MIGHT BE RELATED TO SICK BUILDING SYNDROME, SINCE THE ISSUE FIRST CAME TO PUBLIC ATTENTION IN 1989; AND

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* AIR QUALITY SURVEYS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED IN GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS SINCE 1989. THE RESULTS HAVE SHOWN NO SERIOUS PROBLEM.

"TO INVESTIGATE THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM, WE WOULD NEED AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF ALL BUILDINGS. THIS WOULD REQUIRE SUBSTANTIAL RESOURCES AND YEARS OF RESEARCH," HE SAID.

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GOVT AIMS TO GET CHINA'S SUPPORT ON AIRPORT PROJECT
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IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S PRINCIPAL AIM TO SECURE CHINA'S SUPPORT FOR THE NEW AIRPORT PROJECTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING, THE SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR K Y YEUNG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"ANY OTHER OPTION WAS SECOND BEST," MR YEUNG SAID IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHIM PUI-CHUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE SAID THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, HAD REITERATED THIS AIM ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS.

"BUT - AS THE GOVERNOR HAS SUGGESTED - UNTIL WE GET AN OVERALL AGREEMENT, WE SHOULD DO WHAT WE CAN TO CONTINUE TO TAKE THE PROJECTS FORWARD," HE ADDED.

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CLEARANCE PROCESSES AT LOWU UNDER REVIEW
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THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN VERY ACTIVE IN REVIEWING AND STREAMLINING THE PROCEDURES IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE STANDARD OF CLEARING A PASSENGER WITHIN 30 MINUTES, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ZACHARY WONG WAI-YIN, MR STRACHAN SAID: "WE ARE NOW CONSIDERING FURTHER STREAMLINING OF ACTUAL PROCEDURES. THIS WILL REQUIRE THE CO-OPERATION OF THE CHINESE SIDE."

IF AND WHEN SUCH IMPROVEMENTS ARE ABLE TO BE IMPLEMENTED, IT WILL VERY CONSIDERABLY REDUCE THE AVERAGE WAITING TIME FOR VISITORS FROM CHINA, HE SAID.

THE OVERALL TRAFFIC THROUGH LOWU HAD BEEN INCREASING VERY DRAMATICALLY, UP BY 39% SINCE 1989.

/THIS GROWTH

THIS GROWTH IN TRAFFIC HAS NOT BEEN MATCHED BY A CORRESPONDING INCREASE IN RESOURCES, HE SAID.

"THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT HAS THEREFORE HAD TO IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY," HE SAID.

DESPITE THESE DIFFICULTIES, MR STRACHAN SAID THE ABOVE STANDARD WAS STILL ACHIEVED FOR 90% OF THE PASSENGERS ON NORMAL WEEKDAYS.

ON WEEKENDS AND HOLIDAYS WHEN THE TRAFFIC IS ALWAYS EXTREMELY HEAVY, 65% OF THE PASSENGERS ARE CLEARED WITHIN 45 MINUTES, HE ADDED.

AS FOR THE HOLDERS OF ONE-WAY PERMITS, MR STRACHAN SAID THEY WERE PROCESSED AT THE DESIGNATED EXAMINATION AREA (PERMIT OFFICE) BECAUSE THEY WERE COMING FOR SETTLEMENT AND WERE THEREFORE SUBJECT TO A DIFFERENT AND MORE DETAILED SET OF PROCEDURES.

MEMBERS OF CHINESE TOUR GROUPS FOR HONG KONG OR OVERSEAS ORGANISED BY DESIGNATED TRAVEL AGENTS AND HOLDERS OF CHINESE PASSPORTS IN TRANSIT TO OTHER DESTINATIONS ARE CLEARED AT THE PERMIT OFFICE IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH THEIR BONA FIDE AS VISITORS AND TO ENSURE THAT SUITABLE ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR THEIR VISIT TO/TRANSIT THROUGH HONG KONG.

HE SAID: "GIVEN THE EXTRA STEPS REQUIRED, CLEARANCE TAKES LONGER TIME THAN AT THE COUNTER."

THE CORRESPONDING WAITING TIME FOR PASSENGERS FROM CHINA BEING CLEARED VARIES FROM 1 TO 3 HOURS.

HE NOTED THAT THE WAITING TIME WAS OFTEN AFFECTED BY THE VERY UNEVEN FLOW OF TRAFFIC OF TWO-WAY PERMIT VISITORS.

"THE MAJORITY ARE CLEARED WITHIN 90 MINUTES," HE ADDED.

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GOVT WORKING TO MAXIMISE EASE OF TRAVEL OF ALL RESIDENTS

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS WORKED CONSISTENTLY TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WHICH PRESENTLY REQUIRE HONG KONG RESIDENTS TO HAVE VISAS TO VISIT THEM, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"WE MUST ACKNOWLEDGE REALISTICALLY THAT SOME COUNTRIES HAVE IMMIGRATION OR POPULATION CONTROL PROBLEMS WHICH THEY CONSIDER REQUIRE THEM TO IMPOSE VISA RESTRICTIONS ON MOST IF NOT ALL VISITORS," MR STRACHAN SAID.

NEVERTHELESS, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO ARGUE STRONGLY FOR OPENING OF TRAVEL AS IT DID FOR OPENING OF TRADE EVERYWHERE.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHIM PUI-CHUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, MR STRACHAN SAID:

"IT WOULD MAKE VERY LITTLE SENSE IN MOST CASES TO IMPOSE CORRESPONDING ENTRY VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR NATIONALS OF THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH DO NOT OFFER RECIPROCAL ENTRY VISA REQUIREMENTS TO HONG KONG RESIDENTS."

THIS WOULD IN GENERAL BE DETRIMENTAL TO HONG KONG WHICH DEPENDS SO MUCH ON TRADE AND TOURISM.

MR STRACHAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS KEEN TO MAXIMISE THE EASE OF TRAVEL OF ALL HONG KONG RESIDENTS, INCLUDING HOLDERS OF HONG KONG CERTIFICATES OF IDENTITY.

