



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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PUBLIC VIEWS FULLY TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN WHITE PAPER

THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID FORD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN THE WHITE PAPER WAS PUBLISHED EARLY IN THE NEW YEAR, THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG WOULD BE ABLE TO JUDGE FOR THEMSELVES WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT HAD FULLY TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THEIR VIEWS IN DECIDING ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF A MOTION BY THE HON LYDIA DUNN THAT THE COUNCIL URGES THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON THE OPTIONS CONTAINED IN THE GREEN PAPER ON REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT BY SENDING THEM TO THE SURVEY OFFICE, MR FORD SAID:

+I TRUST THAT THERE IS NOW NO DOUBT IN THE MINDS OF THE PUBLIC AS TO GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO A GENUINE AND OPEN REVIEW OR TO OUR SINCERITY IN WISHING TO OBTAIN THE WIDEST POSSIBLE PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE GREEN PAPER.

+I WOULD LIKE TO ENDORSE MOST STRONGLY MISS DUNN'S CALL FOR THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE GREEN PAPER BY SENDING THEIR VIEWS TO THE SURVEY OFFICE.

+I REALISE THAT THE GREEN PAPER IS A LENGTHY DOCUMENT DEALING WITH COMPLEX ISSUES, AND THAT THE TASK OF DIGESTING ITS CONTENTS AND FORMING VIEWS ON THE OPTIONS PRESENTED IS NOT AN EASY ONE.

+BUT THEY ARE IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE WELL-BEING OF HONG KONG, AND IT IS INCUMBENT UPON ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY TO CONSIDER THESE ISSUES CAREFULLY, FORM THEIR OWN JUDGMENT ABOUT HOW THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE OUR SYSTEMS OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY MAKE THEIR VIEWS KNOWN,+ HE STRESSED.

MR FORD NOTED THAT THE CALL FOR THE HONG KONG COMMUNITY TO SPEAK OUT HAD COME FROM PEOPLE WITH WIDELY DIFFERING POINTS OF VIEW AND HAD BEEN TAKEN UP STRONGLY AND COMMENDABLY BY THE MEDIA.

+WE ARE ALSO ENCOURAGED BY THE FACT THAT SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF THE GREEN PAPER THERE IS MUCH LESS SUPPORT FOR THE IDEA THAT THIS CONSULTATIVE EXERCISE IS A WASTE OF TIME BECAUSE THE VIEWS EXPRESSED WILL HAVE LITTLE EFFECT ON DECISIONS EVENTUALLY TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT,+ HE SAID.

+SO THE FACT IS THAT THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED ON THE GREEN PAPER WILL BE FULLY AND FAIRLY REFLECTED IN THE REPORT OF THE SURVEY OFFICE, THAT REPORT WILL BE PUBLISHED; IT WILL BE OPEN TO PUBLIC SCRUTINY AND ITS CONTENTS FULLY DEBATED IN THIS COUNCIL.+

MR FORD STRESSED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION, AS WELL AS THE INDEPENDENT SURVEY OFFICE, WAS DOING ALL IT COULD TO ENCOURAGE THE WIDEST POSSIBLE PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE GREEN PAPER.

HE SAID A MAJOR EFFORT HAD BEEN MADE TO ENSURE THAT THE GREEN PAPER WAS READILY AVAILABLE IN ALL PARTS OF THE TERRITORY.

MORE THAN THREE-QUARTERS OF A MILLION COPIES HAD ALREADY BEEN TAKEN UP BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE FOR THE PRINTING OF ADDITIONAL COPIES TO ENSURE THAT STOCKS DID NOT RUN OUT, HE SAID.

MR FORD SAID THE SURVEY OFFICE WOULD BE SENDING OUT OVER 8,000 LETTERS TO DISTRICT BOARDS, THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS, MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES, OWNERS CORPORATIONS AND A WIDE RANGE OF OTHER COMMUNITY BODIES AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS, SPECIFICALLY INVITING THEM TO SEND IN THEIR VIEWS ON THE GREEN PAPER.

THE SURVEY OFFICE WAS ALSO PUTTING ACROSS ITS MESSAGE BY ADVERTISEMENT IN THE PRESS AND ON TELEVISION.

A FIRM WITH SPECIALIST EXPERIENCE IN PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS WOULD SHORTLY BE APPOINTED TO ASSIST THE SURVEY OFFICE, HE SAID.

TO ASSIST MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE DIFFICULTY IN MAKING THEIR VIEWS HEARD, STAFF OF THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION WOULD, UPON REQUEST, ASSIST LOCAL BODIES BY RECORDING THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD TO DISCUSS THE GREEN PAPER, AND FORWARDING THEM TO THE SURVEY OFFICE AFTER THEY HAD BEEN CONFIRMED BY THE ORGANISATIONS CONCERNED.

CNTA STAFF WOULD ALSO BE PREPARED, IN GENERAL, TO ASSIST COMMUNITY GROUPS IN ORGANISING PUBLIC MEETINGS OR SEMINARS TO DISCUSS THE GREEN PAPER, MR FORD SAID.

IN ADDITION, CNTA STAFF WERE WILLING TO ASSIST INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, WHO WERE UNABLE TO STATE THEIR VIEWS IN WRITING BUT WERE PREPARED TO DO SO ORALLY, BY RECORDING THEIR VIEWS, HAD THEM CHECKED BY THE INDIVIDUALS CONCERNED AND FORWARDING THEM TO THE SURVEY OFFICE.

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DUNN URGES THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK UP ON GREEN PAPER

SENIOR MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE HON LYDIA DUNN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) URGED EVERY MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY TO READ THE GREEN PAPER ON POLITICAL REVIEW, TO WEIGH ITS CONTENTS, TO PONDER ITS OPTIONS AND TO RECORD HIS OR HER VIEWS UPON THEM.

MISS DUNN WAS SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WHEN MOVING THE MOTION WHICH READ: +THAT THIS COUNCIL URGES THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON THE OPTIONS CONTAINED IN THE GREEN PAPER: THE 1987 REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT BY SENDING THEM TO THE SURVEY OFFICE+.

/SHE SAID

SHE SAID MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PUT THEIR FAITH IN THE WISDOM AND GOOD CONSCIENCE OF THE COMMUNITY.

+IT MAY BE THAT ONLY A FEW CAN BE ARTICULATE ADVOCATES. BUT EVERYONE CAN BE A JUDGE OF WHERE THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY LIE,+ SHE SAID.

SHE SAID LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS WERE OF ONE MIND IN URGING THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON THE GREEN PAPER OPTIONS BY SENDING THEM TO THE SURVEY OFFICE.

SHE RECALLED THAT THE CHIEF SECRETARY, WHEN TABLING THE GREEN PAPER LAST WEEK, HAD EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT PLACED ON OBTAINING THE WIDEST POSSIBLE PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE GREEN PAPER. HE HAD ALSO STATED THAT IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO ENCOURAGE A RESPONSE FROM THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION WHO WERE SILENT.

+I SPEAK FOR ALL MY FELLOW MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL WHO ARE NOT PART OF THE ADMINISTRATION IN GIVING OUR FULL SUPPORT TO THE GOVERNMENT'S ENDEAVOURS,+ SHE SAID.

SHE SAID THERE WERE GOOD REASONS FOR THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK UP. THE OPTIONS CONTAINED IN THE GREEN PAPER DID MATTER BECAUSE THEY IDENTIFIED THE CHOICES TO BE MADE IN SHAPING THE STRUCTURE OF THE GOVERNMENT.

SHE SAID CHANGES TO THE INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT COULD NOT BE INTRODUCED WITHOUT CONSULTING THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG.

+BUT IT IS NOT ONLY OUR RIGHT TO SAY WHAT WE THINK, IT IS ALSO OUR DUTY TO DO SO IF WE CARE FOR HONG KONG,+ SHE ADDED.

SHE SAID THAT FOR MOST PEOPLE IN HONG KONG -- AS ELSEWHERE -- THERE WAS QUITE ENOUGH TO DO AND TO THINK ABOUT MAKING A LIVING AND SUPPORTING A FAMILY. THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF GOVERNMENT WAS SEEN AS SOMETHING TOO ABSTRACT, AND IRRELEVANT TO THE DAILY LIVES TO BE OF MUCH CONCERN.

AS PEOPLE LOOKED AROUND AT THE UNMISTAKABLE SIGNS OF PROSPERITY AND MATERIAL PROGRESS, SOME MIGHT THINK THAT THIS ATTITUDE HAD NOT DONE THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG ANY HARM.

BUT IT WAS NOW NO LONGER RIGHT FOR THOSE WHO CARED FOR HONG KONG TO REMAIN INDIFFERENT.

+AS WE EMBARK UPON THIS IMPORTANT CONSULTATION EXERCISE, WHICH POINTS OUT POSSIBLE WAYS FORWARD TOWARDS A MORE REPRESENTATIVE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT, THE GOVERNMENT MUST KNOW WHAT THE COMMUNITY, AS A WHOLE, WANTS.

/+IT NEEDS

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+IT NEEDS TO BE SURE THAT IF ANY REFORMS ARE TO BE INTRODUCED, THEY WILL HAVE THE CLEAR SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG BEHIND THEM,+ SHE SAID.

SHE ADDED THAT IMPORTANT CHANGES COULD NOT BE MADE WITH ONLY THIN SUPPORT OR ON THE BASIS OF WHAT A FEW ARTICULATE VOICES ADVOCATED, OR IN THE FACE OF INCOHERENT OPINIONS.

SO THIS WAS THE CHANCE FOR THE VIEWS OF THE COMMUNITY TO BE HEARD LOUD AND CLEAR AND FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO DISCOVER WHAT THE COMMUNITY WANTED AND DID NOT WANT.

MISS DUNN SAID THERE WERE NO EXCUSES FOR REMAINING SILENT. SOME HAD SUGGESTED THAT PEOPLE HERE WOULD BE INHIBITED FROM SPEAKING OUT FRANKLY BECAUSE OF PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE ATTITUDE OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT.

BUT AS THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, HAD SAID LAST FRIDAY DURING HIS PRESS CONFERENCE, THE CHINESE VIEWS WERE NOT ALWAYS AS SIMPLE OR ONE WAY AS THE INTERPRETATIONS SOMETIMES PUT UPON THEM.

IT WAS FOR THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG TO DECIDE THEMSELVES WHAT VIEW THEY THOUGHT THEY WANTED TO PUT TO THE GOVERNMENT, SHE SAID.

MISS DUNN ALSO NOTED THAT SOME HAD SUGGESTED THAT THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAD ALREADY MADE UP ITS MIND WHAT TO DO WITHOUT WAITING TO HEAR THE OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION.

+NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH -- AND I SPEAK AS A MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL,+ SHE SAID.

SHE SAID THE ADVICE WHICH THE GOVERNOR WOULD RECEIVE FROM THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WOULD BE GIVEN AS ALWAYS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OATH EACH MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL HAD TAKEN: TO GIVE COUNSEL AND ADVICE TO THE GOVERNOR FOR THE GOOD GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG AND TO CONSCIENTIOUSLY AND TRULY SERVE THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG.

SHE SAID ADVICE WOULD BE TENDERED BY EACH EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER FOR THE GOVERNOR'S DECISION. +NO ONE MEMBER CAN SPEAK FOR OTHERS.+

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NEW PENSION SCHEME PROPOSED

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A BILL SEEKING TO GRANT NEW PENSION BENEFITS FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE AND TO AMEND, LARGELY CONSEQUENTIAL, EXISTING ORDINANCES CONTAINING REFERENCES TO PENSION MATTERS, WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE PENSION BENEFITS BILL 1987, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID FORD, SAID THE EXISTING CIVIL SERVICE PENSION SCHEME HAD BEEN IN OPERATION SINCE 1949 AND IT HAD BEGUN TO SHOW ITS AGE IN RECENT YEARS.

HE SAID THAT A REVIEW WAS UNDERTAKEN FOLLOWING REQUESTS FROM STAFF WHICH CONFIRMED THAT THE PRESENT PENSION ARRANGEMENTS WERE IN NEED OF MODERNISATION.

"IN THE LIGHT OF THIS REVIEW A NEW SCHEME WAS DEvised WHICH IT WAS FELT WAS MORE IN KEEPING WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE HONG KONG CIVIL SERVICE OF TODAY," MR FORD CONTINUED.

THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE SCHEME ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- * THE NORMAL AGE OF RETIREMENT IS RAISED FROM 55 TO 60;
- * THE PENSION EARNING FACTOR FOR PENSIONABLE STAFF WILL BE ADJUSTED FROM 1/600TH TO 1/675TH AS A CONSEQUENCE TO RAISING THE RETIREMENT AGE. IN ADDITION, THE LOWER PENSION FACTOR FOR STAFF OTHER THAN PENSIONABLE STAFF WILL BE BROUGHT INTO LINE WITH THAT FOR PENSIONABLE STAFF FROM A CURRENT DATE. THE MAXIMUM PENSION WHICH CAN BE EARNED WILL REMAIN AT TWO/THIRDS OF FINAL SALARY;
- * CIVIL SERVANTS WILL BE ALLOWED TO COMMUTE UP TO 50 PER CENT OF THEIR PENSION FOR A LUMP SUM INSTEAD OF 25 PER CENT;
- * CIVIL SERVANTS WHO COMPLETE NOT LESS THAN TEN YEARS SERVICE WILL BE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE THEIR EARNED PENSION BENEFITS ON REACHING NORMAL RETIREMENT AGE;
- * SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE INTRODUCED FOR THE DISCIPLINED SERVICES. UNDER THESE ARRANGEMENTS HEAD OF THE DISCIPLINED SERVICES OR THE GOVERNOR IN THE CASE OF DIRECTORATE STAFF WILL BE EMPOWERED TO PRESCRIBE WITH ANY GRADE, RANK OR CATEGORY OF OFFICER SHOULD RETIRE ON OPERATIONAL GROUNDS AT A SPECIFIED AGE BETWEEN 55 AND 60. WHERE THE RETIREMENT AGE IS SET AT BELOW 60 OFFICERS RETIRED UNDER THESE ARRANGEMENTS WILL RECEIVE AN ENHANCED PENSION;

/* SERVING OFFICERS

- * SERVING OFFICERS WILL BE ALLOWED TO RETIRE WITH THEIR PENSION BENEFITS AT ANY TIME AFTER REACHING THE AGE OF 55; AND
- * PENSIONS ARE MADE A RIGHT RATHER THAN A PRIVILEGE AS IS THE CASE AT PRESENT.

MR FORD SAID THE NEW PENSION SCHEME WOULD APPLY TO ALL OFFICERS APPOINTED AFTER THE DATE OF ITS INTRODUCTION, SERVING OFFICERS MIGHT TRANSFER TO THE NEW PENSION SCHEME OR REMAIN ON THE EXISTING SCHEME AS THEY PREFER.

"THERE IS PROVISION IN THE BILL FOR THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE NOT TO ACCEPT APPLICATIONS TO TRANSFER TO THE NEW SCHEME WHERE HE CONSIDERS SUCH ACTION IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE," HE SAID.

HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT APPLICATIONS TO TRANSFER TO THE NEW SCHEME WOULD ONLY BE REJECTED IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES SUCH AS WHEN AN OFFICER'S PERFORMANCE HAD BEEN SO POOR.

"IT IS AN UNFORTUNATE AND UNAVOIDABLE FACT THAT WHILE THE BASIC PROVISIONS OF CIVIL SERVICE PENSION SCHEMES ARE STRAIGHTFORWARD THE LEGISLATION NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THEM TENDS TO BE TECHNICALLY COMPLEX," MR FORD SAID.

"THIS IS BECAUSE OF ALL THE DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH HAVE TO BE COVERED: OFFICERS DYING, OFFICERS INJURED ON DUTY, OFFICERS RETIRING THROUGH ILLNESS, OFFICERS TRANSFERRED FROM OR TO OTHER COUNTRIES, OFFICERS RETIRED ON DISCIPLINARY GROUNDS AND SO ON."

HE SAID THAT CLAUSES 1 TO 35 OF THE BILL DID NO MORE THAN TO BUILD THE ELEMENTS OF THE NEW PENSION SCHEME ON TO AN EXISTING FOUNDATION OF CIVIL SERVICE PENSION PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE.

HE ADDED THAT THE REMAINING CLAUSES OF THE BILL MAKE AMENDMENTS TO A NUMBER OF ORDINANCES:

- (A) TO EXTEND THE APPLICATION OF THESE ORDINANCE TO OFFICERS WHO COME UNDER THE NEW PENSION SCHEME;
- (B) TO BRING THE TERMS USED IN THE ORDINANCES AND THE NEW PENSION BENEFITS BILL INTO LINE;
- (C) TO ENSURE THAT DOUBLE BENEFITS ARE NOT PAYABLE UNDER THE EXISTING AND NEW PENSION SCHEMES IN RESPECT OF THE SAME PERIOD OF SERVICE; AND
- (D) TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF PENSIONS BEING MADE A RIGHT.

/^IN ADDITION,

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"IN ADDITION, AMENDMENTS HAD BEEN MADE TO UPDATE THE PROVISIONS OF THE ORDINANCES, TO INTRODUCE IMPROVED CHANGES AND TO REMOVE ANOMALIES," HE ADDED.

MR FORD SAID THE PRINCIPAL AMENDMENTS WERE TO THE PENSION ORDINANCE, WHICH GOVERNED THE EXISTING PENSION SCHEME, TO ENABLE IT TO REMAIN COMPATIBLE WITH THE NEW PENSION SCHEME AND TO UPDATE ITS PROVISIONS WHERE NECESSARY.

THE WIDOW'S AND CHILDREN'S PENSION ORDINANCE HAD BEEN AMENDED TO UPDATE CERTAIN OF ITS PROVISIONS BUT PRINCIPALLY TO ENSURE THAT OFFICERS WHO TRANSFER TO THE NEW PENSION SCHEME CONTINUED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE LEVEL OF DEPENDANTS PENSION FOR WHICH THEY HAD CONTRIBUTED.

"THE PENSION INCREASE ORDINANCE HAS ALSO BEEN AMENDED TO PROVIDE FOR ITS APPLICATION TO OFFICERS ON THE NEW PENSION SCHEME AND TO ENSURE THAT OFFICERS WHO QUALIFY FOR A DEFERRED PENSION RECEIVE THE BENEFIT OF PENSION INCREASES BUT ONLY PAYABLE ON REACHING NORMAL RETIREMENT AGE," MR FORD SAID.

NOTING THAT AFTER 1997, PENSIONS WOULD BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FUTURE SAR GOVERNMENT, MR FORD SAID THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES HAD BEEN INFORMED OF THE NEW PENSION SCHEME IN ITS PRESENT FORM AND HAD INDICATED THAT THEY FOUND IT FULLY ACCEPTABLE.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BETTER PROSPECTS FOR QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENTS TO WELFARE SERVICES

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THERE ARE NOW MUCH BETTER PROSPECTS FOR QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENTS TO WELFARE SERVICES WITH THE IMPROVED FINANCIAL CLIMATE, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

WINDING UP THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON SOCIAL WELFARE SUBVENTION POLICY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR CHAMBERS SAID DURING THE YEARS OF TIGHT BUDGETARY RESTRAINT "WE MUST CONCENTRATE ON MUCH-NEEDED QUANTITATIVE EXPANSION OF EXISTING SERVICES, AND THAT IMPROVEMENTS TO STANDARDS HAVE NECESSARILY HAD TO TAKE A BACK SEAT.

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"BUT IN THE IMPROVED FINANCIAL CLIMATE THERE ARE NOW MUCH BETTER PROSPECTS FOR QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENTS.

"ALREADY, IT HAS BEEN DECIDED THAT THE SUBVENTION SURPLUSES IN THE PAST YEARS SHOULD BE RE-ALLOCATED FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING SERVICES," HE ADDED.

HE SAID THE OBJECTIVE OF THE WORKING GROUP SET UP ON THE ADVICE OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE LAST SUMMER WAS TO REVIEW THE BASIC ISSUE OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE SUBVENTION SYSTEM AS A

MR CHAMBERS SAID THE GROUP DID NOT DEAL WITH CERTAIN MORE SPECIFIC TOPICS, IN PARTICULAR THE CATEGORISATION OF SOME SERVICES, AND THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF MULTI-SERVICE AGENCIES.

HE NOTED THAT IN ITS REPORT SUBMITTED RECENTLY, THE WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDED THE STANDARD COST SUBVENTION SYSTEM, IMPLEMENTED SINCE 1983 AND AS ALREADY MODIFIED ON AN INTERIM BASIS ON THE ADVICE OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, SHOULD BE RETAINED, AND EXTENDED TO OTHER SERVICES FOR WHICH STANDARD COSTS COULD BE ESTABLISHED.

EXPLAINING THE CALCULATION OF THE STANDARD COSTS, MR CHAMBERS SAID: "THEY HAVE TWO ELEMENTS-STAFF COSTS BASED ON THE NUMBER AND LEVEL OF STAFF REQUIRED TO PROVIDE THE SERVICE, CALCULATED BY USING THE MID-POINTS OF THE SALARY SCALES OF THE APPROPRIATE RANKS AND GRADES.

"AND SECONDLY A GRANT TO COVER OTHER NECESSARY ITEMS OF EXPENDITURE SUCH AS UTILITY CHARGES AND PROGRAMME EXPENSES."

HOWEVER, A MAJOR DIFFICULTY HAD ARISEN FROM THE USE OF THE MID-POINTS OF SALARY SCALES TO CALCULATE THE SALARY ELEMENT OF STANDARD COST, HE SAID.

"BECAUSE AGENCIES' ACTUAL STAFF COSTS IN MANY CASES TURNED OUT TO BE WELL BELOW THE MID-POINT LEVEL, SUBSTANTIAL SURPLUSES RESULTED," HE ADDED.

"THESE SURPLUSES ACCUMULATED IN RESERVE ACCOUNTS, WHICH COULD ONLY BE USED WITH THE AGREEMENT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE."

MR CHAMBERS NOTED THAT IT WAS UNACCEPTABLE FOR A SYSTEM TO HAVE LARGE SUMS BEING TIED UP IN AGENCIES' RESERVE ACCOUNTS, PARTICULARLY AT A TIME OF FINANCIAL STRINGENCY WHEN THE FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR WELFARE SERVICES WERE STRICTLY LIMITED.

IN SPITE OF THE INITIAL LIMITATIONS OF THE STANDARD COST SYSTEM, THE WORKING GROUP ON THE SUBVENTION POLICY CONCLUDED THAT THE SYSTEM HAD IMPORTANT FEATURES WHICH WERE WORTHY OF RETENTION, AND THAT A RETURN TO THE DISCRETIONARY GRANT SYSTEM OPERATING BEFORE 1982 WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE.

/IN HIS

IN HIS OWN VIEW, MR CHAMBERS AGREED WITH THE WORKING GROUP THAT AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF CALCULATING SALARY REQUIREMENTS SHOULD BE FURTHER EXPLORED TO SATISFACTORILY RESOLVE THE PROBLEM.

HE LOOKED FORWARD TO RECEIVING THE ADVICE FROM THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE REHABILITATION DEVELOPMENT CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE ON THE WORKING GROUP'S REPORT, WHICH HAD ALSO BEEN STUDIED BY THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE, FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SYSTEM.

CONCERNING THE CATEGORISATION OF SERVICES IN THE NEW SUBVENTION SYSTEM, MR CHAMBERS SAID, "CATEGORY I SERVICES ARE THOSE FOR WHICH A STANDARD COST CAN BE ESTABLISHED AND WHICH ARE EITHER STATUTORY IN NATURE OR ENSURE THAT A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN NEED IS MET. OTHER SERVICES ARE PLACED IN CATEGORY II."

"A SERVICE IN CATEGORY I RECEIVES SUBVENTION AT 100 PER CENT OF THE STANDARD COST ESTABLISHED FOR THAT SERVICE," HE CONTINUED.

HE FURTHER SAID THAT CATEGORY II SERVICES RECEIVED A SUBVENTION COVERING A PROPORTION OF THE STANDARD COST, OR IF A STANDARD COST COULD NOT BE ESTABLISHED, A LUMP SUM, THE AMOUNT TO BE DECIDED ACCORDING TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF EACH CASE.

STATING THE PRINCIPLE BEHIND THE CATEGORISATION SYSTEM, MR CHAMBERS SAID THAT PRIORITY WAS GIVEN TO THE MOST ESSENTIAL SERVICES SUBJECT TO THE ADVICE OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE REHABILITATION DEVELOPMENT CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE.

