



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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CONTENTS

PAGE NO.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING:

LEGCO HAS SHOWN DETERMINATION, COURAGE: GOVERNOR	1
SECRET POSSIBLE PRIORITY FOR PROTECTING ENVIRONMENT	2
HK MUST REMAIN A FIT PLACE TO LIVE	3
ROOM FOR CAUTION IN FIGHT AGAINST POLLUTION	4
HELP FOR SMALL FACTORIES URGED	6
MORE INVESTMENT IN WASTE DISPOSAL URGED	6
TOURISM INDUSTRY SUPPORTS ANTI-POLLUTION PLANS	7
CO-OPERATION NEEDED IN FIGHTING POLLUTION	8
ASSISTANCE FOR FACTORY OPERATORS IN FIGHTING POLLUTION URGED	10
PROLONGED EXPOSURE TO NOISE NOT ADDRESSED	12
GOVT URGED TO HELP INDUSTRY IN POLLUTION CONTROL	13
SUBSTANTIAL DEMAND FOR SEPARATE TAXATION	14
SEPARATE TAXATION FOR MARRIED COUPLES WELCOMED	18
PRINCIPLE OF EQUITY SUPPORTED	19
MEMBER OBJECTS TO SEPARATE TAXATION BILL	20
NO INCREASE IN BURDEN ON LOW INCOME FAMILIES	21
MARRIED COUPLES NOT TREATED FAIRLY	23
BANKING BILL GIVES EFFECT TO CHANGES TO THREE-TIER SYSTEM ..	24
BILLS SEEK TO ENHANCE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS	27
BILL TO SPECIFY DISPLAY OF TAXI FARE TABLES	28
AMENDMENTS TO CLARIFY BILL'S OPERATION	29
BILL INTENDED TO STRENGTHEN LEGAL PROFESSION	30
REGULATION OF USE OF AIR-WAVES APPROPRIATE	32
MOTION ON TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS APPROVED	33
MOTION ON REORGANISATION OF BRANCH	33
CHARGES FOR NEW EMERGENCY PHONE EQUIPMENT APPROVED	34
PUBLIC URGED TO GIVE VIEWS ON CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT ...	35
RELOCATION OF TSING YI OIL DEPOTS INTENDED	35

/ACTION AGAINST

ACTION AGAINST SUPPLIER OF GAS TO HOSPITAL	37
FISCAL RESERVE STANDS AT \$63.9 BILLION	38
DUAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY NOT A GENERAL NEED	39
MEASURES TO MINIMISE HAZARDS TO FIRE FIGHTING	40
FURTHER MEASURES TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC ON TSING YI	42
CASTLE PEAK HOSPITAL STAFF ESTABLISHMENT BEING REVISED	43
POWERS TO REMOVE DANGEROUS SIGNS SUFFICIENT	43
ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL SOLICITATION OF DONATIONS	44
THIRTEEN BILLS PASSED IN FINAL MEETING	45
FC APPROVES FUNDS FOR QUALITY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN	46
MOBIL OIL AGREES TO RELOCATION	47
HK'S ADVANTAGES AS OFFSHORE MANUFACTURING LOCATION APPRECIATED	47
HD'S MATERIALS TESTING LAB ACCREDITED BY HOKLAS	49
MERCHANT FINED \$5,000 FOR USING INACCURATE SCALES	50
JULY DEADLINE FOR RETURNING SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES	52
HK ENERGY STATISTICS 1978-88 NOW ON SALE	53
SOUTHERN DB TO DISCUSS MASTER SEWERAGE PLAN	54
ESTABLISHMENT OF SPORTS DEVELOPMENT BOARD ON DB COMMITTEE	
AGENDA	55
DB COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT SERVICE	55
KWAI TSING DB COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS IMPACT OF ROUTE 5	56
SEMINAR ON RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD	57
TWO GOVT LOTS TO LET BY TENDER	58
ILLEGAL STRUCTURE IN NORTH POINT TO BE CLOSED	59
TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN CENTRAL, WESTERN	59
BUS LANE DESIGNATED ON MUT WAH STREET	60
ENTRY BAN AT FANLING KCR STATION FORECOURT	60

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

51

52

53

54

55

56

57

58

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60

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62

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64

65

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69

70

LEGCO HAS SHOWN DETERMINATION, COURAGE: GOVERNOR

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL STARTED OFF THE YEAR IN A STRAIGHTFORWARD SESSION OF STEADY PROGRESS, BUT THAT HAD BEEN CHANGED OVER THE LAST TWO MONTHS BY THE TRAGIC EVENTS WHICH OCCURRED IN CHINA, THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ADDRESSING THE FINAL MEETING OF THE 1988-89 SESSION OF THE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNOR SAID IT WAS AT TIMES LIKE THIS THAT THE COMMUNITY LOOKED TO MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL FOR LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL WISDOM.

"I THINK THE COUNCIL AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL, AND OMELCO AS A WHOLE, HAS RESPONDED WITH GREAT DETERMINATION AND COURAGE TO THE EVENTS THAT WE'VE HAD TO FACE," SIR DAVID SAID.