HONG KONG OFFERS NATIONALS OF 170 COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES VISA-FREE VISIT TO HONG KONG. 75 COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES OFFER VISA-FREE VISIT TO HOLDERS OF HONG KONG BDTC OR BN(O) PASSPORTS.

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ROLE OF DISTRICT BOARDS REMAINS UNCHANGED

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THE ADMINISTRATION HAS NO INTENTION OF CHANGING THE BASIC ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON GILBERT LEUNG, MR SUEN SAID THERE WAS NO PLAN TO LET THE DISTRICT BOARDS TAKE OVER THE WORK AND FUNCTION OF THE DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.

HE SAID THE COMMITTEE WOULD STILL REMAIN THE FORUM FOR INTER-DEPARTMENTAL DELIBERATION OF DISTRICT MATTERS AND CO-ORDINATION OF ACTION TO DEAL WITH DISTRICT PROBLEMS.

HOWEVER, MR SUEN SAID THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO STRENGTHEN THE INFLUENCE AND PARTICIPATION OF DISTRICT BOARDS IN LOCAL AFFAIRS.

"THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED BY REQUIRING GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS TO TAKE HEED OF THE ADVICE OF DISTRICT BOARDS IN THEIR WORK AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL.

"COMPREHENSIVE ACTION PLANS ADOPTED BY THE DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE TO TACKLE DISTRICT PROBLEMS WILL HAVE TO BE DEvised IN CLOSE CO-OPERATION WITH THE DISTRICT BOARDS.

"DEPARTMENTS WILL BECOME MORE ACCOUNTABLE TO DISTRICT BOARDS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUCH ACTION PLANS. REGULAR REPORTS WILL BE SUBMITTED TO DISTRICT BOARDS TO ENABLE THEM TO MONITOR PROGRESS MORE CLOSELY," HE SAID.

AND, MR SUEN NOTED THAT IT WAS NOT NECESSARY TO AMEND ANY LEGISLATION TO GIVE EFFECT TO THIS.

ON THE ALLOCATION OF DISTRICT BOARD FUNDS, MR SUEN REITERATED THAT IT WOULD BE INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY IN ORDER TO ENABLE THE ADVISORY BODIES TO UNDERTAKE MORE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND MINOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS IN THEIR DISTRICTS.

HE ADDED THAT DISTRICT BOARDS ALSO RECEIVED FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR WORTHWHILE DISTRICT PROJECTS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES SUCH AS THE LOTTERIES FUND, THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND LOCAL BUSINESSMEN.

FOR THIS REASON, THERE WAS NO PLAN TO SUPPLEMENT THESE ARRANGEMENTS BY ALLOWING DISTRICT BOARDS TO HAVE INDEPENDENT SOURCES OF REVENUE SIMILAR TO THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS, HE SAID.

MR SUEN SAID THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS AMONG THE 19 DISTRICTS WAS DETERMINED BY THE POPULATION OF THE DISTRICT, THE GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD OF THE DISTRICT, DISTRICT NEEDS AND PAST RECORD OF EXPENDITURE.

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PROPOSAL TO EXTEND EXHIBITION FACILITY BEING STUDIED

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THE ADMINISTRATION IS STUDYING A PROPOSAL BY THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL TO CONSTRUCT AN EXTENSION FACILITY TO THE HONG KONG CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTRE (HKCEC), THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MS DENISE YUE, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HUANG CHEN-YA, MS YUE SAID THE OCCUPANCY RATE OF THE TWO EXHIBITION HALLS OF HKCEC, TOTALING 18,000 SQ.M., FOR THE YEAR MAY 1991 TO APRIL 1992 WAS AROUND 60%.

HONG KONG'S EXHIBITION FACILITIES ARE MAINLY PROVIDED BY HKCEC THOUGH SOME SMALLER-SCALE EVENTS ARE HELD IN VENUES SUCH AS CHINA RESOURCES CENTRE, HOTELS AND SOMETIMES SHOPPING COMPLEXES.

MS YUE SAID IT WAS NOT EASY TO FORECAST THE DEMAND FOR EXHIBITION FACILITIES SINCE DEMAND WAS AFFECTED BY A NUMBER OF FACTORS SUCH AS THE ECONOMIC AND TRADE ENVIRONMENT, THE AVAILABILITY AND RELATIVE COMPETITIVENESS OF OTHER EXHIBITION CENTRES IN THE REGION.

"HOWEVER, BASED ON HISTORICAL DATA OF THE OCCUPANCY RATE OF THE HKCEC EXHIBITION FACILITIES, THE UTILISATION RATE FOR MEDIUM TO LARGE-SCALE EXHIBITIONS IS LIKELY TO GROW BY ABOUT 7% ANNUALLY.

"ON THE SUPPLY SIDE, WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY FIRM PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVES TO CONSTRUCT ANY PREMISES FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF HOLDING EXHIBITIONS. IT SHOULD HOWEVER BE NOTED THAT NEW FACILITIES FOR SMALL- TO MEDIUM-SCALE EVENTS MAY BE AVAILABLE IN HOTELS OR SHOPPING ARCADES TO BE BUILT IN THE YEARS TO COME," SHE SAID.

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DRUG ABUSE AMONG YOUTHS IN HK LESS SERIOUS

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THERE ARE INDICATIONS, BASED ON ANECDOTAL INFORMATION, THAT DRUG ABUSE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN HONG KONG IS A LESS SERIOUS PROBLEM THAN ELSEWHERE IN SOUTH EAST ASIA, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON SELINA CHOW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR STRACHAN SAID IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO MAKE COMPARISONS BETWEEN HONG KONG AND NEIGHBOURING SOUTH EAST ASIAN CITIES, BECAUSE STATISTICS ON DRUG ABUSE IN THESE PLACES WERE NOT READILY AVAILABLE.