AS REGARDS THE SUBVENTION FOR CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF MULTI-SERVICE AGENCIES, HE SAID IT WAS NOT PRACTICABLE TO HAVE A STANDARD COST ARRANGEMENT FOR A NON-STANDARD SERVICE AS THE ADMINISTRATION.

HOWEVER, HE SAID THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE WAS NOW REVIEWING THE METHOD OF SUBVENTING CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION WITH A VIEW TO RATIONALISING THE METHODOLOGY AND WORKING OUT SOME PRINCIPLES FOR ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF SUBVENTION.

"THE REVIEW, WHICH SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY OCTOBER, WILL INCLUDE AGENCIES' ACCOUNTING REQUIREMENTS," HE ADDED.

MR CHAMBERS, IN ADDITION, REFERRED TO THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE AGENCIES AND THE GOVERNMENT "WHICH IS THE BASIS OF OUR SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES".

HE REFUTED THE ALLEGED CONTINUAL BATTLE BETWEEN THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR.

DESPITE THE FACT THAT RESOURCES COULD NOT BE UNLIMITED AND THAT THERE HAD TO BE CONTROLS AND MONITORING OF HOW PUBLIC MONEY WAS SPENT, MR CHAMBER'S OWN EXPERIENCE WAS THAT "THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF GENUINE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES".

SUBVENTION POLICY ON CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES EXPLAINED

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NEW APPLICATIONS FOR SUBVENTIONS TOWARDS CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES WOULD BE CONSIDERED ON THE MERITS OF THE CASE AND THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS FOR THAT YEAR, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP, MR CHAMBERS SAID LUMP SUM GRANTS WERE PROVIDED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT TOWARDS THE ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF RUNNING THE HEADQUARTERS OF MULTI-SERVICE AGENCIES AND THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE.

+THE LEVEL OF SUBVENTION VARIES FROM ONE AGENCY TO ANOTHER,+ MR CHAMBERS SAID.

+DUE TO DIFFERENCES IN THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, THE PATTERN OF ADMINISTRATION, AND THE SIZE, RANGE AND COMPLEXITY OF THE VARIOUS SERVICES, IT HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE TO USE THE STANDARD COST APPROACH IN ASSESSING THESE SUBVENTIONS,+ HE EXPLAINED.

IN 1983/84, 33 SUBVENTED WELFARE AGENCIES RECEIVED SUBVENTIONS WHILE 34 AGENCIES FROM 1984/85 TO 1986/87 AND 36 AGENCIES FOR 1987/88 WERE GRANTED SUBVENTIONS.

+UNDER THE LUMP SUM GRANT SYSTEM, AGENCIES ARE GIVEN THE DISCRETION TO DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES THE NUMBER AND THE RANK OF STAFF EMPLOYED AND HOW THE SUBVENTION SHOULD BE USED TO SUIT THEIR OPERATIONS,+ MR CHAMBERS ADDED.

MR CHAMBERS CONTINUED TO OUTLINE THE GOVERNMENT POLICY IN THE WELFARE, MEDICAL AND EDUCATION FIELDS REGARDING THE GRANTING OF SUCH SUBVENTION.

+THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE IS NOW REVIEWING THE BASIS FOR SUBVENTING CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES WITH A VIEW TO RATIONALISING THE METHODOLOGY AND DEVISING STANDARDS FOR ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF SUBVENTION.

THE GENERAL POLICY IN THE MEDICAL FIELD WAS TO SUBVENT ONLY THE DIRECT COSTS OF PROVIDING VARIOUS MEDICAL SERVICES, MR CHAMBERS SAID.

+NO NEW APPLICATION FOR SUBVENTION OF CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES HAS BEEN RECEIVED IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS,+ HE ADDED.

MR CHAMBERS FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS NOT THE POLICY OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO SUBVENT THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES OPERATING SCHOOLS.

BOTH THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAD NO PLANS TO REVIEW THE EXISTING POLICY, MR CHAMBERS SAID.

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SUBVENTION POLICY NEEDS OVERALL REVIEW

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THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONDUCT AN OVERALL REVIEW ON ITS SOCIAL WELFARE SUBVENTION POLICY AS THERE WERE SO MANY PROBLEMS IN THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICE HERE, THE HON DESMOND LEE YU-TAI, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE ADDED THAT THE REVIEW PANEL NEEDED NOT BE AN INTERNATIONAL ONE BUT THERE MUST BE PARTICIPATION FROM OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT.

MR LEE WAS LEADING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON SOCIAL WELFARE SUBVENTION POLICY AS CONVENER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AD HOC GROUP PREPARING FOR THE DEBATE.

HE NOTED THAT THE PRESENT SUBVENTION SYSTEM WAS INTRODUCED BASING ON A GOVERNMENT WORKING PARTY REPORT COMPLETED IN JUNE 1980 AND A REVIEW REPORT BY A GOVERNMENT WORKING GROUP IN MAY THIS YEAR.

HOWEVER, BOTH EXERCISES WERE UNDERTAKEN BY THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE MEMBERSHIPS OF THE WORKING PARTY AND OF THE WORKING GROUP CONSISTED ENTIRELY OF OFFICIAL MEMBERS, HE SAID.

"FOR THIS REASON, IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONVINCE THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR THAT THE TWO STUDIES ARE OBJECTIVE," HE SAID.

COMMENTING ON THE STANDARD COST SYSTEM, MR LEE SAID THE SYSTEM WAS SUPPORTED NOT ONLY BY ALL THE SIX MEMBERS SPEAKING DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE; BUT ALSO BY HEADS OF AGENCIES WHOM HE HAD CONSULTED.

HOWEVER, HE OBSERVED THAT THE SYSTEM SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO COVER ALL SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES, AND THAT THE APPLICATION OF THE SYSTEM SHOULD BE IMPROVED.

UNDER THE EXISTING STRUCTURE, MR LEE SAID, VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND THE GOVERNMENT HAD ENTERED INTO PARTNERSHIP, WHEREBY AGENCIES PROVIDED THE SERVICES AS REQUIRED, AND GOVERNMENT MADE AVAILABLE THE RESOURCES.

HOWEVER, HE REGRETTED THAT A JOINT ENTERPRISE SPIRIT HAD NOT BEEN ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE TWO PARTNERS AND IT SEEMED THAT THERE WAS A LACK OF MUTUAL TRUST BETWEEN THE TWO.

MR LEE POINTED OUT THAT ACCORDING TO THE PRESENT PRACTICE, THE STANDARD COST ASSESSMENT MIGHT NOT MEET THE ACTUAL REQUIREMENT OF THE SERVICE.

HE SAID AS SERVICE PROVIDERS, THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR WOULD PREFER PARTICIPATION IN THE STANDARD COST SETTING PROCESS AND CONSULTATION AT THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL.

/MR LEE

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MR LEE SAID THE PRESENT FUNDING ARRANGEMENT DID NOT ALLOW FLEXIBILITY EITHER FOR IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY OR EXPANSION.

HE SAID SOME AGENCIES HAD TOLD HIM THAT THEY HAD SUBSTANTIAL SAVINGS IN SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK BUT WERE UNABLE TO USE THESE SAVINGS TO IMPROVE THE SERVICE ABOVE THE RATIO OF ONE WORKER FOR FOUR SCHOOLS.

ON THE PROPOSAL BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT TO CHANGE FROM QUARTERLY PAYMENT OF GRANTS TO MONTHLY PAYMENT, MR LEE SAID THIS MIGHT LEAD TO CASHFLOW PROBLEMS PARTICULARLY WHEN THERE WAS TURNOVER OF STAFF.

FURTHERMORE, THE KEEPING OF MONTHLY INSTEAD OF QUARTERLY ACCOUNTS WOULD CERTAINLY INCREASE THE WORKLOAD OF ADMINISTRATION.

THEREFORE, THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR PREFERRED THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT OF QUARTERLY PAYMENT WHICH ALLOWED SLIGHTLY MORE FLEXIBILITY.

TURNING TO THE RESTRAINT IN EXPANSION IN NEW AREAS OR TRIAL PROJECTS, MR LEE PROPOSED THAT SOME MARGIN OF FLEXIBILITY BE CONSIDERED FOR THE USE OF SAVINGS IN NEW AREAS OF SERVICE.

"THE CLAWING BACK OF INTERESTS ON SAVINGS IS A MOST UNWELCOME ARRANGEMENT.

"THE ACTUAL AMOUNT WHICH IS RECOVERED IN THIS WAY IS VERY SMALL AND INVOLVES A LOT OF ADMINISTRATION.

"I WOULD SUGGEST THAT THIS ARRANGEMENT IS NOT WORTHWHILE AND SHOULD BE DISPENSED WITH," HE SAID.

ON THE CATEGORISATION OF SERVICES, MR LEE URGED THAT IT SHOULD BE REVIEWED AT REGULAR INTERVALS AND THAT AGENCIES BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE REVIEW, OR AT LEAST BE CONSULTED IN THE PROCESS.

IN RESPECT OF SERVICES IN CATEGORY II (DESIRABLE SERVICE), THE PROPORTION OF SUBSIDY SHOULD ALSO BE REVIEWED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE AGENCIES, HE ADDED.

NOTING THAT CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE ON THE QUALITY OF SERVICE PROVIDED, MR LEE HOPED THAT THE CATEGORISATION OF THIS FUNCTION COULD BE REVIEWED BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY AND THAT FINANCIAL PROVISIONS WERE SET ASIDE FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY IMPROVEMENT FOLLOWING THE DIRECTOR'S DECISION, SO AS TO AVOID FURTHER DELAY.

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IMPROVEMENT TO WELFARE SERVICES URGED

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THE HON MRS ROSANNA TAM SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT BOTH QUALITY AND QUANTITY WERE IMPORTANT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF WELFARE SERVICES AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALLOT A REASONABLE PROPORTION OF FUND FOR IMPROVING EXISTING SERVICES WHEN DECIDING THE ALLOCATION OF WELFARE SUBVENTIONS.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON SOCIAL WELFARE SUBVENTION POLICY, MRS TAM SAID THAT AT PRESENT A GREAT PROPORTION OF THE ANNUAL WELFARE PROVISION WAS USED TO MAINTAIN EXISTING SERVICES WHILE THE REST WERE USED FOR EXPANDING NEW SERVICES. FUNDS FOR IMPROVING THE EXISTING SERVICES, HOWEVER, WERE SERIOUSLY LACKING, SHE NOTED.

SHE CITED AS AN EXAMPLE THAT AT PRESENT THERE WERE A TOTAL OF 206 CHILDREN AND YOUTH CENTRES, GROWING AT A RATE OF 11 NEW CENTRES PER YEAR. BUT AS FAR AS QUALITY WAS CONCERNED, THE STANDARD RATIO FOR SUPERVISORY STAFF HAD NEVER BEEN IMPLEMENTED.

TURNING TO ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS CONCERNING GOVERNMENT SUBVENTIONS, MRS TAM AGREED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO APPROPRIATELY MONITOR THE FINANCE OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES.

AT THE SAME TIME, ONE MUST REALISE THAT VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND THE GOVERNMENT WERE CLOSE PARTNERS IN PROVIDING WELFARE SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC. THERE SHOULD BE MUTUAL TRUST BETWEEN THE TWO.

MRS TAM SAID THAT AS POINTED OUT IN THE REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP SET UP BY THE GOVERNMENT, AN IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE IN GOVERNMENT SUBVENTION MUST BE TO ALLOW MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY FOR VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN THEIR FINANCES.

"BASED ON THE ABOVE PRINCIPLE, I SUPPORT THE SPIRIT OF THE STANDARD COST SYSTEM OF SUBVENTION INTRODUCED SINCE 1982-83," SHE SAID, ADDING THAT THE SYSTEM SHOULD BE FOLLOWED AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE.

SHE ALSO CONSIDERED THE MODIFIED STANDARD COST SUBVENTION SYSTEM AS SUGGESTED BY THE REPORT ACCEPTABLE. HOWEVER, THERE WERE THREE POINTS WHICH MERITED SERIOUS CONSIDERATION.

FIRST, IN CHANGING THE PAYMENT OF STAFF COST TO A MONTHLY BASIS INSTEAD OF THE PREVIOUS QUARTERLY BASIS, THE GOVERNMENT MUST ENSURE THAT SUCH PAYMENTS REACHED THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WELL BEFORE THE PAY-DAY OF EACH MONTH.