"I'M SURE THAT OVER THE MONTHS TO COME, THE COMMUNITY WILL BE ABLE TO CONTINUE TO LOOK TO MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL FOR THOSE VERY SAME QUALITIES," HE ADDED.

THE GOVERNOR SAID THAT THE SESSION BEGAN WITH A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF NEW MEMBERS WHO QUICKLY ESTABLISHED THEMSELVES AND HAD MADE THEIR MARK FULLY IN THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL.

IN ADDITION TO A VERY BUSY SESSION, THE COUNCIL HAD ALSO SET NEW RECORDS, SIR DAVID NOTED.

"IT'S NOT A RECORD AMOUNT OF LEGISLATION THIS TIME BUT IT IS A RECORD AMOUNT OF AMENDMENTS TO CLAUSES -- SOME 250, AND THAT SHOWS THE GREAT DEAL OF HARD WORK THAT GOES ON BEHIND THE SCENES," HE SAID.

THE GOVERNOR POINTED OUT THAT THIS WAS BECAUSE OF BILINGUAL LEGISLATION WHICH HAD BEEN A "MAJOR STEP FORWARD FOR THE WORK OF THIS COUNCIL DURING THE SESSION".

"THE COUNCIL HAS TAKEN TO IT WILLINGLY, STARTING WORK EARLY IN THE MORNING AND WORKING ITS WAY THROUGH A LARGE AMOUNT OF AMENDMENTS AND TRYING TO MAKE SURE THAT WE USE STANDARD FORMS OF CHINESE FOR THE FORMS OF ENGLISH THAT WE'VE USED," SIR DAVID SAID.

THE GOVERNOR NOTED THAT WHILE COUNCIL MEMBERS HAD WORKED VERY HARD, THE SUPPORT STAFF HAD ALSO SERVED THE COUNCIL EXTREMELY WELL.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1989

- 2 -

HIGHEST POSSIBLE PRIORITY FOR PROTECTING ENVIRONMENT
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AN ASSURANCE THAT SAVING AND PROTECTING HONG KONG'S ENVIRONMENT HAS THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE RANKING IN THE GOVERNMENT'S OVERALL PRIORITIES WAS GIVEN BY THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE DEBATE ON THE WHITE PAPER ON POLLUTION, MR BARNES SAID HE WAS MOST HEARTENED BY THE STRONG SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT GIVEN BY COUNCILLORS TO THE GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGIES IN TACKLING THE VARIOUS POLLUTION PROBLEMS.

"THERE ARE 100 STRATEGIES IN THE WHITE PAPER, AND WE HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TAKING ACTION ON EACH ONE," HE SAID.

PUBLICITY TO DRIVE HOME THE ANTI-POLLUTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL MESSAGE OF THE WHITE PAPER WOULD CONTINUE.

MR BARNES SAID THESE WOULD INCLUDE APPOINTING A PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTANT TO HELP THE GOVERNMENT PREPARE AND CARRY OUT PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS, AND MORE FREE RADIO AND TELEVISION TIMES TO PUBLICISE THE MESSAGES.

THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SHORTLY BE CONSULTING INDUSTRY OVER SOME MAJOR INITIATIVES, SUCH AS SULPHUR IN FUEL OIL AND TIGHTENING UP THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ORDINANCE TO REDUCE THE AMOUNTS OF INDUSTRIAL EFFLUENTS POLLUTING HONG KONG'S WATERS.

MR BARNES SAID IT WAS RELATIVELY INEXPENSIVE TO INSTAL ANTI-POLLUTION MEASURES AND HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE SMALL FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS MAKING USE OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL.

THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ALSO ENCOURAGE SUCH INITIATIVES AS THE CENTRE OF ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY FOR INDUSTRY ESTABLISHED AT THE CITY POLYTECHNIC IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL, AND WHICH WAS FINANCIALLY ASSISTED BY THE HONGKONG AND SHANGHAI BANK.

THE CENTRE, WHICH WOULD LAY PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON ASSISTING SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED FACTORIES, WOULD DEMONSTRATE NON-POLLUTION TREATMENT AND RECOVERY SYSTEMS FOR INDUSTRIAL WASTE.

MR BARNES SAID A MAJOR REVIEW OF THE TERRITORY'S SEWERAGE FACILITIES WAS NEARING COMPLETION AND AN ESTIMATED \$12 BILLION WOULD BE NEEDED FOR A PROGRAMME OF CONSTRUCTION OF SEWAGE COLLECTION, TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL FACILITIES.

A FURTHER \$5 BILLION WOULD BE NEEDED FOR IMPLEMENTING THE TERRITORY'S WASTE DISPOSAL PLANS IN THE FORM OF THREE VERY LARGE LANDFILLS AND ASSOCIATED REFUSE TRANSFER STATIONS, REPLACING THE SMELLY URBAN LANDFILLS AND INCINERATORS.