HE ALSO SAID IT WAS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S EDUCATIONAL MEASURES TO PROMOTE THE AWARENESS OF YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE HARM OF DRUG ABUSE.

"HOWEVER, WE REGULARLY SEEK FEEDBACK FROM TEACHERS AND PUPILS AND THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE MESSAGE IS CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD," HE SAID.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT PAID PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO DRUG ABUSE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER 21.

TWO SCHOOL SURVEYS WERE CONDUCTED IN 1987 AND 1990 TO COLLECT DATA ON DRUG ABUSE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE. A THIRD SURVEY IS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY.

MR STRACHAN ALSO SAID A PILOT SCHEME HAD BEGUN TO EXTEND DRUG EDUCATION TALKS TO PRIMARY 6 STUDENTS. AT PRESENT, THESE TALKS ARE HELD IN ALL SECONDARY SCHOOLS, BOYS AND GIRLS HOMES AND YOUTH ORGANISATIONS.

"WE ARE ALSO ARRANGING TALKS ON DRUG MATTERS FOR BOTH PARENTS AND CHILDREN TOGETHER. A NUMBER OF TALKS HAVE BEEN ORGANISED, BUT THE RESPONSE, SO FAR, HAS BEEN DISAPPOINTING," HE SAID.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO PERSEVERE WITH THESE TALKS BECAUSE EXPERIENCE OUTSIDE HONG KONG SUGGESTED THAT TALKS WHICH INVOLVED BOTH PARENTS AND CHILDREN HAD A MUCH GREATER IMPACT THAN THOSE WHICH INVOLVED ONLY ONE OR THE OTHER.

HE ALSO SAID PLANS ARE AFOOT TO CONDUCT A SERIES OF TALKS IN TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGES.

"OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO ENCOURAGE TEACHERS TO DEAL WITH DRUG ISSUES DURING NORMAL LESSONS," HE SAID.

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NEW SYSTEM TO IMPROVE MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC HOUSING

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THE HOUSING AUTHORITY HAS RECENTLY INTRODUCED A NEW MAINTENANCE PLANNING SYSTEM TO ENSURE REGULAR AND BETTER CO-ORDINATED INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF ITS PROPERTIES.

THIS WAS STATED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON CONRAD LAM KUI-SHING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR EASON SAID THE SYSTEM, KNOWN AS CONDITION, APPRAISAL, REPAIR AND EXAMINATION, WOULD PRODUCE FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS TO THE AUTHORITY'S MAINTENANCE SERVICE.

FROM JANUARY 1990 TO JUNE THIS YEAR, THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT RECEIVED A TOTAL OF 9,970 COMPLAINTS OR REPORTS ON GENERAL MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS AND A FURTHER 6,524 IN RESPECT OF BUILDING SERVICES INSTALLATIONS.

"THE STATISTICS GIVEN SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S STOCK OF ABOUT 845,000 UNITS," HE STRESSED.

DURING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, THERE WAS ABOUT ONE REPORT FOR EVERY 100 FLATS.

ON THE COMPLETION TIME FOR REPAIRS, HE SAID FOR EMERGENCY WORK AND IN PARTICULAR CASES WHERE SAFETY WAS IMPORTANT, THE RESPONSE WAS IMMEDIATE.

"FOR NORMAL ROUTINE REPAIRS, RANGING FROM FIXING A DOOR LOCK TO WATER SEEPAGE, THE TIME TAKEN VARIES FROM AN HOUR TO A FEW WEEKS," MR EASON ADDED.

"HOWEVER, THE AUTHORITY HAS TAKEN ACTION TO IMPROVE RESPONSE TIME, TIME NEEDED TO COMPLETE THE REPAIRS AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WORK THROUGH IMPROVED SUPERVISION OF CONTRACTORS AND THE USE OF NEW CONTRACTORS' PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM.

"FOR EXAMPLE, OVER THE PAST SIX YEARS, THE AVERAGE LIFT BREAKDOWN RATE HAS BEEN HALVED TO 0.5 BREAKDOWNS PER LIFT PER MONTH AND THE NUMBER OF ELECTRICAL RISER FAULTS HAS DROPPED FROM 770 IN 1990 TO ABOUT 300 SO FAR THIS YEAR," HE SAID.

SYMPATHY FOR WAR VICTIMS

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THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS, MR DAVID NENDICK, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT BOTH HONG KONG AND BRITISH GOVERNMENTS SYMPATHISED GREATLY WITH THOSE WHO SUFFERED LOSS AND HARDSHIP IN HONG KONG DURING THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION.

HOWEVER, THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT HAS NO STANDING TO PRESS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO TAKE THE MATTER UP FURTHER WITH THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON SZETO WAH, MR NENDICK SAID WHEN THE MATTER WAS LAST RAISED IN THE COUNCIL IN DECEMBER 1990, IT WAS REFERRED TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT FOR CONSIDERATION.

IN A LETTER DATED JANUARY 25 LAST YEAR FROM THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE TO THE HONG KONG REPARATION ASSOCIATION, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ADVISED THAT UNDER THE TREATY OF PEACE WITH JAPAN SIGNED BY THE UNITED KINGDOM AND OTHER ALLIED POWERS IN SAN FRANCISCO IN 1951, THE SUMS RECEIVED AT THE TIME WOULD BE RECOGNISED AS A FULL DISCHARGE BY THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT OF ITS OBLIGATIONS.

THE 1951 PEACE TREATY APPLIED TO HONG KONG.

"THE VICTIMS THEMSELVES ARE, OF COURSE, FREE TO PURSUE ANY CLAIMS DIRECTLY WITH THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT.

"IF THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT DECIDED OF THEIR OWN WILL TO MAKE SOME COMPENSATION IN RESPECT OF SUCH CLAIMS, WE ARE SURE THIS WOULD BE WELCOMED," HE ADDED.