SHE SUGGESTED THAT A REVIEW OF THE CASH FLOW SITUATION IN VOLUNTARY AGENCIES SHOULD BE MADE AFTER A YEAR'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS NEW PROCEDURE.

SECOND, SHE SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE EXTENDING THE STANDARD COST SUBVENTION SYSTEM TO OTHER LONG-AWAITED SERVICES.

/ "I AM

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"I AM GLAD THAT THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO EXTEND THE STANDARD COST SUBVENTION SYSTEM TO EIGHT OTHER SERVICES," SHE SAID.

SHE SAID THE THIRD POINT WAS THAT SHE HAD RESERVATION ABOUT THE PROPOSAL TO REPLACE THE PRESENT SYSTEM WITH THE ONE SIMILAR TO THE CIVIL SERVICE IN MEETING STAFF SALARY REQUIREMENTS.

"THIS SYSTEM WOULD TIGHTEN THE CONTROL ON STAFFING IN VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND IS CONTRARY TO THE PRINCIPLE OF FLEXIBLE DEPLOYMENT OF RESOURCES," SHE SAID.

MOREOVER, ONCE THIS SYSTEM WAS IMPLEMENTED, VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WOULD LOSE THEIR UNIQUENESS AND BECOME ANOTHER KIND OF GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS.

TURNING TO THE MONITORING OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES' FINANCES, MRS TAM SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALLOCATE SUFFICIENT FUNDS FOR THE AGENCIES TO EMPLOY QUALIFIED ACCOUNTING STAFF TO MANAGE THEIR ACCOUNT, IN ADDITION TO INCREASING ITS OWN MONITORING STAFF.

ON THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, MRS TAM SAID THAT IN THE PAST, THERE HAD NOT BEEN ANY STANDARD RATIO OF CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION STAFF TO THE SCOPE OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY VOLUNTARY AGENCIES.

"IT IS TIME FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO FORMULATE A SET OF STANDARDS FOR REFERENCE OF THE AGENCIES TO IMPROVE THEIR STAFFING STANDARD IN CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION," SHE SAID.

AT THE SAME TIME, SUFFICIENT FUNDS SHOULD BE GRANTED TO THOSE AGENCIES WHICH WERE BELOW STAFFING STANDARDS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR STAFFING IN CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION, SHE SAID.

SHE ALSO SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER TREATING CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION AS CATEGORY I SERVICES, WHICH WERE FULLY SUBVENTED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

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GOVERNMENT LACKS SINCERITY IN SUBVENTION POLICY

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THE HON HUI YIN-FAT SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THE GOVERNMENT LACKED SINCERITY IN ACHIEVING THE SUBVENTION POLICY OBJECTIVES WHICH ARE TO GIVE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES PREDICTABLE INCOME TO FINANCE THEIR SERVICES AND MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY IN THE USE OF RESOURCES.

SPEAKING IN THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON SOCIAL WELFARE SUBVENTION POLICY TODAY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR HUI ALSO CHARGED THE GOVERNMENT FOR LACKING COMMITMENT TO THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARD COSTS SYSTEM PROMISED IN 1982.

HE SAID THAT THE CRUX OF THE MATTER LAY IN AN UNEASY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WHICH HAD DETERIORATED.

"A CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT'S INVETERATE ATTITUDE MUST PRECEDE ANY POLICY CHANGE," HE SAID.

"INSTEAD OF RESTRICTING THE LEVEL OF SUPPORT SET AT MINIMUM STANDARDS, GOVERNMENT OUGHT TO LIVE UP TO ITS FIRM COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL WELFARE, PARTICULARLY WHEN INCREASE IN SOCIAL WELFARE ALLOCATIONS HAD BEEN PROMISED FOR 1987-88," MR HUI SAID.

HE SET OUT A NUMBER OF PROPOSALS FOR GOVERNMENT'S ACTION:

- * THAT A THREE-YEAR PLAN BE DRAWN UP TO PUT ALL SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES UNDER THE STANDARD COSTS SYSTEM;
- * THAT A CONTINUING EXERCISE BE STARTED IMMEDIATELY TO REVIEW AND UPGRADE CATEGORY II SERVICE (DESIRABLE SERVICE) TO CATEGORY I (ESSENTIAL SERVICE) IN KEEPING WITH CHANGING SOCIAL NEEDS;
- * THAT CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION BE CLASSIFIED AS CATEGORY I SERVICE AND SUBVENTED IN FULL;
- * THAT LUMP SUM DISCRETIONARY GRANTS BE ELIMINATED.

IN ADDITION, HE SUGGESTED THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD REPLACE ITS OBDURATE CONTROL AND MONITORING WITH POSITIVE, OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT IN RETURN FOR GOOD MANAGEMENT WITH CLEAR ACCOUNTABILITY.

"TO DEMONSTRATE GOVERNMENT'S OPEN ATTITUDE AND TO PURSUE THE PARTNERSHIP RELATIONSHIP, I WOULD URGE THE GOVERNMENT TO RECONSIDER THE SUGGESTION FOR VOLUNTARY AGENCIES TO BE REPRESENTED ON THE WORKING GROUP AND OTHER COMMITTEES DEALING WITH THE FINANCING AND OPERATION OF VOLUNTARY WELFARE AGENCIES.

/"THIS MOVE

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"THIS MOVE NOT ONLY FALLS IN LINE WITH THE RISING TREND OF DEMOCRACY, BUT IS THE SURE WAY TO BRING ABOUT INSPIRED CO-OPERATION FROM VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN OUR JOINT EFFORTS TO SOLVE HONG KONG'S MANY AND VARIED SOCIAL PROBLEMS," MR HUI SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT ONLY EIGHT TYPES OF SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES WERE PRESENTLY SUBVENTED UNDER THE STANDARD COSTS SYSTEM LAUNCHED IN 1982, WHILE THE MAJORITY OF SERVICES WERE OPERATING UNDER UNSATISFACTORY CONDITION OF GETTING PERCENTAGE SUPPORT OR LUMP SUM DISCRETIONARY GRANTS.

HE URGED THAT AN IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE SHOULD BE DRAWN UP IMMEDIATELY FOR THE SETTING OF STANDARD COSTS FOR ALL TYPES OF SERVICES, INCLUDING CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF ESTABLISHMENT; AND IF NECESSARY, STANDARDS COULD BE SET FOR JUST ONE PARTICULAR SERVICE OR EVEN ONE SPECIFIC AGENCY.

UNDER THE STRINGENT CONTROL IN SUBVENTION ADMINISTRATION, MR HUI SAID VOLUNTARY AGENCIES HAD ENCOUNTERED MUCH DIFFICULTIES IN EMPLOYING EXTRA STAFF REQUIRED TO MEET NEW SERVICE NEEDS.

LONG-TERM PLANNING, SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF SERVICE QUALITY WERE A LUXURY FOR THE SUBVENTED AGENCIES, WHICH ALSO SUFFERED FROM CASH FLOW PROBLEMS.

ON THE POSITIVE MONITORING AND CONTROL OF SUBVENTION BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT IN THE FUTURE, MR HUI SUGGESTED THAT THE CODE OF AIDS ADOPTED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT FOR SUBSIDISED SCHOOLS BE EXTENDED TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR.

HE DEMANDED THAT MORE ACCOUNTING STAFF RESOURCES BE PROVIDED FOR VOLUNTARY AGENCIES TO COMPLY WITH THE MANY FINANCIAL MONITORING AND SUBVENTION CONTROL REQUIREMENTS NOW BEING ENFORCED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

FURTHERMORE, DUE TO RAPID SOCIAL CHANGES THAT HAD TAKEN PLACE IN THE PAST FEW YEARS, MR HUI SAID MANY SUBVENTED SERVICES REQUIRED UPGRADING.

HE MENTIONED THE MULTI-SERVICE CENTRES FOR THE ELDERLY AS A TYPICAL EXAMPLE.

ON THE BASIS OF CALCULATING RECOGNISED COSTS, MR HUI SAID THERE WAS A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

THE FORMER INSISTED ON A DECENT STANDARD OF SERVICE, WHILE THE LATTER, THE MINIMUM SERVICE STANDARD.

HE SAID THE FACT THAT THE LONG STANDING PROBLEM OF SOCIAL WELFARE SUBVENTION HAD NOT BEEN SOLVED AFTER ALL THESE YEARS MADE A MOCKERY OF OUR STABLE AND PROSPEROUS SOCIETY.

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MOVE ON SUBVENTION OF CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION COST SUPPORTED

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THE GOVERNMENT'S MOVE TO FORMALLY ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF SUBVENTION TO MEET THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION COSTS OF SUBVENTED AGENCIES WAS SUPPORTED BY DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON SOCIAL WELFARE SUBVENTION POLICY, DR IP SAID INADEQUATE PROVISION OF SUBVENTION FOR HEAD OFFICE ADMINISTRATION OF SUBVENTED AGENCIES WAS RECOGNISED TO CAUSE FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES.

SHE DREW THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE'S ATTENTION TO TWO ASPECTS WHEN REVIEWING THE METHOD OF ASSESSING SUBVENTIONS TO MEET THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION COSTS OF AGENCIES.

FIRSTLY, SHE POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ACCEPT THAT SUPERVISION OF SERVICE PROJECTS WAS NECESSARY AND THAT SUCH SUPERVISION REQUIRED HEAD OFFICE STAFF AND THEREFORE INCURRED COST.

"AS SUCH STAFF COST IS PART AND PARCEL OF THE EFFICIENT OPERATION OF SERVICE PROJECTS, I CANNOT SEE ANY REASON WHY SUBVENTION SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN," SHE ARGUED.

SECONDLY, SINCE A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF HEAD OFFICE EXPENDITURE WAS SPENT ON PLANNING FOR EXPANSION OF EXISTING SERVICES AND FOR NEW PROJECTS AND THAT THIS MIGHT TAKE MONTHS OR EVEN YEARS, SUCH EFFORTS SHOULD FORM PART OF THE PROJECT EXPENSES AND THEREFORE BE ELIGIBLE FOR SUBVENTION, DR IP SAID.

"IF FULL SUBVENTION FOR HEAD OFFICE ADMINISTRATION IS NOT FORTHCOMING, IT IS ONLY EQUITABLE TO GRANT SUBSIDY TO THAT PORTION OF HEAD OFFICE EXPENSES RELATED TO SUPERVISION AND PLANNING OF SUBVENTED PROJECTS," SHE ADDED.

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SUBVENTED WELFARE SECTOR GETS RAW DEAL

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HONG KONG'S SUBVENTED WELFARE SECTOR IS RECEIVING A RAW DEAL AT THE HANDS OF THE ADMINISTRATION, DR THE HON CONRAD LAM TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON SOCIAL WELFARE SUBVENTION POLICY, DR LAM SAID THE REMARK WERE ALSO AGREED BY THE HON DAVID LI WHO HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN VOLUNTARY SERVICE FOR MORE THAN 17 YEARS BUT WAS NOT ABLE TO BE PRESENT TO SPEAK DUE TO OVERSEAS COMMITMENTS.

/DR LAM

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DR LAM SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AIMED TO PROVIDE MAXIMUM SOCIAL SERVICES THROUGH VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AT A MINIMUM COST.

AS A RESULT, VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WERE FORCED TO OPERATE ON A SHOESTRING BUDGET, HE SAID.

"IN HONG KONG'S SOCIAL WELFARE SECTOR, WE GET WHAT WE PAY FOR - HOWEVER, NEITHER WHAT WE PAY NOR WHAT WE GET FOR IT IS GOOD ENOUGH," HE NOTED.

THEREFORE, VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WERE UNABLE TO PROVIDE EITHER MUCH NEEDED NEW SERVICES NOR TO IMPROVE THE STANDARD OF EXISTING SERVICES, HE ADDED.

DR LAM SAID HE SUPPORTED THE PROPOSALS BY THE WORKING GROUP ON SOCIAL WELFARE SUBVENTION ADMINISTRATION ON EXTENDING THE MODIFIED STANDARD COST SYSTEM AND ON THE MONTHLY PAYMENT SYSTEM BASED ON ACTUAL STAFF COST. HOWEVER, HE WAS CONCERNED THAT EVEN IF ALL THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKING GROUP WERE IMPLEMENTED, MAJOR PROBLEMS WOULD REMAIN UNRESOLVED.