"BUT I MUST STRESS THAT WE HAVE A VERY LARGE PROGRAMME WITH SOME VERY TOUGH PROBLEMS TO OVERCOME. THE SOLUTIONS ARE THEREFORE GOING TO HAVE TO BE VERY FIRM," MR BARNES SAID.

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/3

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1989

- 3 -

HK MUST REMAIN A FIT PLACE TO LIVE

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THERE IS NO POINT OF SAVING AND BUILDING HONG KONG AS OUR HOME IF THE TERRITORY IS NO LONGER A FIT PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE, THE HON PETER WONG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR WONG WAS LEADING OFF DEBATE ON HIS MOTION ON THE WHITE PAPER ON POLLUTION.

THE MOTION READ: "THAT THIS COUNCIL SUPPORTS THE AIMS OF THE 'WHITE PAPER ON POLLUTION IN HONG KONG - A TIME TO ACT' AND URGES EVERYBODY TO KEEP OUR ENVIRONMENT CLEAN".

MR WONG, CONVENER OF A LEGCO AD HOC GROUP FORMED TO PREPARE FOR THE DEBATE, SAID HONG KONG NEEDED A NEW PERCEPTION ON POLLUTION WHICH WAS NOT JUST AN EXTENSION OF THE KEEP HONG KONG CLEAN CAMPAIGN.

"IT IS NOT ENOUGH THAT PEOPLE PITCH IN WITH THEIR LITTER ONLY. THEIR PERCEPTION MUST INCREASINGLY BE BASED ON WHAT IS ESSENTIAL TO MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WAY OF LIFE AS OPPOSED TO REMEDIAL MEASURES USED TO ATTEMPT TO CLEAR UP THE MESS," HE SAID.

ON THE QUESTION OF WASTE MANAGEMENT, MR WONG SAID THAT HONG KONG PRODUCED ABOUT 16,000 TONS OF SOLID WASTE EVERY DAY.

OF THIS, 3,000 TONS WAS SEPARATED AND RECYCLED.

A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT WAS DUMPED, UNTREATED IN LANDFILLS. THIS WAS LIKE SWEEPING THE DUST UNDER THE CARPET.

HE AGREED WITH THE WHITE PAPER THAT THE KEY TO THE PROBLEM WAS TO REDUCE AND RESTRICT THE GENERATION OF WASTES THAT GAVE RISE TO THE LITTER PROBLEM.

MR WONG SUGGESTED THAT INCENTIVE SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE RECYCLING INDUSTRY TO COLLECT SEPARATED HOUSEHOLD WASTE, SIMILAR TO PRACTICES IN PARTS OF THE UNITED STATES WHERE ALUMINIUM DRINK CANS, BEER BOTTLES AND PLASTIC CONTAINERS ALL HAD DEPOSITS CHARGED ON SALE, AND REFUNDED UPON THEIR RETURN FOR RECYCLING.

HONG KONG PEOPLE SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO USE FEWER UNNECESSARY ITEMS SUCH AS ELABORATE PACKAGING.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE IDEA OF STARTING 'BOTTLE BANKS, BATTERY BANKS AND PLASTIC BAG BANKS SHOULD BE ACTIVELY PURSUED BY THE GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS THE URBAN AND REGIONAL COUNCILS, HE SUGGESTED.

ALL THE WHITE PAPER PROPOSALS WERE ONLY GOOD INTENTIONS UNLESS CLEAR AND STRONG LEGISLATION WAS ENACTED AND RIGIDLY ENFORCED, MR WONG SAID.

/VERY LITTLE

VERY LITTLE HAD BEEN SAID IN THE WHITE PAPER ABOUT SETTING UP TOLERABLE STANDARDS OF POLLUTION TO BE ACHIEVED BY DEFINITE TARGET DATES.

HE SAID ENFORCEMENT OF TARGET PERFORMANCE MEASURES SHOULD HAVE BEEN HIGHLIGHTED IN THE WHITE PAPER AND NOT RELEGATED TO AN APPENDIX OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT 1988 REVIEW.

"THIS TREATMENT GIVEN TO A MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE ENTIRE POLLUTION CONTROL PROGRAMME LEAVES ME WITH A DISTINCT FEELING THAT THERE IS LESS THAN FULL COMMITMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT," HE SAID.

MR WONG SAID THAT WHILE THE WHITE PAPER ACKNOWLEDGED THE INADEQUACY OF EXISTING INSPECTION MEASURES, THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT HAD NOT BEEN EQUIPPED WITH THE NECESSARY POWERS NOR RESOURCES FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PLANS.

THIS GAVE RISE TO DOUBTS ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S SINCERITY IN TRANSLATING THE WHITE PAPER INTO CONCRETE ACTION.

"IF WE ARE REALLY SERIOUS ABOUT POLLUTION, WE HAVE TO BE MUCH MORE COMMITTED IN OUR INVESTMENT, NOT ONLY IN DISPOSAL FACILITIES BUT ALSO IN EDUCATING THE YOUNG AND THE OLD AGAINST OUR TRADITIONAL NEGLECT OF THE ENVIRONMENT," HE SAID.