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NEW COMMITTEE TO PROMOTE HOME-SCHOOL CO-OPERATION

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THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IS TAKING STEPS TO SET UP A NEW STANDING COMMITTEE TO ADVISE THE GOVERNMENT ON WAYS TO PROMOTE POSITIVE ATTITUDES AMONG HEADMASTERS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS TOWARDS HOME-SCHOOL CO-OPERATION, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON SELINA CHOW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR CHAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD EARMARKED \$5 MILLION TO SUPPORT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE.

THESE ACTIVITIES MAY INCLUDE CONDUCTING A SURVEY TO INVESTIGATE CURRENT PERCEPTIONS OF HOME-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS; DRAWING UP A STATEMENT OF THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS, SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS IN THE EDUCATION PROCESS; PRODUCING TRAINING MATERIALS FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS; AND DISBURSING PROJECT GRANTS TO SCHOOLS.

/MR CHAN

MR CHAN ALSO TOLD MEMBERS THAT GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FORMS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT IN THE CORE PROGRAMME OF ALL INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING COURSES BY THE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION.

"AS RECOMMENDED IN THE EDUCATION COMMISSION'S REPORT NO. 4, THIS COMPONENT HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED SINCE SEPTEMBER 1991 TO HELP ALL TEACHER TRAINEES DEVELOP A POSITIVE ATTITUDE IN ASSISTING STUDENTS TO RESOLVE THEIR DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEMS," HE SAID.

"TEACHER TRAINEES ARE PROVIDED WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO DEEPEN THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS THROUGH ACADEMIC, CULTURAL, CREATIVE AND CONTEMPORARY STUDIES, AS WELL AS THROUGH SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS ON CIVIC EDUCATION, SEX EDUCATION, JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND GOOD PARENTING.

"THEY ALSO LEARN HOW TO CONDUCT EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS OUTSIDE NORMAL CLASSROOM SITUATIONS, THEREBY FACILITATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HOME-SCHOOL CO-OPERATION."

REGULAR PROFESSIONAL SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS ARE CONDUCTED FOR TEACHERS BY EDUCATIONAL COUNSELLORS OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

EIGHT ONE-DAY WORKSHOPS ON "EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION" FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS TO ENHANCE THEIR COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN WORKING WITH STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS WERE HELD EARLIER THIS YEAR AND 12 MORE WILL BE CONDUCTED BY MID-1993.

IN ADDITION, 12 REGIONAL DISCUSSION SESSIONS FOR TEACHERS REPRESENTING SCHOOLS IN THE SAME AND NEIGHBOURING REGIONS TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES IN WORKING WITH STUDENTS AND PARENTS ARE SCHEDULED BETWEEN OCTOBER THIS YEAR AND FEBRUARY 1993.

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LAW GOVERNING PRIVATE TUITION SCHOOLS TO BE AMENDED

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APPROPRIATE LEGISLATION WILL BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE CURRENT SESSION TO RECTIFY THE EXISTING PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE REGISTRATION OF PRIVATE TUITION SCHOOLS, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG MAN-KWONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR CHAN SAID THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAD IDENTIFIED THREE BROAD PROBLEM AREAS DURING ITS INVESTIGATIONS INTO EXISTING REGISTERED AND UNREGISTERED PRIVATE TUITION SCHOOLS.

THE FIRST CONCERNS REGISTERED SCHOOLS FAILING TO COMPLY WITH TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS, SUCH AS REPORTING THE APPOINTMENT OF TEACHERS AND OBTAINING APPROVAL TO OPERATE NEW COURSES.

MR CHAN SAID THESE PROBLEMS, WHERE FOUND, HAD BEEN RECTIFIED ON THE ADVICE OF THE SCHOOL INSPECTORS.

THE SECOND PROBLEM RELATES TO AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF UNREGISTERED OPERATIONS.

"AS THESE DID NOT REACH THE MINIMUM ENROLMENT TO TRIGGER THE NEED FOR REGISTRATION AS SCHOOLS, THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WAS UNABLE TO DETERMINE WHETHER THEY MET REASONABLE REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE SAFETY OF PREMISES, THE QUALITY OF SERVICES RENDERED AND THE LEVEL OF FEES CHARGED," HE NOTED.

ANOTHER PROBLEM RELATES TO WHETHER THE EDUCATION ORDINANCE PROVIDES THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WITH ADEQUATE POWERS TO EXERCISE PRUDENTIAL CONTROL OVER THE OPERATIONS OF PRIVATE TUTORIAL SCHOOLS, BOTH IN REGARD TO THEIR REGISTRATION AND THE WAY SOME OF THEM ADVERTISE THEIR COURSES.

MR CHAN SAID THE BOARD OF EDUCATION HAD BEEN CONSULTED AND SUPPORTS IN PRINCIPLE THE POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS TO THE EDUCATION ORDINANCE TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED.

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INFORMATION ON FRANCHISED BUS SERVICES PROVIDED

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INFORMATION ON THE ROUTEING, TIMETABLES AND FARES OF INDIVIDUAL FRANCHISED BUS SERVICES IS DISPLAYED IN BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE AT BUS TERMINI AND STOPS.

THIS WAS STATED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PETER WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR LEUNG SAID ALL FOUR FRANCHISED BUS COMPANIES ALSO PROVIDED A HOTLINE FOR HANDLING PASSENGER ENQUIRIES IN BOTH LANGUAGES.

"THEY HAVE ALSO DEVELOPED VARIOUS OTHER WAYS TO DISTRIBUTE PASSENGER INFORMATION," HE SAID.

THE KOWLOON MOTOR BUS COMPANY (KMB) AND CITYBUS LIMITED PROVIDE ROUTE MAPS. THE CHINA MOTOR BUS COMPANY PUBLISHES ROUTE INFORMATION IN LEAFLETS FOR NEW SERVICES.