DR LAM ASKED WHY THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WAS NOT FULLY SUBVENTED.

HE SAID AT PRESENT THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF MOST AGENCIES WAS DESPERATELY SHORT-HANDED BECAUSE THEY SIMPLY DID NOT HAVE THE MONEY TO ATTRACT THE CALIBRE OF STAFF THEY NEEDED TO UPGRADE THEIR STANDARD OF SERVICE.

"THE PRESENT SITUATION IS A TOTALLY UNREALISTIC STATE OF AFFAIRS. HOWEVER, THERE IS A WORKABLE ALTERNATIVE.

"IF WE WERE TO FULLY SUBVENT THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF WELFARE AGENCIES, THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO DO A FAR BETTER JOB WHICH, IN TURN, WOULD UPGRADE THE COORDINATION AND PLANNING AND ULTIMATELY, THE SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE AGENCIES," HE SUGGESTED.

NOTING THAT THE WORKLOAD OF THE LONG-SUFFERING ACCOUNTS DEPARTMENTS OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES HAD DRAMATICALLY ESCALATED SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF THE STANDARD COST SYSTEM IN 1983, DR LAM ASKED: "ONLY BY SUBVENTING QUALIFIED ACCOUNTING STAFF FOR MAJOR VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, COULD THE GOVERNMENT REALISTICALLY ACHIEVE ITS AIM OF IMPROVING FINANCIAL CONTROLS OVER SOCIAL WELFARE SUBVENTION?"

ON THE EVALUATION OF THE QUALITY OF SOCIAL SERVICES, DR LAM SAID THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT HAD ACKNOWLEDGED ITS DIFFICULTIES IN MAKING QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENTS, PARTICULARLY OF COUNSELLING AND CASEWORK SERVICES.

/HE THEREFORE

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HE THEREFORE CALLED FOR A POLICY REVIEW, TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE AMERICAN SYSTEM, WHICH PRESCRIBED AN OPEN PLANNING PROCESS FOR WELFARE AGENCIES WITH EMPHASIS ON CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT.

DR LAM SAID LOCAL VOLUNTARY AGENCIES STOOD READY AND WILLING TO FULFIL THEIR ESSENTIAL ROLE IN THE PROVISION OF WELFARE SERVICES.

"THEY DO A MAGNIFICENT JOB BUT ONE THAT IS MADE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT BY GOVERNMENT FAILURE TO PROVIDE THEM WITH THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT THEY REQUIRE FOR CENTRAL MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTING SERVICES.

"THE GOVERNMENT MUST UNCLENCH ITS TIGHT FINANCIAL FIST AND GIVE THE AGENCIES SUBVENTIONS FOR MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTING SERVICES THAT WILL ENABLE THESE AGENCIES AND THEIR STAFF TO PROVIDE THE NEEDY AMONG US WITH THE QUALITY OF WELFARE SERVICE THAT HONG KONG SHOULD HAVE - AND DOES NOT," HE ADDED.

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FULL SUBVENTION FOR CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION COST URGED

THE HON F K HU TODAY (WEDNESDAY) CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO FULLY SUBVENT THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION COST OF VOLUNTARY WELFARE AGENCIES.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON SOCIAL WELFARE SUBVENTION POLICY, MR HU SAID HE WAS SOMEWHAT DISAPPOINTED BY THE REVIEW OF THE WORKING GROUP ON SOCIAL WELFARE SUBVENTION ADMINISTRATION FOR ITS FAILURE TO CONSIDER THE METHOD OF ASSESSING SUBVENTIONS TO MEET THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION COST.

THE REPORT BY THE WORKING GROUP SAID THE ISSUE WOULD BE SEPARATELY EXAMINED BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE.

"THIS WILL MEAN A FURTHER DELAY IN CONSIDERING ANY IMPROVEMENT IN SUBVENTING VOLUNTARY AGENCIES TO MEET THIS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT COST," MR HU SAID.

/THE CENTRAL

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THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION COST OF AN AGENCY WAS AT PRESENT CLASSIFIED AS CATEGORY II, MEANING THAT IT WAS SUBVENTED AT A PERCENTAGE.

THE COST COVERED THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF A SOUND MANAGEMENT INCLUDING THE SALARY OF THE AGENCY DIRECTOR, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, ACCOUNTANT, SECRETARY AND THEIR SUPPORTING STAFF AND IN MANY CASES RENTALS FOR THEIR OFFICE ACCOMMODATION.

MR HU NOTED THAT IN PRACTICALLY EVERY POLICY STATEMENT OR WHITE PAPER ON SOCIAL WELFARE, IT WAS EITHER IMPLIED OR EXPLICITLY STATED THAT THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES WAS THE SHARED RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND THAT THEIR MUTUAL RELATION WAS ONE OF PARTNERSHIP.

"IN THE SPIRIT OF SUCH STATEMENTS, THE PROVISION OF AN EQUALLY EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SET UP FOR THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IS FULLY JUSTIFIED," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT SINCE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION WAS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE OPERATION OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, IT WAS JUSTIFIED TO BE RANKED AS A CATEGORY I SERVICE, MEANING THAT IT WAS FULLY SUBVENTED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

MR HU SAID HIS OTHER CONCERN WAS THE QUALITY OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY AGENCIES. HE NOTED THAT THE REPORT BY WORKING GROUP MAINLY TALKED ABOUT COSTS, NUMBERS AND FIGURES.

"I SUGGEST THAT WE SHOULD MAKE ROOM FINANCIALLY TO ALLOW IMPROVEMENTS TO THE QUALITY OF THEIR SOCIAL WORK SERVICES AS ALREADY PLANNED," HE SAID.

HE ALSO QUESTIONED THE ADEQUACY OF THE EVALUATION SECTION AND THE FIELD STAFF OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT IN CARRYING OUT THE DAY-TO-DAY MONITORING OF THE SUBVENTED AGENCIES.

"I UNDERSTAND THAT EACH SUBVENTED SERVICE UNIT CAN BE VISITED ONLY THREE TIMES A YEAR AND I WONDERED IF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE IS SATISFIED THAT THE EXISTING LEVEL OF CONSULTATION AND THE FREQUENCY OF THESE LIAISON VISITS CAN ENSURE THAT IMPROVEMENT OF THEIR SOCIAL WORK SERVICES WILL BE POSITIVELY ENCOURAGED", HE SAID.

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APPOINTMENTS TO NEW BOARD OF OCEAN PARK CORPORATION SUGGESTED

THE HON HILTON CHEONG-LEEN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER APPOINTING MEMBERS FROM BOTH THE URBAN AND REGIONAL COUNCILS TO THE NEW BOARD OF THE OCEAN PARK CORPORATION.

HE SAID THE TWO MUNICIPAL COUNCILS WERE VERY MUCH INVOLVED IN PROVIDING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES FOR HONG KONG'S 5.5 MILLION POPULATION AND THAT THE APPOINTMENTS SHOULD PREFERABLY BE NOMINATED BY THE RESPECTIVE COUNCILS OR ALTERNATIVELY IN AN INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY.

"THIS WOULD ASSIST IN REDUCING DUPLICATION AND STRENGTHEN CO-OPERATION AMONG ALL THOSE PARTIES WHICH ARE MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS IN THE PROVISION OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES," HE ADDED.

MR CHEONG-LEEN WAS SPEAKING DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE OF THE OCEAN PARK CORPORATION BILL 1987 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE NOTED THAT AN INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF THE OCEAN PARK FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS INDICATED THAT THE CASH FLOW PROJECTIONS RELIED HEAVILY ON ATTENDANCE ASSUMPTIONS.

IN THE LIGHT OF THE EVALUATION, MR CHEONG-LEEN WELCOMED THE BILL WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE CORPORATION TO BE OPERATED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ON COMMERCIAL LINES, WITHOUT A CONTINUOUS CALL ON PUBLIC FUNDS; AND BEARING IN MIND THE OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THE OCEAN PARK BEING RUN AS A "PUBLIC RECREATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL PARK".

HE SAID ATTRACTING A CONTINUOUSLY HIGH OR ADEQUATE ATTENDANCE LEVEL WAS A MAJOR TASK AND SOMETIMES A PROBLEM IN ALL RECREATIONAL FACILITIES OF THIS NATURE.

"THIS WILL BE A TREMENDOUS CHALLENGE TO THE NEW BOARD OF THE CORPORATION IN THE YEARS AHEAD, AND CURRENT ATTENDANCE FIGURES AND PROJECTIONS WILL NO DOUBT HAVE TO BE SCRUTINISED CONTINUOUSLY AND ANNUALLY; SIMILARLY FOR ANY 5-YEAR ROLL-FORWARD PROGRAMME," HE SAID.

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AMENDMENTS TO AVOID AMBIGUITY

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AMENDMENTS TO THE OCEAN PARK CORPORATION BILL 1987 WOULD AVOID ANY AMBIGUITY OF THE STATUS OF THE CORPORATION IN ITS OPERATION OF THE TRUST FUND AND ALSO TO PROVIDE A MORE REALISTIC REQUIREMENT FOR MEMBERSHIP TO FORM A QUORUM TO HOLD A MEETING, THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MOVING THE AMENDMENTS TO THE BILL AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE, MR LIAO SAID THAT THE BILL PROVIDED FOR A QUORUM OF FOUR MEMBERS TO CALL A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE OCEAN PARK CORPORATION.

/ "IN ORDER

"IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MAJORITY VIEW, IT IS CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE THAT THE SIZE OF THE QUORUM BE LINKED REALISTICALLY TO THE SIZE OF THE BOARD'S MEMBERSHIP, MR LIAO SAID.

AN AMENDMENT WAS THEREFORE INTRODUCED TO STIPULATE THAT A QUORUM SHOULD CONSIST OF A MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS, HE ADDED.

IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE OCEAN PARK TRUST FUND, AN AMENDMENT WAS INTRODUCED TO SPECIFY THAT THE CORPORATION WAS THE TRUSTEE OF THE FUND, MR LIAO SAID.

THE AMENDMENT WOULD AVOID ANY AMBIGUITY OF STATUS OF THE CORPORATION, AS IT WAS NOT DESCRIBED SPECIFICALLY IN THE LEGISLATION THAT THE CORPORATION WAS THE TRUSTEE, HE ADDED.

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MEASURES TAKEN TO EASE NTE SCHOOL SHORTAGE

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IT IS GOVERNMENT POLICY THAT SUFFICIENT PUBLIC SECTOR PLACES BE PROVIDED IN THE TERRITORY AS A WHOLE TO MEET TOTAL DEMAND FOR JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION AND TO MEET APPROVED TARGETS FOR SENIOR SECONDARY AND SIXTH FORM PLACES.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON MICHELANGELO PAGLIARI, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HONOURABLE ANDREW WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR PAGLIARI SAID, HOWEVER, IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT THERE WOULD BE A SHORTAGE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES IN THE NEW TOWNS AND A CORRESPONDING SURPLUS OF PLACES IN THE URBAN AREAS BECAUSE OF THE CONCENTRATION OF EXISTING SCHOOLS IN THE URBAN AREAS AND THE RAPID EXPANSION OF THE NEW TOWNS AND CONSEQUENT MOVEMENT OF POPULATION TO THEM.

"THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN AWARE OF THESE IMBALANCES FOR SOME TIME AND CONSIDERS THEM TO BE ACCEPTABLE PROVIDED THAT THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS INVOLVED IS NOT EXCESSIVE, THAT THE DISTANCES INVOLVED IN GETTING TO SCHOOL ARE NOT TOO GREAT AND THAT CONVENIENT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IS AVAILABLE," HE SAID.

MR PAGLIARI NOTED THAT CERTAIN MEASURES WERE TAKEN AS A MATTER OF ROUTINE TO PREVENT THESE IMBALANCES FROM BECOMING TOO GREAT. "IN PARTICULAR NEW SCHOOLS BEING BUILT TO CATER FOR EXPANDING DEMAND TERRITORY-WIDE ARE LOCATED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE IN AREAS WHERE THE SHORTAGE OF PLACES IS GREATEST, WITH PRIORITY GIVEN TO REMOTE AND ISOLATED DISTRICTS," HE SAID.

/IN ADDITION

IN ADDITION THE SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES ALLOCATION SYSTEM TRIED TO ENSURE THAT A STUDENT WAS ALLOCATED A PLACE IN AN AREA AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO HIS HOME OR IN A LOCATION CONVENIENTLY SERVED BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT, HE ADDED.