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ROOM FOR CAUTION IN FIGHT AGAINST POLLUTION

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HONG KONG SHOULD BE ON GUARD AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF "BEING CARRIED AWAY TOO MUCH BY THE HOLINESS OF THE MISSION TO COMBAT POLLUTION", THE HON STEPHEN CHEONG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE DEBATE ON THE WHITE PAPER ON POLLUTION, MR CHEONG SAID IN MAKING FUTURE DECISIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION HONG KONG MUST CONSTANTLY EVALUATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COST, AFFORDABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS.

HE SAID HIS CAUTIONARY NOTE BY NO MEANS REDUCED HIS SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORT TO COMBAT SOME OF THE URGENT ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS.

IN FACT, HE HAD URGED THE FEDERATION OF HONG KONG INDUSTRIES TO SET UP A SPECIAL ALL-INDUSTRY COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE WHITE PAPER.

MR CHEONG SAID THE FEDERATION WAS IN BROAD AGREEMENT WITH THE POLICY OBJECTIVES SET OUT IN THE WHITE PAPER.

/"HOWEVER,

"HOWEVER, WE FEEL THAT WHILE THE WHITE PAPER HAS QUOTED FIGURES AND STATISTICS TO SHOW THE AMOUNT OF POLLUTANTS GENERATED BY THE COMMUNITY, IT DOES NOT GO FAR ENOUGH TO PROVIDE A CRITICAL ANALYSIS TO ESTABLISH THAT THE TREND IS TOWARDS FURTHER DETERIORATION UNLESS THE ACTIONS SET OUT IN THE WHITE PAPER ARE IMPLEMENTED," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT MANY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS OF TODAY STEMMED FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S LACK OF LONG-TERM AND WELL-CO-ORDINATED PLANNING IN THE PAST.

"IT WOULD BE UNFAIR TO REQUIRE COMPANIES WHICH HAVE MADE SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENTS IN GOOD FAITH AND IN COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION PREVAILING AT THE TIME OF THEIR ESTABLISHMENT, TO SHOULDER ALL BY THEMSELVES A HEAVY FINANCIAL BURDEN NOW TO COMPLY WITH SOME NEWLY ENACTED LEGISLATION," MR CHEONG SAID.

THE FEDERATION'S POSITION WAS THAT A SENSIBLE BALANCE MUST BE STRUCK BETWEEN WHAT WAS ENVIRONMENTALLY DESIRABLE AND WHAT WAS ECONOMICALLY VIABLE.

IN CONSIDERING LEGISLATIVE CONTROL AND ENFORCEMENT, IT WAS ALL TOO EASY TO PUT THE EMPHASIS ON THE PUNITIVE ELEMENT.

HE SUBMITTED THAT ENCOURAGING MANUFACTURERS TO ADOPT POLLUTION REDUCTION MEASURES THROUGH THE USE OF INCENTIVES WOULD PROVE TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE.

"WE PROPOSE THAT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN, FOR INSTANCE, TO THE GRANTING OF LOW INTEREST LOANS BY THE GOVERNMENT TO INDUSTRIES FOR THE PRODUCTION OF RECYCLED PRODUCTS," HE SAID.

TURNING TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION EDUCATION, MR CHEONG SAID THE EDUCATION PROGRAMME SET OUT IN THE WHITE PAPER SEEMED TO BE GEARED TOWARDS ENHANCING ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS IN THE ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL SETTING.

"WE SUBMIT THAT INDUSTRIALISTS, TOO, NEED TO BE EDUCATED ON THE WAYS AND MEANS OF CONTAINING AND REDUCING POLLUTION, AND IT IS IMPORTANT TO SHOW THEM WHAT IS WRONG AND WHAT CAN BE DONE TO CORRECT THE WRONG."

MR CHEONG ADDED THAT THE IMPRESSION OF SOME INDUSTRIALISTS, WHO HAD EXTENSIVE DEALINGS WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT IN THE PAST, WAS THAT THERE WAS NO REAL ABILITY YET IN THE DEPARTMENT TO TELL INDUSTRY UP-FRONT IN EXACT TERMS WHAT STANDARDS ONE HAD TO ACHIEVE.

"A FREQUENTLY ADOPTED MODUS OPERANDI IS FOR THE DEPARTMENT TO REQUEST FROM THE INDUSTRY A CONSULTANT'S STUDY ON THE PROBLEM," HE SAID.

HE HOPED THESE WERE ONLY ISOLATED INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES AND HE URGED STRONGLY THAT ATTEMPTS BE MADE TO TRY TO DRAW UP DEFINITIVE UP-FRONT CRITERIA FOR INDIVIDUAL FACTORIES TO FOLLOW.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1989

- 6 -

HELP FOR SMALL FACTORIES URGED

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THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD OFFER ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE TO SMALL-SCALE FACTORIES TO HELP THEM COMPLY WITH POLLUTION CONTROL MEASURES.

PROF THE HON C. K. POON SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE DEBATE ON THE WHITE PAPER ON POLLUTION.

THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD REACH OUT TO MORE SMALL FACTORIES AND PROVIDE THEM WITH CONSULTANCY SERVICES AT ATTRACTIVE RATES, AND TO UNDERTAKE MORE AND BETTER LONG-TERM RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN CLEAN TECHNOLOGY, POLLUTION CONTROL AND WASTE RECOVERY FIELDS, PROF POON SAID.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT REVIEW THE CURRENT LEVEL AND MECHANISMS OF SUPPORT IN ORDER TO WORK OUT THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS OF PROVIDING CONSULTANCY SERVICES ON A NON-PROFIT MAKING BASIS.

"I FEEL THIS WOULD BE A COST-EFFECTIVE WAY TO COMBAT ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION FROM INDUSTRY WITHOUT THREATENING THE LIFELINE OF OUR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT WHILE LEGISLATIVE SANCTIONS WERE A MUST IN ANY ATTEMPT TO REDUCE INDUSTRIAL WASTE, THE GOVERNMENT MUST REALISE THE UNIQUE SITUATION IN HONG KONG.

OVER 97 PER CENT OF THE LOCAL MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES WERE SMALL INDUSTRIES EMPLOYING FEWER THAN 100 EMPLOYEES AND MANY WERE OPERATING IN MULTI-STOREY BUILDINGS WITH SEVERE SPACE CONSTRAINTS.

"MANY FACTORIES SIMPLY DO NOT HAVE THE SPACE TO ACCOMMODATE EXTRA POLLUTION PREVENTIVE EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE IN SHOPS. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MEASURES NEED TO BE CUSTOM-MADE TO SUIT HONG KONG'S UNIQUE SITUATION," HE SAID.

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MORE INVESTMENT IN WASTE DISPOSAL URGED

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THE HON EDWARD HO URGED THE GOVERNMENT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) NOT TO LOSE SIGHT OF THE PRIORITY OF INVESTING IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE PROPER DISCHARGE OF EFFLUENTS.

SPEAKING IN THE DEBATE ON THE WHITE PAPER ON POLLUTION, MR HO SAID INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SEWAGE AND WASTE DISPOSAL HAD, UP TO NOW, BEEN GIVEN A LOW PRIORITY.

/HE SAID

- 7 -

HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE WHITE PAPER MENTIONED THAT A TOTAL OF SOME \$5 BILLION WOULD BE REQUIRED TO CONSTRUCT NEW OR MODIFIED SEWERAGE SYSTEMS IN THE SEWERAGE MASTER PLANS, ONLY \$173 MILLION, OR 3.5 PER CENT, HAD BEEN EARMARKED FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS.

"WE SHOULD BE ASSURED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL COMPLETE THE WHOLE OF THE SEWERAGE MASTER PLANS WITHIN 10 YEARS," MR HO SAID.

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO COVER THE WHOLE OF THE TERRITORY.

"OUR ENVIRONMENT CANNOT BE PROTECTED IF EFFECTIVE PLANNING CONTROLS CAN ONLY BE APPLIED TO THE URBAN OR THE POTENTIAL URBAN AREAS, AS IN THE PRESENT ORDINANCE," HE SAID.

MR HO SAID THE ORDINANCE, WHICH WAS ENACTED IN 1939, MUST BE REVISED TO RECOGNISE THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF TOWN PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACTIVITIES, AND TO ENSURE THAT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES WOULD BE GIVEN GREATER REGARD IN ALL PLANNING DECISIONS THAN IN THE PAST.

"ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDIES SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT WHEN A SUB-REGIONAL PLAN OR AN OUTLINE ZONING PLAN IS PREPARED. SIMILARLY, PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDIES," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT LAND USE PLANNING ALSO HAD A DECISIVE EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT.

"IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT AND OUR PLANNERS TO COME UP WITH THE MOST OPTIMUM PLANNING STRATEGY WHICH WILL PROVIDE OUR COMMUNITY WITH A PLACE THAT WE CAN HAPPILY CALL OUR HOME," HE SAID.

MR HO ALSO POINTED OUT THAT LEGISLATION SHOULD BE INTRODUCED TO REDUCE EXISTING SOURCES OF POLLUTION, AND THAT SUFFICIENT RESOURCES SHOULD BE PROVIDED FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF SUCH LEGISLATION.

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TOURISM INDUSTRY SUPPORTS ANTI-POLLUTION PLANS

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HONG KONG'S TOURISM INDUSTRY, WHICH EARNED \$33 BILLION IN 1988 OR 7.8 PER CENT OF THE GDP, FULLY SUPPORTS THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT. THE HON MARTIN BARROW SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE DEBATE ON THE WHITE PAPER ON POLLUTION, MR BARROW SAID THE LAST THING THAT ANY OF HONG KONG'S SIX MILLION VISITORS WOULD WANT TO LOOK AT WAS A POLLUTED HARBOUR, WHILE BREATHING IN POLLUTED AIR, WALKING ALONG A GROSSLY NOISY STREET AND SIDE-STEPPING LITTER ON THE PAVEMENT.