THE NEW LANTAO BUS COMPANY DISSEMINATES CUSTOMERS INFORMATION AT A CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE AT MUI WO, THE MAIN INTERCHANGE FOR BUSES SERVING LANTAU.

ALL SUCH INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE IN BOTH LANGUAGES.

MR LEUNG ALSO NOTED THAT THE HONG KONG TOURIST ASSOCIATION ISSUED BROCHURES FOR FOREIGN VISITORS IN VARIOUS LANGUAGES.

"THESE BROCHURES CONTAIN INFORMATION ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT, INCLUDING SELECTED FRANCHISED ROUTES SERVING PLACES OF INTEREST TO TOURISTS AND KMB'S SERVICES TO THE AIRPORT," HE SAID.

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INITIATIVES BEING TAKEN TO IMPROVE STANDARD OF ENGLISH

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THE GOVERNMENT IS FULLY AWARE OF THE NEED TO IMPROVE THE ENGLISH STANDARD OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HENRY TANG, MR CHAN NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS TAKING A NUMBER OF INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION.

FIRST, THE INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION IS RUNNING A 16-WEEK IN-SERVICE REFRESHER COURSE FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS IN BOTH PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

SINCE 1987, MR CHAN SAID, THE COURSE FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO INCLUDE A FOUR-WEEK COURSE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

IN ADDITION, ABOUT 100 TEACHER TRAINEES MAJORING IN ENGLISH AT THE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION ARE ALSO SENT EVERY YEAR TO BRITAIN ON A SIX-WEEK TOTAL IMMERSION ENGLISH COURSE.

SECONDLY, THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO SET A CONSISTENT POLICY ON THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS IN 1994.

"UNDER THIS POLICY, SCHOOLS AND PARENTS WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO CHOOSE EITHER CHINESE OR ENGLISH AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION ON THE BASIS OF OBJECTIVE MEASURES OF THEIR CHILDREN'S NEEDS," MR CHAN SAID.

"STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS BEING ABLE TO LEARN THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF ENGLISH WILL BE OFFERED A BRIDGING COURSE IN SECONDARY 1 TO HELP THEM CHANGE OVER FROM CHINESE MEDIUM IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO THE ENGLISH MEDIUM.

"THE ENGLISH STANDARDS OF THESE STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO IMPROVE VERY CONSIDERABLY IN THE YEARS TO COME."

THOSE WHO WILL STUDY IN THE CHINESE MEDIUM ARE ALSO EXPECTED TO BE ABLE TO LEARN ENGLISH BETTER BECAUSE OF THE GENERAL IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR LEARNING CAPACITY THROUGH THE USE OF THE MEDIUM THEY ARE COMFORTABLE WITH, MR CHAN ADDED.

THIRDLY, ENGLISH IS ONE OF THE THREE CORE SUBJECTS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE TARGET AND TARGET-RELATED ASSESSMENTS (TTRA) INITIATIVE WHICH WILL BEGIN WITH PRIMARY 4 IN MAY 1993 AND EXTEND FROM PRIMARY 1 TO SECONDARY 3 BY 1997.

THE TTRA IS DESIGNED TO ENABLE STUDENTS TO ATTAIN THE HIGHEST STANDARDS THAT CAN REALISTICALLY BE ACHIEVED WITHIN THE TIME ALLOCATED TO ENGLISH AS A SUBJECT IN THEIR SCHOOLS.

FOURTHLY, BASED ON RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN BY THE INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL ENGLISH MATERIALS HAVE BEEN WRITTEN AND A CERTIFICATION SCHEME IS BEING PREPARED AT VARIOUS LEVELS.

/"FROM SEPTEMBER

"FROM SEPTEMBER 1993 LANGUAGE INSTITUTES AND INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYERS WILL BE ABLE TO MOUNT COURSES USING THE VOCATIONAL ENGLISH MATERIALS TAILORED TO THE NEEDS OF THE WORKPLACE.

"THE VOCATIONAL ENGLISH PROGRAMME, WHICH IS DESIGNED TO IMPROVE THE STANDARDS OF ENGLISH IN THE WORKPLACE, WILL EVENTUALLY BE EXTENDED FROM BASIC TO ADVANCED LEVEL," MR CHAN ADDED.

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WATER QUALITY OF SHING MUN RIVER IMPROVING
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THERE HAVE BEEN SLOW BUT STEADY IMPROVEMENTS IN THE WATER QUALITY OF THE SHING MUN RIVER, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR EASON SAID SUBSTANTIAL MEASURES WERE IN HAND TO UPGRADE THE SEWERAGE PROGRAMMES FOR THE RIVER AND ITS CATCHMENT.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON EMILY LAU WAI-HING, HE SAID THESE MEASURES WERE PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO ABATE POLLUTION IN TOLO HARBOUR - THE TOLO HARBOUR ACTION PLAN.

THE ACTION PLAN COMBINES ENFORCEMENT OF THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ORDINANCE WITH SEWERAGE PROGRAMMES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND REDUCE THE QUANTITY OF DISCHARGES INTO THE TOLO HARBOUR CATCHMENT INCLUDING THE SHING MUN RIVER.

THE SEWERAGE PROGRAMMES ARE:

* UPGRADING OF THE SHA TIN AND TAI PO SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS TO ABATE THE NITROGEN POLLUTION IN DISCHARGES FROM THE WORKS;

* IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SEWERAGE MASTER PLAN FOR THE UNSEWERED AREAS IN THE TOLO CATCHMENT. THE PLAN INVOLVES THE PROVISION OF SEWERAGE FACILITIES TO SOME 165 UNSEWERED VILLAGES OVER A 10-YEAR CONSTRUCTION PERIOD;

* TO REDUCE STILL FURTHER THE POLLUTION LOADING ENTERING THE TOLO HARBOUR AN EFFLUENT EXPORT SCHEME IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION. THIS SCHEME WILL TRANSFER ALL TREATED EFFLUENTS FROM THE SHA TIN (STAGE ONE) AND THE TAI PO (STAGE TWO) SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS TO VICTORIA HARBOUR THROUGH THE KAI TAK NULLAH. STAGE ONE WILL BE COMPLETED IN NEXT YEAR; STAGE TWO IN 1995.