"UNFORTUNATELY THESE ROUTINE MEASURES DO NOT ALWAYS PREVENT SERIOUS IMBALANCES FROM OCCURRING," MR PAGLIARI SAID.

THE EMERGENCE OF A SERIOUS SHORTAGE OF SECONDARY PLACES IN NEW TERRITORIES EAST CAME TO LIGHT IN MID-1985 WHEN THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED THE LOCATION OF 35 ADDITIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS TO BE BUILT IN THE PERIOD 1987-1993 AS RECOMMENDED BY THE EDUCATION COMMISSION AS PART OF A PACKAGE OF MEASURES DESIGNED TO PERMIT THE PHASING-OUT OF THE JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION ASSESSMENT IN 1991, HE NOTED.

HENCE, 11 OF THE 35 ADDITIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS WERE ALLOCATED TO THE EASTERN NEW TERRITORIES WHILE AT THE SAME TIME CONSIDERATION WAS BEING GIVEN TO FURTHER MEASURES TO COPE WITH THE KNOWN PROBLEM IN TUEN MUN, MR PAGLIARI SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT SHATIN WAS NOT AT THAT TIME CONSIDERED TO BE AS SERIOUS A PROBLEM AS TUEN MUN BECAUSE OF THE AVAILABILITY OF MASS TRANSPORTATION TO ADJACENT DISTRICTS IN NORTH KOWLOON WITH SURPLUS PLACES.

NEVERTHELESS, MR PAGLIARI SAID, THE PROBLEMS OF NT(EAST) WERE SUFFICIENTLY ACUTE TO CAUSE THE GOVERNMENT TO IMMEDIATELY BEGIN PLANNING FOR THE REPROVISIONING OF 11 SUB-STANDARD SCHOOLS FROM THE URBAN AREAS TO NT(EAST) BY 1992, IN ADDITION TO THE 11 SCHOOLS ALLOCAED TO THE AREA.

DESPITE THESE MEASURES, UPDATED POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE AND DISTRICT WHICH BECAME AVAILABLE EARLY LAST YEAR HAD REVEALED THAT THE SHORTFALL OF SECONDARY ONE PLACES IN THE EASTERN NEW TERRITORIES WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN PREVIOUSLY INDICATED, RISING TO SOME 5,900 FORM ONE PLACES BY 1993.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT THEREFORE WORKED OUT A NUMBER OF SHORT-TERM REMEDIAL MEASURES FOR SHATIN SIMILAR TO THOSE APPLIED SUCCESSFULLY IN TUEN MUN LAST YEAR, HE SAID.

THESE MEASURES, MR PAGLIARI SAID, INCLUDED REDUCTION IN THE PERCENTAGE OF DISCRETIONARY PLACES FROM 10 PER CENT TO FIVE PER CENT; ADOPTION OF A NEW CLASS STRUCTURE IN EXISTING AND ALL NEW SCHOOLS; AND ADVANCEMENT OF THE COMPLETION DATE AND THE OPENING OF NEW SCHOOLS.

IN ADDITION, A CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME WAS PROPOSED FOR A FURTHER 12 SECONDARY SCHOOLS BY 1993 IN THE AREA, HE SAID.

"THE COMBINATION OF THESE MEASURES WILL HOLD THE SHORTFALL IN FORM ONE PLACES WITHIN TOLERABLE LIMITS FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS AND REDUCE IT THEREAFTER, WITH ITS COMPLETE ELIMINATION BY 1993," MR PAGLIARI SAID.

"MUCH, HOWEVER, WILL DEPEND ON THE ACCURACY OF OUR POPULATION PROJECTIONS AS ANY ALTERATION IN THE RATE OF BUILD-UP OF POPULATION IN THE AREA OR IN THE AGE GROUP MIX WILL INEVITABLY AFFECT THE SHORTFALL POSITION," HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT THE 1986 BY-CENSUS FIGURES WHICH WOULD BE AVAILABLE THIS SUMMER SHOULD GIVE A CLEARER PICTURE.

"PRESENT INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE RELEVANT PROJECTIONS WILL BE LOWER THAN PREVIOUS FORECASTS, WHICH SHOULD RESULT IN AN EARLIER SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS FACING NT EAST IF THE BUILD UP OF NEW HOUSING IN NT EAST FOLLOWS THE REVISED PATTERN," MR PAGLIARI SAID.

"IF, HOWEVER, THE REVERSE TURNS OUT TO BE THE CASE, WE WILL CONSIDER FURTHER REPROVISIONING OF SCHOOLS FROM THE URBAN AREA TO NT EAST," HE ADDED.

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NEEDS TO PROVIDE INTERPRETATION SERVICE RECOGNISED

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THE RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETERS AND CHINESE LANGUAGE OFFICERS HAVE BEEN STEPPED UP IN RECENT YEARS TO COPE WITH THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR THEIR SERVICES, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID FORD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (TODAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG, MR FORD SAID THAT THE NUMBER OF SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETERS HAD INCREASED FROM SEVEN IN APRIL 1983 TO 16 IN JUNE 1987 AND THE NUMBER OF CHINESE LANGUAGE OFFICERS HAD INCREASED FROM 343 TO 508 OVER THE SAME PERIOD.

HE SAID RECRUITMENT WAS UNDERWAY TO FILL THE EXISTING THREE VACANT POSTS OF SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETERS AND 57 VANCANCIES OF CHINESE LANGUAGE OFFICERS.

"THE LARGE NUMBER OF VACANCIES IN THE CHINESE LANGUAGE OFFICERS GRADE IS A REFLECTION OF THE HIGH RATE AT WHICH NEW POSTS ARE CREATED TO MEET THE DEMAND FOR TRANSLATION WORK," HE CONTINUED.

/CONCERNING THE

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CONCERNING THE RECRUITMENT EXERCISES CARRIED OUT TWICE EACH YEAR, MR FORD SAID THE RESPONSE TO THE RECRUITMENT OF CHINESE LANGUAGE OFFICERS HAD BEEN GOOD BUT GOOD SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETERS, PARTICULARLY FOR INTERPRETATION FROM ENGLISH TO PUTONGHUA, WERE IN SHORT SUPPLY.

THEREFORE, A SPECIAL PROGRAMME HAD BEEN INTRODUCED TO TRAIN CIVIL SERVANTS WITH POTENTIAL TO BECOME SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETERS WITH A VIEW TO A TRANSFER ON SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME SINCE LAST YEAR, HE SAID.

"BECAUSE OF THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR PUTONGHUA INTERPRETATION, A SPECIAL CADRE OF 17 CHINESE LANGUAGE OFFICERS HAS BEEN FORMED TO PROVIDE THIS SERVICE FOR HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS SUCH AS THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP AND LAND COMMISSION MEETINGS," HE NOTED.

MR FORD ALSO POINTED OUT THAT ON THE JOB, PART TIME DAY-RELEASE AND OVERSEAS TRAINING WERE PROVIDED TO SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETERS AND CHINESE LANGUAGE OFFICERS.

THERE WERE PLANS TO INVITE OVERSEAS EXPERTS IN CONFERENCE INTERPRETATION TO COME TO HONG KONG TO TRAIN THE CHINESE LANGUAGE OFFICERS, HE ADDED.

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FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS WELL CO-ORDINATED

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STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS ADEQUATE LIAISON AND CO-ORDINATION AMONG THREE POLICY BRANCHES OF THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT WHICH HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HELMUT SOHMEN, MR JACOBS SAID THE THREE BRANCHES, NAMELY THE ECONOMIC SERVICES BRANCH, THE TRADE AND INDUSTRY BRANCH AND THE MONETARY AFFAIRS BRANCH, HAD RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS THAT IMPINGED ON THEIR RESPECTIVE AREAS OF WORK.

"ACTIVITIES ON NEGOTIATIONS IN THESE AREAS ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE WORK OF EACH BRANCH AND ARE BEST DEALT WITH BY THE POLICY SECRETARY RESPONSIBLE IN ANY PARTICULAR CASE."

MR JACOBS ADDED THAT AS FINANCIAL SECRETARY, HE HELD OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY IN RELATION TO THE WORK OF ALL THE THREE BRANCHES AND THERE WAS CLOSE LIAISON AND CO-ORDINATION AMONG THEM.

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EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY ON SOFT DRUGS STEPPED UP

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PREVENTIVE EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY PROGRAMME REGARDING THE DANGERS OF PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES SHOULD BE INTENSIFIED, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON MRS RITA FAN, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT THE MAIN THRUST OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-NARCOTICS PREVENTIVE EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY PROGRAMME HAD ALWAYS BEEN DIRECTED AT YOUNG PEOPLE.

IN THE PAST FOUR YEARS, HE SAID, THE NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE NEWLY REPORTED TO THE CENTRAL REGISTRY OF DRUG ABUSE HAD GONE DOWN SIGNIFICANTLY, FROM 1,121 IN 1983 TO 783 IN 1986.

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE MOST COMMONLY ABUSED DRUG AMONG THESE PEOPLE WAS HEROIN. BUT THERE WERE NOW INDICATIONS THAT MORE YOUNG PEOPLE HAD BEEN ABUSING SUCH PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES AS MANDRAX AND CANNABIS IN THE LAST TWO YEARS OR SO, HE ADDED.

THEREFORE, HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT HAD ACCEPTED THE ADVICE GIVEN BY THE ACTION COMMITTEE AGAINST NARCOTICS (ACAN) THAT THE PREVENTIVE EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY PROGRAMME REGARDING THE DANGERS OF THESE DRUGS SHOULD BE INTENSIFIED.

MR JEAFFRESON THEN LISTED OUT MEASURES THAT HAD EITHER BEEN TAKEN OR WOULD BE TAKEN IN THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR:

- * MORE FREQUENT BROADCASTS OF ANNOUNCEMENTS OF PUBLIC INTEREST (APIS) ON PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES IN GENERAL;
- * PLACING LARGE POSTERS RELATING TO PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES AT CONSPICUOUS PLACES AND PLACES FREQUENTED BY YOUNG PEOPLE;
- * ENCOURAGING YOUNG PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE YOUTH AGAINST DRUGS SCHEME;
- * INCLUDING IN THE SCHOOL TEACHING KIT AN INFORMATION SHEET ON PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES;
- * PRODUCING A SIMILAR INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND PARENTS;
- * STRENGTHENING THE CONTENT OF SCHOOL TALKS GIVEN BY THE SCHOOL TALKS TEAM BY INCLUDING MORE INFORMATION ON THE PHYSICAL, SOCIAL AND LEGAL CONSEQUENCES OF ABUSING THESE DRUGS; AND
- * EXPANDING THE SCHOOL TALKS TEAM.

/MR JEAFFRESON

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MR JEAFFRESON POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED THE SCHOOL TALKS TEAM IN FEBRUARY 1984 TO GIVE DRUG EDUCATION TALKS TO SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AGED BETWEEN 12 AND 15 IN FORM I TO FORM III CLASSES AND THAT NO CONSIDERATION WAS YET GIVEN TO EXTEND THE COVERAGE OF THE SCHOOL TALKS TEAM TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

"THE OBJECT OF THE TEAM IS TO REACH ALL YOUNG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS BEFORE ANY OF THEM LEAVE AT THE AGE OF 15 AFTER THE NINE-YEAR PERIOD OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION. THOSE WHO LEAVE SCHOOL AT THIS EARLY AGE ARE CONSIDERED TO BE MORE VULNERABLE TO UNDESIRABLE INFLUENCES THAN THOSE STILL ATTENDING SCHOOL.

"SCHOOL TALKS ARE AIMED AT GIVING STUDENTS A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF THE DRUG PROBLEM AND THE DANGERS OF DRUG ABUSE," HE SAID.

IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR, HE ADDED, THE TEAM COMPLETED ITS FIRST CYCLE OF TALKS IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS AFTER GIVING ABOUT 600 TALKS TO SOME 200,000 STUDENTS IN THE TERRITORY.

"HAVING RECENTLY REVIEWED THE ACTIVITIES OF THE TEAM, ACAN ADVISED THAT THE SCHOOL TALKS PROGRAMME SHOULD BE EXPANDED TO COVER STUDENTS IN FORMS IV AND V AS WELL. ACCORDINGLY, PLANS ARE IN HAND TO ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES," HE SAID.