/WHILE IT

WHILE IT HAD NOT COME TO THE POINT WHERE LOCAL LEVELS OF POLLUTION WERE AFFECTING TOURISM, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT MUST NEVER LET SUCH A SITUATION ARISE.

"IF WE ACT NOW ALONG THE PROPOSALS OF THE WHITE PAPER, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO PRESERVE THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF HONG KONG AS A TOURIST DESTINATION.

"LAST YEAR, OVER 60 PER CENT OF OUR VISITORS ENJOYED THEIR STAY SO MUCH THAT THEY SAID THEY WILL RETURN, WHILE ANOTHER 24 PER CENT SAID THEY MAY COME TO HONG KONG AGAIN," HE SAID.

MR BARROW SAID HONG KONG WAS FOR THESE MILLIONS OF VISITORS A TOURISM "PRODUCT".

"THEIR TRIP IS SOMETHING THEY BUY, JUST AS THEY BUY OTHER THINGS IN LIFE. WE, THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG, ARE THE SELLERS.

"WE ARE SELLING THE ATTRACTIVENESS, THE FRIENDLINESS AND THE MAINLY TAX-FREE SHOPPING OF HONG KONG TO THE ENTIRE WORLD," HE SAID:

HE ADDED: "IF WE EXPECT TO KEEP ATTRACTING 'BUYERS' AND INCREASE TOURISM'S CONTRIBUTION TO OUR ECONOMY, THEN WE MUST TAKE VERY GOOD CARE OF OUR PRODUCT.

"WE MUST ENSURE THAT THE 'SHOP WINDOW' WHICH HONG KONG PRESENTS TO THE WORLD REMAINS MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN THOSE OF COMPETITIVE DESTINATIONS."

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CO-OPERATION NEEDED IN FIGHTING POLLUTION

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OPEN-MINDED CO-OPERATION BY THE ADMINISTRATION, THE PUBLIC, INDUSTRIALISTS, SCHOOLS, VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS, AND SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS IS ESSENTIAL IF THE BATTLE AGAINST POLLUTION IS TO BE WON, THE HON PAUL CHENG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE CONCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE DEBATE ON THE WHITE PAPER ON POLLUTION, MR CHENG STRESSED THAT A REAL SENSE OF URGENCY WAS REQUIRED ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND ALL SECTORS MUST BE WILLING TO MAKE SACRIFICES.

"THERE IS NO ROOM FOR COMPROMISE OR WE RUN THE RISK OF FOREVER PLAYING A CATCH-UP GAME," HE SAID.

THE ADMINISTRATION MUST ACCEPT THE FACT THAT TOUGHER LEGISLATION AND ENFORCEMENT WOULD NOT BE POPULAR IN CERTAIN CIRCLES, BUT IT MUST NOT LET LOBBYING PRESSURES WATER DOWN THIS NEW INITIATIVE, HE URGED.

/"WE NEED

"WE NEED ACTIONS MORE THAN LONG DRAWN OUT CONSULTATIVE PROCESSES," MR CHENG SAID AS HE APPLAUDED THE GOVERNMENT'S MOVE OF WAIVING THE USUAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION EXERCISE IN THE FORM OF A GREEN PAPER BY GOING STRAIGHT TO THE WHITE PAPER ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE.

HE STRONGLY URGED THE ADMINISTRATION TO DO AWAY WITH WORDS SUCH AS "BUT", "IF", "LIKELY", "INTENDED", "ENCOURAGE", "EXPECTED", "VOLUNTARY" AND REPLACE THEM WITH "WILL" AND "MUST" IN THE "THE WAY FORWARD" SECTIONS OF THE WHITE PAPER.

"THE ADMINISTRATION MUST NOT BE AFRAID TO MAKE DEFINITE COMMITMENTS IN CONTROVERSIAL AND DIFFICULT AREAS OR I CAN GUARANTEE THAT WE WILL BE POURING BILLIONS DOWN A DARK BOTTOMLESS PIT," HE EMPHASISED.

ON THE PROPOSED ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK, MR CHENG EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE SUBSERVIENT ROLE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT (EPD) IN THE FUTURE AS APPARENTLY THE DEPARTMENT WOULD NOT BE DIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH PLANNING OR INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY-MAKING.

NOTING THAT EPD WAS SHIFTING MORE TOWARDS AN ADVISORY ROLE TO THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNINGS ENVIRONMENT AND LAND AND A MONITORING, ENFORCEMENT UNIT, MR CHENG SAID IT WOULD BE A REAL SHAME FOR THE EXPERTISE OF THE DEPARTMENT TO BE LOST IN THE REORGANISATION.

HE HOPED THERE WOULD BE A PROPER MECHANISM FOR THE EPD TO HAVE A STRONG VOICE IN FRAMING OF MAJOR PROJECT PLANS WHICH HAD MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS. A CASE IN POINT WAS THE NEW AIRPORT PROJECT.

ON FUNDING, HE FEARED THAT THE \$20,000 MILLION EARMARKED MIGHT NOT BE SUFFICIENT OVER A 10-YEAR PERIOD IF WE WERE TO REALLY CORRECT THE POLLUTION SITUATION.