THE SHING MUN RIVER LIES WITHIN THE TOLO HARBOUR AND CHANNEL WATER CONTROL ZONE.

TO DATE, ALL PRIVATE DOMESTIC SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANTS IN UNSEWERED AREAS ARE LICENSED AND OVER 90 PER CENT COMPLY WITH THE TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM (TM) REQUIREMENTS, THE REMAINING 10 PER CENT ARE BEING ADVISED TO COMPLY BY ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION STAFF.

OVER 90 PER CENT OF THE INDUSTRIAL DISCHARGES IN THE AREA, PARTICULARLY THOSE FROM THE ELECTROPLATING AND THE PRINTED CIRCUIT BOARD FACTORIES IN INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS AT FO TAN AND TAI WAI, COMPLY WITH THE STANDARDS IN THE TM.

MR EASON SAID MOST OF THE REMAINING INDUSTRIAL DISCHARGES WERE IN THE PROCESS OF INSTALLING FACILITIES TO PROVIDE PRE-TREATMENT BEFORE DISCHARGE INTO SEWERS.

SLUDGES DISCHARGED FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S SHA TIN WATERWORKS AND FROM THE SHA TIN SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS HAVE BEEN TRANSPORTED AWAY FROM THE SHING MUN RIVER FOR MARINE DISPOSAL SINCE JULY LAST YEAR.

"AS A RESULT OF THESE MEASURES, THERE HAVE BEEN SLOW BUT STEADY IMPROVEMENTS IN THE WATER QUALITY OF THE RIVER," MR EASON SAID.

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REALISTIC TARGETS SET FOR MANPOWER SAVINGS

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THE GOVERNMENT FULLY RECOGNISED THE NEED TO SET REALISTIC TARGETS FOR MANPOWER SAVINGS AND TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE ACHIEVED, THE SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR K Y YEUNG, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON CONRAD LAM KUI-SHING, MR YEUNG SAID A FORMAL SYSTEM OF POST-IMPLEMENTATION REVIEWS HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED FOR ALL ADMINISTRATIVE COMPUTER SYSTEMS COSTING MORE THAN \$5 MILLION.

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF 1989, FINANCE COMMITTEE HAD APPROVED 10 COMPUTERISATION PROJECTS WHICH ENVISAGE MANPOWER SAVINGS UPON IMPLEMENTATION.

SEVEN OF THE PROJECTS ARE STILL UNDER WAY. THREE HAVE BEEN COMPLETED AND THE MANPOWER SAVINGS ENVISAGED HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1992

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THREE BILLS PASSED IN LEGCO

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THREE MOTIONS UNDER INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES ORDINANCE MOVED BY THE HON ALBERT CHAN AND THE HON LAU CHIN-SHEK RESPECTIVELY WERE PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THREE BILLS WERE ALSO PASSED. TWO WITHOUT AMENDMENT. THEY ARE OATHS AND DECLARATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 AND BUSINESS REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992. THE THIRD BILL, TOYS AND CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS SAFETY BILL WAS PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS.

THREE BILLS WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS. DEBATES ON THEM WERE ADJOURNED. THEY WERE: DISTRICT COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992, EXCHANGE FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 AND FORESTS AND COUNTRYSIDE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992.

TWO MOTIONS UNDER COMPANIES ORDINANCE AND BANKRUPTCY ORDINANCE MOVED BY THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS WERE PASSED.

THE HONG KONG INDUSTRIAL ESTATES CORPORATION ANNUAL REPORT 1991/92 WAS TABLED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY.

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IS OUR PRIORITY: CS

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THE GOVERNOR IN HIS SPEECH LAST MONTH HAS PUT MUCH EMPHASIS UPON THE NEED TO GIVE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION A PRIORITY WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT AND IN THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DAVID FORD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

OFFICIATING AT THE OPENING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FESTIVAL '92, SIR DAVID SAID THE WORLD HAD IGNORED ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR A LONG TIME.

"FOR YEARS, WE HAVE IGNORED IT. WE'VE USED THE PLANET LIKE A GIANT GABBAGE CAN. BUT WE KNOW WE SIMPLY CANNOT GO ON DOING THAT SORT OF DAMAGE WITHOUT CATASTROPHIC CONSEQUENCES BOTH FOR US, AND THE MOST IMPORTANT FOR OUR CHILDREN," SIR DAVID SAID.

"AND IT IS PARTICULAR SAD HERE IN HONG KONG, BECAUSE HONG KONG HAS SOME OF THE FINEST SURROUNDINGS IN THE WORLD AND YET SOME OF THE WORST POLLUTIONS.

"WE HAVE THE MONEY TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM NOW, WE HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY. AND WHAT WE MUST MAKE SURE WE ALSO HAVE IS THE WILL POWER. AND THAT IS WHY THERE ARE OF COURSE, MANY OTHER PRESSING ISSUES, BUT WE MUST NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE GREAT NEED TO KEEP PUSHING THE NEED TO IMPROVE OUR ENVIRONMENT.

"WE CANNOT GO ON PUTTING FILTH INTO OUR AIR, POURING CHEMICALS INTO OUR WATER AND DUMPING RUBBISH INTO THE SEA. WE HAVE TO PUT A STOP TO IT," HE SAID.

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MEASURES TO REDUCE USE OF HARDWOOD

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THE GOVERNMENT IS AIMING THROUGH SPECIFICATION AS AN IMMEDIATE MEASURE TO MINIMISE THE USE OF HARDWOOD, TROPICAL OR OTHERWISE, FOR HOARDINGS ON CONSTRUCTION SITES.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR WORKS, MR JAMES BLAKE, AT A SEMINAR ON PROGRESS AND PRESERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"CONTRACTORS TENDERING WILL BE REQUIRED TO PROPOSE ALTERNATIVES IN THEIR TENDERS, OR DIRECTED TO USE SPECIFIED ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVES WHEN A NUMBER ARE READILY AVAILABLE," MR BLAKE SAID.