MR JEAFFRESON FURTHER SAID THAT AS REGARDS PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS, THE VIEW WAS THAT DRUG EDUCATION SHOULD MORE APPROPRIATELY BE PROVIDED FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN OF SUCH A YOUNG AGE AND THAT PARENT SEMINARS AND FAMILY CAMPS WERE ORGANISED FROM TIME TO TIME.

HE ALSO NOTED THAT DRUG EDUCATION WAS BEING PROMOTED IN PRIMARY 6 CLASSES THROUGH THE TEACHING OF HEALTH EDUCATION.

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NUMBER OF LIGHT BUSES LIMITED

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A MOTION TO EXTEND THE PERIOD LIMITING THE LICENSING OF PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES TO JUNE 20, 1989 WAS PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE MOTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID THE EFFECT OF THE EXTENSION WAS THAT THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VEHICLES WHICH MIGHT BE REGISTERED AND LICENSED AS PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES WOULD REMAIN AT 4,350 AS ORDERED BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL ON JUNE 10, 1986.

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TWO BILLS PASSED

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THE POWERS OF ATTORNEY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 AND THE OCEAN PARK CORPORATION BILL 1987 WERE PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ANOTHER BILL - THE PENSION BENEFITS BILL 1987 - WAS READ A SECOND TIME AND DEBATE ON IT WAS ADJOURNED.

DURING THE SITTING, THE SENIOR MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE HON LYDIA DUNN, MOVED A MOTION URGING THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON THE GREEN PAPER ON THE 1987 REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.

ANOTHER MOTION, SEEKING TO AMEND THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE TO EXTEND THE PERIOD FOR THE LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF VEHICLES WHICH MAY BE REGISTERED AS PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES SPECIFIED IN THE PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES (LIMITATION ON NUMBER) NOTICE 1986 TO JUNE 20, 1989, WAS PASSED.

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NEW MILESTONE IN SERVICE TO MEDIA

THE NEW TELEPRINTER NETWORK IN GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES (GIS), WHICH REPLACES THE SYSTEM THAT HAD SERVED THE MEDIA IN HONG KONG FOR MANY YEARS, OFFICIALLY CAME INTO OPERATION TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IT PROVIDES FOR THE DIRECT INPUT OF ENGLISH AND CHINESE TEXTS AND THE SIMULTANEOUS TRANSMISSION OF A NEWS ITEM TO MORE THAN 60 NEWSPAPERS, AGENCIES AND TV AND RADIO STATIONS AT A SPEED OF 100 ENGLISH CHARACTERS OR 20 CHINESE WORDS PER SECOND WHICH IS MANY TIMES QUICKER THAN THE OLD SYSTEM.

WITH ADVICE FROM THE POSTMASTER GENERAL'S OFFICE, THE NEW TELEPRINTER WAS DESIGNED AND INSTALLED BY THE HONG KONG TELEPHONE COMPANY.

REPRESENTATIVES FROM MORE THAN 60 MEDIA ORGANISATIONS WITNESSED AN INAUGURATION CEREMONY JOINTLY OFFICIATED BY THE DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES, MRS IRENE YAU, AND THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF HONG KONG TELEPHONE, MR MIKE GALE, AT THE GIS NEWS ROOM IN BEACONSFIELD HOUSE THIS MORNING.

BEFORE PRESSING A KEYBOARD SWITCH TO TRANSMIT THIS PRESS RELEASE TO SUBSCRIBERS OF THE NETWORK TO MARK THE LAUNCHING OF THE NEW TELEPRINTER, MRS YAU TOLD THE GATHERING THAT THE NEW SYSTEM REPRESENTED ANOTHER MILESTONE IN GIS SERVICE TO THE MEDIA.

SHE SAID TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION TO THE MEDIA AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE WAS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF GIS SERVICE, AND A RELIABLE AND EFFICIENT LINK WITH MEDIA ORGANISATIONS WAS A VITAL COG IN THE WHEEL.

MRS YAU SAID IN RECENT YEARS, TYPEWRITERS HAD DISAPPEARED FROM THE NEWSROOM OF MOST NEWSPAPERS AS REPORTERS AND SUB-EDITORS WERE WORKING IN FRONT OF COMPUTER TERMINALS. THE CHINESE NEWSPAPER, TOO, SHE SAID, WERE SWITCHING TO COMPUTER.

NOTING THAT THE GIS TELEPRINTER SYSTEM HAD GROWN FROM A MODEST START OF SIX LINES 25 YEARS AGO TO OVER 60 SUBSCRIBERS TODAY, MRS YAU SAID THE DEPARTMENT HAD BEEN LOOKING AROUND FOR A NEW TELEPRINTER SYSTEM TO REPLACE THE EXISTING ONE.

SHE THANKED THE HONG KONG TELEPHONE AND THE POSTMASTER GENERAL FOR DESIGNING AND INSTALLING THE SYSTEM.

THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF HONG KONG TELEPHONE, MR GALE, IN CONGRATULATING GIS ON THE INAUGURATION OF THE NEW SYSTEM, OUTLINED THE MANY "REMARKABLE FEATURES" OF THE NEW NETWORK AND SAID IT HAD POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.

"WE HOPE TO SEE THE INTRODUCTION OF DIRECT COMPUTER LINK BETWEEN GIS AND NEWSPAPER COMPUTER TYPESETTING SYSTEM, AND THE INTRODUCTION OF OVERSEAS NEWS TRANSMISSION.

/"AND ALREADY;

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"AND ALREADY, THE SYSTEM HAS CREATED INTEREST OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT FOR HIGH SPEED INFORMATION BROADCASTING IN BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE," MR GALE NOTED.

MRS YAU THEN INAUGURATED THE NEW NETWORK BY TRANSMITTING THIS PRESS RELEASE THROUGH THE NEW SYSTEM.

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HUNG HOM BAY RECLAMATION

THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO PROVIDE AN AREA OF 18 HECTARES WITHIN THE 36 HECTARES NOW BEING RECLAIMED IN HUNG HOM BAY TO THE KOWLOON CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION (KCRC) FOR EXPANSION OF ITS FREIGHT YARD.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THE PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE 18 HECTARES TO THE KCRC WAS BASED ON ASSESSMENTS OF THE AMOUNT OF LAND THE CORPORATION WOULD REQUIRE FOR FREIGHT YARD DEVELOPMENT UP TILL THE LATE 1990S.

HE STRESSED THE CONSIDERABLE STRATEGIC VALUE OF THE REMAINDER OF THE RECLAMATION IN PROVIDING RESIDENTIAL SPACE TO FACILITATE URBAN REDEVELOPMENT.

AS REGARDS THE OVERALL PLANNING OF THE HUNG HOM BAY RECLAMATION HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT PREFERRED THE FOLLOWING OPTION:

- I) AN 18-HECTARE FREIGHT YARD EXPANSION WITH ONE PODIUM OF ABOUT FIVE HECTARES TO BE BUILT ON IT TO ACCOMMODATE COMMERCIAL PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT AND CARRY THE HUNG HOM BY-PASS. THE REMAINDER OF THE FREIGHT YARD EXPANSION AREA WOULD BE COVERED BY A COVER FOR NOISE ABATEMENT PURPOSES, EIGHT HECTARES OF WHICH MIGHT BE FOR RECREATIONAL USE;
- II) THE REST OF THE RECLAMATION WOULD BE EARMARKED FOR PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNMENT/INSTITUTION/COMMUNITY USES AND OPEN SPACES;
- III) ROAD LINKS WOULD BE BUILT TO CONNECT EAST TSIM SHA TSUI WITH HUNG HOM (I.E. THE HUNG HOM BY-PASS), AND TO CONNECT PRINCESS MARGARET ROAD WITH THE HUNG HOM BAY RECLAMATION.

/HE WENT

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HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT DEVELOPMENT IN THE BAY WAS SUBJECT TO A PEAK-HOUR TRAFFIC GENERATION CAPACITY AND, GIVEN THAT CONSTRAINT, THE ABOVE OPTIONS WOULD REPRESENT THE MOST ECONOMICAL USE OF LAND AND BEST MEET PLANNING OBJECTIVES.

HE EXPECTED ABOUT 15 HECTARES TO BE GRANTED IN 1989 AND THE REST IN 1990. FULL COMPLETION OF THE RECLAMATION WAS NOT EXPECTED UNTIL 1993. DETAILS REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT WILL BE DISCUSSED FURTHER WITH KCRC BEFORE THE AGREEMENT OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD IS SOUGHT.

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ANGLO ASEAN BANK NEVER APPROVED: BANKING COMMISSIONER
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THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING NOTED RECENTLY THAT A WRIT OF SUMMONS HAS BEEN ISSUED BY A DEPOSITOR IN HIGH COURT ON MAY 25 AGAINST AN ORGANISATION CALLED ANGLO ASEAN BANK AND TRUST LIMITED APPARENTLY AT ITS LAST KNOWN ADDRESSES AT ROOM 1414, MELBOURNE PLAZA, 33 QUEEN'S ROAD CENTRAL AND ROOM 202, FAR EAST EXCHANGE BUILDING, 8 WYNDHAM STREET, CENTRAL, HONG KONG.

THE COMMISSIONER STATES THAT ANGLO ASEAN BANK AND TRUST LIMITED HAS NEVER APPLIED TO HIM FOR APPROVAL OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ANY OFFICE IN HONG KONG AND HAS THEREFORE NEVER BEEN AUTHORISED TO ACT IN ANY BANKING CAPACITY IN HONG KONG.

IN REPLY TO HIS ENQUIRY TO THE CENTRAL BANK OF VANUATU, THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER AND LIQUIDATOR IN VANUATU INFORMED THE COMMISSIONER THAT A WINDING-UP ORDER WAS MADE AGAINST THE COMPANY ON DECEMBER 11, 1985 ON WHICH DATE THE COMPANY'S BANKING LICENCE WAS ALSO REVOKED. ACCORDING TO THE CENTRAL BANK'S RECORD IN VANUATU, THERE WAS NO KNOWN OFFICE IN HONG KONG.

THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING ADVISES ANY PERSON WHO MAY HAVE MADE DEPOSITS WITH THE COMPANY IN HONG KONG TO REPORT THE MATTER TO THE POLICE AND TO FILE THEIR PROOFS OF CLAIMS WITH THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER AND LIQUIDATOR IN VANUATU FOR RECOVERY OF THEIR DEPOSITS.

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ROUTE 5 SHA TIN CONNECTION CONTRACT AWARDED

WORK ON THE SHA TIN CONNECTION OF ROUTE 5 IS TO START IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MONTH WITH THE AWARD OF A \$210 MILLION CONTRACT BY THE TERRITORY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT.

THE CONTRACT WAS SIGNED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE DIRECTOR OF TERRITORY DEVELOPMENT, MR KENNETH KWOK, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF HARBOUR CONSTRUCTION LTD., MR PATRICK CHAN AND MR GERRIT DE NYS.

THIS, TOGETHER WITH TWO OTHER CONTRACTS FOR CONSTRUCTING THE SHING MUN SECTION AND TSUEN WAN CONNECTION WILL FORM THE MAIN CIVIL ENGINEERING WORKS FOR THE TRUNK ROAD.

THE SHA TIN CONNECTION WILL START NEAR THE BOUNDARY OF SHA TIN NEW TOWN, NORTH OF HEUNG FAN LIU, AND JOIN THE EXISTING TAI PO ROAD NEAR SHA TIN TOWN CENTRE.

THE WORK INCLUDES A 2.2-KILOMETRE DUAL TWO-LANE CARRIAGEWAY, 1.2 KILOMETRES OF WHICH WILL BE ELEVATED.

ALSO INCLUDED ARE TWO FLYOVERS CONNECTING ROUTE 5 WITH TAI WAI AND A FLYOVER CONNECTING THE HIGHWAY WITH THE NORTHBOUND CARRIAGEWAY OF TAI PO ROAD IN FRONT OF TUNG LO WAN.

THE CONTRACT PROVIDES FOR FORMATION WORK FOR SEVERAL RESIDENTIAL SITES IN PAK TIN.

IN ADDITION, SOME SPECIAL FEATURES ARE INCORPORATED INTO THE TRUCK ROAD PROJECT, SUCH AS PROVISION OF NOISE BARRIERS AT APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS AND INSTALLATION OF FIVE CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION CAMERAS AT STRATEGIC POINTS ALONG THE TRUCK ROAD FOR SURVEILLANCE PURPOSES.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE SEVEN-KILOMETRE-LONG TRUCK ROAD LINKING SHA TIN WITH TSUEN WAN STARTED WITH A \$452 MILLION CONTRACT AWARDED FOR THE SHING MUN SECTION IN APRIL LAST YEAR.