"AS SUCH, I MUST URGE THE GOVERNMENT NOT TO LET THE TURMOIL IN CHINA OR A TEMPORARY ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN UNDULY AFFECT THE COMMITMENT MADE ON THE SPENDING PROGRAMMES.

"WE MUST VIEW HAVING A CLEANER, HEALTHIER AND SAFER ENVIRONMENT AS ONE OF THE KEY ELEMENTS IN MAINTAINING LONG-TERM CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG," HE SAID.

ON ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE, MR CHENG FELT THAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST REALLY GET TOUGH AND WE SIMPLY COULD NOT AFFORD ANY PROCRASTINATION.

"IT IS USELESS TO 'ENCOURAGE' COMPLIANCE BECAUSE IT SIMPLY WOULD NOT WORK," HE SAID.

HE HOPED INDUSTRIALISTS WOULD BE MADE TO UNDERSTAND THAT INVESTMENT IN CLEAN TECHNOLOGY WOULD BE CHEAPER IN THE LONG-TERM THAN PAYING "PENALTIES" IN THE FUTURE IN THE FORM OF BUILDINGS REQUIRING MORE FREQUENT MAINTENANCE, IN HIGHER MEDICAL COSTS FOR THE STAFF AND A WHOLE STRING OF OTHER HIDDEN COSTS.

HE WAS GLAD TO NOTE THAT SPECIFIC CHANGES SUCH AS REMOVAL OF EXEMPTIONS AND THE ALLOWANCE OF A 30 PER CENT INCREASE IN DISCHARGE OVER AND ABOVE THE AMOUNT DISCHARGED AT THE TIME THE CONTROLS IN A PARTICULAR WATER CONTROL ZONE WERE IMPLEMENTED WOULD BE INCORPORATED INTO AN AMENDED ORDINANCE IN 1990.

FINALLY, ON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, HE WAS GLAD TO SEE THE WIDE RANGING PROGRAMMES PLANNED OR PROPOSED ACROSS THE COMMUNITY AND AT ALL LEVELS.

HOWEVER, HE SAID THAT THE SUM OF \$400,000 ALLOCATED FOR A GENERAL PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN IN 1989-90 WAS TOTALLY INADEQUATE.

"EITHER WE SPEND SAY \$5 MILLION OR WE SHOULD SAVE THE \$400,000.

"ANY PUBLIC RELATIONS OR ADVERTISING PROFESSIONAL WOULD BE ABLE TO SUBSTANTIATE THAT SPENDING \$400,000 WOULD BE LIKE THROWING THE MONEY INTO OUR POLLUTED HARBOUR," HE SAID.

HE URGED THE ADMINISTRATION TO RE-EVALUATE THIS PARTICULAR ITEM OF EXPENDITURE AND COME UP WITH A MORE MEANINGFUL FIGURE.

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ASSISTANCE FOR FACTORY OPERATORS IN FIGHTING POLLUTION URGED
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SMALL FACTORY OPERATORS SHOULD BE FINANCIALLY ASSISTED TO INSTAL POLLUTION CONTROL EQUIPMENT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POLLUTION, THE HON MIRIAM LAU SAID IN THE LEGISTRATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE DEBATE ON THE WHITE PAPER ON POLLUTION, MRS LAU URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO CONSIDER ALLOWING SUCH EQUIPMENT TO QUALIFY FOR A HIGHER RATE OF TAX CONCESSION.

"IN CASES WHERE SUCH EQUIPMENT CANNOT BE INSTALLED WITHOUT CREATING FINANCIAL HARDSHIP TO THE INDIVIDUAL OPERATOR, PERHAPS GOVERNMENT SHOULD EVEN CONSIDER GRANTING LOANS AT LOW INTEREST RATES TO ENABLE THE INSTALLATION TO BE MADE," SHE SAID.

SHE SAID THAT GIVEN PROPER GUIDANCE MANY INDUSTRIALISTS WOULD BE WILLING TO UNDERTAKE VOLUNTARY REMEDIAL MEASURES WITH A VIEW TO ELIMINATING POLLUTION AT SOURCE.

MRS LAU SAID DESPITE THE PRESENCE OF LEGISTRATIVE CONTROLS, STREAMS AND NULLAHS REMAINED HEAVILY POLLUTED, BATHING BEACHES WERE CLOSED DOWN ONE AFTER ANOTHER, AND DARK SMOKE FROM CHIMNEYS ON TOP OF INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS CONTINUED TO HARASS NEARBY RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION.

/SHE ATTRIBUTED

SHE ATTRIBUTED THIS TO THAT FACT THAT ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISTRATION WAS COMPLEX AND NOT EASILY UNDERSTOOD BY THOSE WHO HAD TO COMPLY WITH IT; THAT SOME OF THE LEGISTRATION WAS NOT STRINGENT ENOUGH; AND THAT ENFORCEMENT MEASURES HAD BEEN SLACK, PIECEMEAL, HALF-HEARTED AND LACKING IN OBJECTIVE.