IN ADDITION TO ENCOURAGING ALTERNATIVE MATERIALS FOR HOARDINGS AND FORMWORK, THE GOVERNMENT WILL LOOK TO MINIMISE THE USE OF HARDWOOD FOR PROPPING AND STRUTTING OF FORMWORK, OR PLANKING AND SHORING FOR TRENCHES, BY ASKING CONTRACTORS TO PUT FORWARD SYSTEMS THAT MAXIMISE THE RE-USE OF MATERIALS OTHER THAN WOOD.

MR BLAKE HOPED THAT ACTIONS IN THESE AREAS WOULD BE SEEN TO BE PRODUCING RESULTS EARLY NEXT YEAR.

ON PREVENTION OF WASTE ON CONSTRUCTION SITES, MR BLAKE SAID THE EFFECTIVE USE OF CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS BY WAY OF QUALITY CONTROL WOULD BE A WAY TO REDUCE THE NECESSITY FOR RECYCLING, REDUCE THE NECESSITY FOR FINDING MORE LANDFILLS, AND LEAVE MORE NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE GROUND EXACTLY WHERE THEY BELONG.

IN REGARD TO ENERGY EFFICIENCY, MR BLAKE NOTED THAT THE MURRAY BUILDING, IN WHICH OFFICES OF THE WORKS BRANCH WERE HOUSED, HAD BEEN DESIGNED TO BE AND STILL WAS A SUCCESSFUL ENERGY EFFICIENT BUILDING.

"THE GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN AN INITIATIVE IN MOVING TOWARDS TIGHTER CONTROL OVER THE THERMAL PERFORMANCE OF BUILDING EXTERIORS.

"HOWEVER, IT DOES NOT REMOVE THE NEED FOR A TOTAL ENERGY APPROACH ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR, IN DEVELOPING ITS CONCEPT DESIGNS, CONSTRUCTING, AND OPERATING ITS BUILDINGS," MR BLAKE SAID.

ON MEASURES OF HANDLING WASTES, MR BLAKE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD ALREADY EXERCISED AND WILL CONTINUE TO EXERCISE CONTROL BY MEANS OF REGULATIONS AND ORDINANCES.

"IT WILL ALSO PROVIDE OVERALL MANAGEMENT OF SCARCE RESOURCES TO ENSURE THAT CONTRACTORS CAN USE SUCH RESOURCES WITHIN ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS," MR BLAKE SAID.

HE CITED THE EXAMPLE OF THE FILL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE WHICH IDENTIFIED AND MANAGED THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF LAND AND MARINE FILL RESOURCES, AND ALSO ENSURED THAT THERE WAS ADEQUATE PROVISION OF PUBLIC DUMPS FOR LANDFILL OR MARINE MUD.

MEANWHILE, THE GOVERNMENT ALSO UNDERTOOK THE CO-ORDINATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES, FOR EXAMPLE THE ROAD OPENING CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE WHICH HAD THE UNENVIABLE TASK OF CO-ORDINATING ROAD AND FOOTPATH WORKS BY VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND PRIVATE COMPANIES, TO MINIMISE DISTURBANCE AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION BROUGHT ABOUT BY SUCH WORKS.

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FREE TRADE POLICY REITERATED

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AN ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF INDUSTRY, MR FRANCIS HO, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) REITERATED THE GOVERNMENT'S FREE ENTERPRISE AND FREE TRADE POLICY WHICH WAS BASED ON A PHILOSOPHY OF MINIMUM INTERFERENCE OF MARKET FORCES AND MAXIMUM SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS.

SPEAKING AT THE AUSTRALIA - HONG KONG/CHINA BUSINESS FORUM IN MELBOURNE, MR HO SAID THIS WAS ONE BASIC REASON WHY HONG KONG WAS A LEADING MANUFACTURING, FINANCIAL AND TRADING CENTRE FOR GOODS AND SERVICES OF THE WORLD.

/"THUS INSTEAD

"THUS INSTEAD OF REGULATIONS, CONTROLS AND SO-CALLED 'NATIONAL' PLANNING, MY GOVERNMENT SEES ITS ROLE IN HUMAN RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT AS WELL AS OTHER DEVELOPMENTAL SUPPORT SO THAT THEY DO NOT LAG BEHIND OPPORTUNITIES; ENFORCEMENT OF EQUITABLE BUSINESS LAWS INCLUDING THOSE WHICH CONCERN THE PROTECTION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY; MAINTENANCE OF A LOW AND STABLE TAX REGIME; ENSURING THE FREE FLOW OF CAPITAL AND GOODS; KEEPING TO PRUDENT FISCAL POLICIES AND SO ON," HE SAID.

MR HO SAID THESE INITIATIVES HAD PAID OFF.

"WE HAVE AN INTELLIGENT, VERSATILE AND PRODUCTIVE AND HIGHLY MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

"THERE HAS BEEN ACTIVE PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN EVERY LINE OF BUSINESS, INCLUDING FINANCIAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES OF THE HIGHEST STANDARDS. THIS AGAIN IN TURN REINFORCES ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY IN HONG KONG.

"IN SUM WE DO NOT OFFER MATERIAL INVESTMENT INCENTIVES -- BUT WE TREASURE THE BUSINESS FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT WHICH WE HAVE CREATED THROUGH THE UNIQUE ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS OF HONG KONG," HE SAID.

MR HO SAID THE OPENING UP OF CHINA IN 1979 GAVE HONG KONG A NEW IMPETUS IN ITS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITH HONG KONG BUSINESS CARRYING ON MANUFACTURING ACTIVITIES ACROSS THE BORDER IN GUANGDONG.