IT COMPRISES TWIN TWO-LANE TUNNELS UNDER SMUGGLERS RIDGE AND NEEDLE HILL, THREE BRIDGES PLUS A TOLL PLAZA AND AN ADMINISTRATION AND CONTROL BUILDING AT TSUEN WAN NEAR WO YI HOP ROAD.

WORK ON THE TSUEN WAN CONNECTION STARTED LAST MONTH AT A COST OF \$161.3 MILLION, INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION OF TWO UNDERPASSES TO CONNECT SHEK WAI KOK ROAD TO WAI TSUEN ROAD UNDER TEXACO ROAD AND YI PEI CHUN ROAD TO SHEK WAI KOK ROAD UNDER CHEUNG PEI SHAN ROAD.

IN ADDITION, AN INTERCHANGE AT WO YI HOP, FOOTBRIDGES AND SUBWAYS WILL BE BUILT AND CHEUNG PEI SHAN ROAD WILL BE EXTENDED:

THE WHOLE TRUNK ROAD IS SCHEDULED TO OPEN TO TRAFFIC AT THE END OF 1989.

ANTI-NARCOTICS BLITZ IN TUEN MUN OPENS
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MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) URGED NOT TO ABUSE DRUGS, BOTH OPIATE AND PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS.

THE APPEAL WAS MADE BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR NARCOTICS, MR GARETH MULLOY, AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 1987/88 TUEN MUN DISTRICT ANTI-NARCOTICS CAMPAIGN.

HE NOTED THAT THIS YEAR'S PUBLICITY WOULD, IN ADDITION TO AN OVERALL ANTI-NARCOTICS PUBLICITY STRATEGY, ALSO INTENSIFY EFFORTS TO EDUCATE THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND YOUTHS IN PARTICULAR ON THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF ABUSING PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES.

MR MULLOY SAID THAT TO ERADICATE THE ROOT OF THE DRUG PROBLEM IN SOCIETY WAS A LONG LASTING AND CHALLENGING TASK FOR EVERY AUTHORITY IN THE WORLD.

"HONG KONG, HOWEVER, WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S FIRM STANCE AND DETERMINATION AND THE WHOLE-HEARTED SUPPORT AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION FROM THE COMMUNITY, HAS EXPERIENCED SUCCESSFUL HARVESTS AND ENCOURAGING RESULTS," HE SAID.

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CAMPAIGN ORGANISING COMMITTEE, MR NG CHEUK-TAI, WHO ALSO SPOKE AT THE CEREMONY, NOTED THAT THE CAMPAIGN WAS AIMED AT REMINDING THE YOUNGER GENERATION OF THE NEED TO BE ALERT TO PSYCHOTROPIC DRUG ABUSE AND TO ADOPT A PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARDS LIFE.

ORGANISED BY THE ACTION COMMITTEE AGAINST NARCOTICS, THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT BOARD, AND THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT OFFICE, ANTI-NARCOTICS MESSAGES WILL BE DISSEMINATED THROUGH A VARIETY OF EDUCATIONAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES DURING THE SIX-MONTH LONG CAMPAIGN PERIOD.

THESE INCLUDE ANTI-NARCOTICS ORIENTATED FILM SHOWS, DRAMMAS, EXHIBITIONS, SLIDE SHOWS AND THE PUBLISHING OF NEWSPAPER SUPPLEMENTS.

IN ADDITION, THERE ARE ALSO ROCK-CLIMBING COURSES, ADVENTURE SHIP VOYAGES, VISITS TO CUSTOMS TRAINING SCHOOL AND AN ANTI-DRUG SEMINAR CAMP WHICH ARE ALL OPEN TO LOCAL YOUTHS.

OTHER GUESTS JOINING MR MULLOY AND MR NG AT THE RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY WERE THE DISTRICT OFFICER (TUEN MUN), MR STEPHEN SELBY AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT BOARD SOCIAL SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE, MR SO SHIU-SING.

ATTENDED BY MORE THAN 400 REPRESENTATIVES FROM LOCAL MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES AND COMMUNITIES, THE OPENING CEREMONY WAS FOLLOWED BY AN ANTI-NARCOTICS SLIDE PRESENTATION AND THE SHOWING OF A FILM.

APART FROM TUEN MUN DISTRICT, ANTI-NARCOTICS DISTRICT CAMPAIGNS WILL ALSO BE CARRIED OUT IN SOUTHERN, SHAM SHUI PO AND YAU MA TEI THIS YEAR.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 1987

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MORE DONATIONS TO SIR EDWARD YUDE FUND

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TSUEN WAN DISTRICT OFFICER, MR WILLIAM SHIU WILL RECEIVE A CHEQUE FOR \$20,059 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PO LEUNG KUK, MR MICHAEL CHAN TOMORROW (THURSDAY), AS DONATIONS FROM STUDENTS OF YAO LIN SUN COLLEGE TO THE SIR EDWARD YUDE FUND.

THE PRESENTATION WILL BE HELD AT 8 PM IN THE CONCERT HALL OF TSUEN WAN TOWN HALL DURING THE PO LEUNG KUK YAO LIN SUN COLLEGE SIR EDWARD YUDE FUND RAISING CUM FIFTH ANNIVERSARY VARIETY SHOW WHICH WILL FEATURE SINGING, DANCING, DRAMA, AND MUSIC PERFORMANCES.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE EVENT.

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FARE HIKE FOR GREEN BUS ROUTES TO GO UP

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THE FARES ON THREE GREEN MINIBUS (GMB) ROUTES IN YUEN LONG WILL BE ADJUSTED WITH EFFECT FROM SATURDAY (JUNE 6).

THE THREE GMB ROUTES ARE: ROUTE 33 FROM YUEN LONG TO HA PAK NAI; ROUTE 34 FROM YUEN LONG TO LAU FAU SHAN; AND ROUTE 35 FROM YUEN LONG TO TSIM BEI TSUI.

ON ROUTE 33, THE FULL FARE WILL BE INCREASED FROM THE EXISTING \$3.5 TO \$4. THE NEW SECTION FARES FROM YUEN LONG TO LONG CHOK HANG, PAK NAI AND LAU FAU SHAN WILL BE \$3.5, \$3 AND \$1.7 RESPECTIVELY.

THE FARE ON ROUTE 34 WILL GO UP FROM \$1.5 TO \$1.7 AND NO SECTION FARE WILL BE CHARGED ON THIS ROUTE.

MEANWHILE, THE FULL FARE ON ROUTE 35 WILL GO UP FROM \$2.5 TO \$3, WHILE NEW SECTION FARES OF \$1.7 AND \$1.5 WILL BE CHARGED FROM YUEN LONG TO LAU FAU SHAN AND SHA KIU RESPECTIVELY.

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TWO NT SITES TO BE LET BY TENDER

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TWO NEW TERRITORIES LOTS ARE TO BE LET ON SHORT TERM TENANCIES BY THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT.

ONE, AT AREA 26E IN KWAI CHUNG, MEASURES ABOUT 4,050 SQUARE METRES AND IS FOR A FEE PAYING PUBLIC CAR PARK FOR PARKING OF CONTAINER TRACTORS AND TRAILERS ONLY.

THE OTHER SITE OF ABOUT 1,924 SQUARE METRES IS SITUATED AT KIN TAK STREET, YUEN LONG, AND IS ALSO FOR A FEE PAYING PUBLIC CAR PARK.

THE TENANCIES FOR BOTH SITES ARE ONE YEAR, RENEWABLE QUARTERLY AFTERWARDS.

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING TENDERS IS NOON ON JUNE 19.

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PRESS CONFERENCE ON KWAI TSING FIGHT CRIME SCHEMES

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THE CHAIRMAN OF THE KWAI CHUNG AND TSING YI DISTRICT FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE, MR CHOI HING-SHUN, WILL MEET THE PRESS AT 11 AM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO INTRODUCE VARIOUS SCHEMES TO ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS IN HELPING EACH OTHER AND THE AUTHORITIES TO CURB CRIME.

THE PRESS CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF KWAI TSING DISTRICT OFFICE, 10TH FLOOR, KWAI HING GOVERNMENT OFFICE BUILDING, 166-174, MING FONG ROAD.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS, MR YAU HON-KEE, MRS NANCY LAM, MR LEE LYEN-YUEN, MR SIU KONG-YU AND MR KINSEN FOK, AS WELL AS POLICE COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER, MR TAM LUN-CHEUNG AND ASSISTANT DISTRICT OFFICER, MR PETER LEUNG WILL BE PRESENT AT THE CONFERENCE.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE PRESS CONFERENCE TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT 11 AM IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE KWAI TSING DISTRICT OFFICE, 10TH FLOOR, KWAI HING GOVERNMENT OFFICE BUILDING (NEXT TO KWAI HING MTR STATION) 166-174, MING FONG ROAD.

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WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY PUBLICITY DRIVE IN SOUTHERN

SOUTHERN DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS WILL SPREAD THE KEEP CLEAN MESSAGE TO RESIDENTS AT THE DISTRICT'S BEACHES, MARKETS AND THE ABERDEEN TYPHOON SHELTER IN A PUBLICITY DRIVE TO SUPPORT THE UNITED NATIONS WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY ON FRIDAY (JUNE 5) MORNING.

THE HALF-DAY PROGRAMME WILL START WITH A 15-MINUTE PERFORMANCE BY CORPS OF DRUMS OF THE 1ST BATTALION COLDSTREAM GUARDS AT 9.30 AM NEAR JUMBO PIER IN ABERDEEN.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD'S ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE WILL THEN BOARD SAMPANS TO DISTRIBUTE PLASTIC GARBAGE BAGS TO VESSELS IN ABERDEEN TYPHOON SHELTER FROM 9.45 AM TO 10.30 AM. THEY WILL TOUR THE WONG CHUK HANG ESTATE MARKET FROM 10.30 AM TO 11 AM AND DEEP WATER BAY AND REPULSE BAY FROM 11 AM TO 12.30 PM TO DISTRIBUTE PUBLICITY MATERIAL TO RESIDENTS.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT BOARD'S WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY ACTIVITIES.

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN WAN CHAI

THE SOUTHBOUND SECTION OF MORRISON HILL ROAD BETWEEN WAN CHAI ROAD AND SHARP STREET WEST WILL BE DESIGNATED AN URBAN CLEARWAY FROM 7 AM TO 10 AM AND FROM 4 PM TO 7 PM DAILY TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC FLOW FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (JUNE 6).

NO VEHICLE EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS WITHIN THE ZONE.

AT THE SAME TIME, NO VEHICLE EXCEEDING FOUR TONNES GROSS WILL BE ALLOWED TO ENTER CANAL ROAD WEST BETWEEN SHARP STREET WEST AND HENNESSY ROAD.

THE MEASURE WILL LAST FOR ABOUT THREE MONTHS TO FACILITATE ROAD WORKS.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 1987

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TING ON STREET CLOSED

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TING ON STREET EAST OF TING FU STREET IN NGAU TAU KOK IS CLOSED TO TRAFFIC FOR ROAD REPAIR WORK FOLLOWING A WATER MAINS BURST THERE.

TO TIE IN WITH THE ROAD CLOSURE, THE SECTION OF TING FU STREET SOUTH OF TING ON STREET HAS BEEN REROUTED FROM ONE-WAY EASTBOUND TO ONE-WAY SOUTHBOUND.

THE ARRANGEMENTS WILL LAST UNTIL SATURDAY (JUNE 6).

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HUNG HOM WATER CUT

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SALT WATER SUPPLY TO CERTAIN PREMISES IN HUNG HOM WILL BE SUSPENDED FROM 8 AM ON FRIDAY (JUNE 5) TO NOON THE FOLLOWING DAY SO THAT MAINS WORK CAN BE CARRIED OUT.

THE SUSPENSION WILL AFFECT PREMISES AT BULKELEY STREET, GILLIES AVENUE, WHAMPOA STREET, WINSLOW STREET, LO LUNG HANG STREET, BAKER COURT, WUHU STREET, WA FUNG STREET, MALACCA STREET, WALKER ROAD, MING ON STREET, HUNG HOM BAY CENTRE AND VALLEY ROAD.

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