"THIS HONG KONG/GUANGDONG PARTNERSHIP NOW HAS A SUCCESSFUL TRACK RECORD OF MORE THAN 13 YEARS, DRIVEN ENTIRELY BY ECONOMIC FORCES," HE SAID.

MR HO SAID THE VERY CLOSE ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HONG KONG AND CHINA HAD PLACED HONG KONG IN A UNIQUE POSITION TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS CHINA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WHILE FURTHERING ITS OWN.

HE SAID THE OPENING UP OF CHINA AS A MARKET AND A SOURCE OF LABOUR AND LAND SUPPLY FACILITATED THE FURTHER UPGRADING AND TRANSFORMATION OF HONG KONG'S ECONOMY.

"THE FLOURISHING RE-EXPORT TRADE BRINGS BUSINESS NOT ONLY TO OUR IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADERS, BUT ALSO OUR SERVICING SECTOR SUCH AS TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATION, FINANCE AND EVEN TOURISM. THIS ENHANCES HONG KONG'S POSITION AS AN INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL CENTRE.

"OUTWARD PROCESSING ACTIVITIES IN CHINA ALSO ALLOW HONG KONG COMPANIES TO CONCENTRATE THEIR EFFORTS IN MARKETING AND DEVELOPING MORE CAPITAL INTENSIVE AND HIGHER TECHNOLOGY PROCESSING IN HONG KONG AND TO MOVE UP MARKET," HE SAID.

AS FAR AS THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF HONG KONG WAS CONCERNED, MR HO SAID THE SHIFTING OF HONG KONG'S LABOUR INTENSIVE ASSEMBLY OPERATIONS INTO SOUTHERN CHINA HAD CREATED A STRONG DEMAND FOR HONG KONG TO BECOME A SUPPORT BASE NOT ONLY IN PROVIDING A VARIETY OF TECHNOLOGICAL SERVICES BUT ALSO IN THE SUPPLY OF MATERIALS, PARTS, COMPONENTS AND TOOLING.

"THE RELOCATION PROCESS HAS ALSO ENABLED HONG KONG MANUFACTURERS AND THEIR WORKFORCE TO CONCENTRATE ON THE MORE SKILL-INTENSIVE ACTIVITIES LOCALLY, THEREBY CONTRIBUTING DIRECTLY TO THE SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT IN LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY," HE SAID.

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LANTAU TAXI FARES TO BE REVISED
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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES THAT FARES FOR LANTAU TAXIS WILL BE REVISED FROM SUNDAY (NOVEMBER 8).

THE NEW FARES WILL BE \$8 FOR THE FIRST TWO KILOMETRES AND 80 CENTS FOR EVERY 0.2 KILOMETRE THEREAFTER.

THE FARES WERE LAST REVISED IN JUNE 1990.

PENDING THE CONVERSION OF TAXI METERS, LANTAU TAXIS MAY CHARGE THE REVISED FARES BY DISPLAYING A CONVERSION TABLE SHOWING THE REVISED FARE SCALES.

STARTING FROM TOMORROW (THURSDAY), OPERATORS AND DRIVERS OF LANTAU TAXIS CAN OBTAIN THE FARE CONVERSION TABLES FROM THE FOLLOWING GOVERNMENT OFFICES:

- * ISLANDS DISTRICT OFFICE AT MUI WO GOVERNMENT OFFICES, LANTAU ISLAND; AND
- * PUBLIC VEHICLES SECTION AT MURRAY ROAD MULTI-STOREY CARPARK BUILDING, CENTRAL.

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SUPERCITY 2001 COMPETITION
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THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WILL INTRODUCE A NEW SECONDARY 4-5 SUBJECT ON "TRAVEL AND TOURISM" IN SEPTEMBER NEXT YEAR AND THE FIRST HONG KONG CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION EXAMINATION ON THE SUBJECT WILL BE HELD IN 1995.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S PRINCIPAL CURRICULUM PLANNING OFFICER, MR NG KWOK-CHUEN, OF THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE, SAID THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AT A PRESS CONFERENCE TO LAUNCH A DESTINATION HONG KONG TRAVEL AND TOURISM COMPETITION.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1992

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TWO TOPICS SELECTED FOR THE COMPETITION WERE "HONG KONG: A CITY OF MANY FACES" AND "HONG KONG: SUPERCITY 2001".

THE COMPETITION, OPEN TO SECONDARY 3 TO 5 STUDENTS, WOULD FURTHER PROMOTE STUDENTS' AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INDUSTRY IN HONG KONG.

"IN TACKLING THESE TWO TOPICS, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF HONG KONG AS A TOURIST DESTINATION FOR TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE," MR NG SAID.

THE COMPETITION IS JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE AMERICAN EXPRESS.

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FINANCE COMMITTEE TO MEET ON FRIDAY

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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WILL HOLD A MEETING AT 2.30 PM ON FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 6) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

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

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NOTE TO EDITORS :

ADVANCE COPIES OF THE COMMITTEE'S PAPERS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THE MEDIA FROM 4 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT THE PRESS ROOM ON THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BUILDING. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE PAPERS WILL BE EMBARGOED FOR USE UNTIL THE MEETING ENDS.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1992

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS
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	\$ MILLION -----
OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,300
REVERSAL OF LAF	+200
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	1,500
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	NIL
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,500
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER TWI 112.3 *-0.3* 4.11.92	

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS			HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS			
TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	3.30 PCT	13 MONTHS	2311	6.25	102.46	3.84
1 MONTH	3.23 PCT	16 MONTHS	2402	5.50	101.55	4.29
3 MONTHS	3.21 PCT	19 MONTHS	2405	5.502	101.57	4.48
6 MONTHS	3.35 PCT	22 MONTHS	2408	4.375	99.60	4.66
12 MONTHS	3.86 PCT					

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 10,676 MN

CLOSED 4 NOVEMBER 1992

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