MRS LAU SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SIMPLIFY LEGISTRATION TO MAKE IT MORE COMPREHENSIBLE TO THE ORDINARY PERSON.

SHE SAID: "AT THE SAME TIME, EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO REACH OUT TO POTENTIAL POLLUTERS TO EXPLAIN THE LEGISLATION TO THEM AND TO PROVIDE THEM WITH GUIDANCE AS TO HOW TO COMPLY WITH THE LAW.

"WHILST GOVERNMENT'S PLAN IS TO REGIONALISE CONTROL ACTIVITIES, I FEEL THAT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN AT DISTRICT LEVEL TO PROMOTE BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE RELEVANT LAWS TO SECURE DUE COMPLIANCE."

IN REGARD TO ENFORCEMENT MEASURES, MRS LAU SAID THAT VARIOUS ANTI-POLLUTION LAWS HAD BEEN ENFORCED BY A NUMBER OF DEPARTMENTS, INCLUDING THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT, THE ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE FORCE AND THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT.

NOTING THAT THE POLICE AND THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT WERE HEAVILY COMMITTED IN THEIR OWN PRIORITY TASKS, MRS LAU ASKED HOW MUCH OF THEIR STAFF RESOURCES COULD BE ALLOCATED TO POLLUTION ENFORCEMENT DUTIES.

SHE NOTED THAT IN THE PAST ENFORCEMENT ACTION HAD ESSENTIALLY BEEN TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS, AND THE RESULT WAS THAT FEW PROSECUTIONS HAD BEEN BROUGHT.

OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS, SHE SAID, FEWER THAN 200 PROSECUTIONS PER YEAR HAD BEEN BROUGHT UNDER THE AIR POLLUTION CONTROL ORDINANCE.

SHE ADDED: "AFTER DECLARATION OF THE FIRST WATER CONTROL ZONE UNDER THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ORDINANCE IN APRIL 1988, ONLY FOUR PROSECUTIONS UNDER THAT ORDINANCE HAVE BEEN LAID.

"SINCE IMPLEMENTATION OF LIVESTOCK WASTE CONTROLS UNDER THE WASTE DISPOSAL ORDINANCE AS FROM JUNE 1988, 11 CASES HAVE BEEN PROSECUTED.

"THESE PROSECUTION FIGURES SERVE TO INDICATE ONE THING: THE MAJORITY OF POLLUTERS HAVE NOT BEEN BROUGHT TO JUSTICE."

NOW THAT MAJOR POLICY INITIATIVES HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED AND TARGETTED AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS PROCEEDING TO INVEST HEAVILY IN ENVIRONMENT IMPROVEMENTS, MRS LAU SAID IT WAS TIME TO LAY DOWN IN CLEAR TERMS PROPER ENFORCEMENT GUIDELINES AND OBJECTIVES SO THAT THEY MIGHT BE FOLLOWED BY THE VARIOUS LAW ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENTS.

/SHE SAID

SHE SAID IT WAS ALSO TIME TO REVIEW THREE OTHER ISSUES RELATING TO ENFORCEMENT -- "FIRSTLY, WHETHER THE SCOPE OF ENFORCEMENT DUTIES OF THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS IS SUFFICIENTLY WELL DEFINED; SECONDLY, WHETHER THESE DEPARTMENTS ARE ADEQUATELY STAFFED TO CARRY OUT THOSE DUTIES; AND THIRDLY, HOW THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS CARRYING OUT LAW ENFORCEMENT MAY BE BETTER CO-ORDINATED TO ACHIEVE MORE EFFICIENT RESULTS".

MRS LAU ADDED THAT ALTHOUGHT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THOSE ENFORCING THE LAW SHOULD BE ABLE TO RESPOND QUICKLY TO PUBLIC COMPLAINTS, IT WAS INSUFFICIENT TO MERELY RESPOND TO COMPLAINTS WITHOUT TAKING ENFORCEMENT INITIATIVES, FOR TO DO SO WOULD BE MERELY TO REACT AND NOT TO ACT.

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PROLONGED EXPOSURE TO NOISE NOT ADDRESSED

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THE WHITE PAPER ON POLLUTION HAS FAILED TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF PROLONGED EXPOSURE TO AN UNACCEPTANCE NOISE LEVEL IN CERTAIN WORKING ENVIRONMENTS.

SUCH EXPOSURE AT ITS WORST MIGHT LEAD TO A PROGRESSIVE LOSS OF HEARING OR AT LEAST MIGHT RESULT IN AN INDIRECT IMPACT ON HEALTH, DR THE HON LEONG CHE-HUNG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE DEBATE ON THE WHITE PAPER ON POLLUTION, DR LEONG SAID INDEED HONG KONG HAD BECOME BY ACADEMIC STANDARD THE "NOISIEST" CITY IN THE WORLD.

AN AVERAGE HONG KONG CITIZEN WAS EXPOSED TO EXCESSIVE NOISE FOR SOME 17 HOURS A DAY, MAINLY FROM AIRCRAFT NOISE, CONSTRUCTION WORK AND ROAD TRAFFIC.

"THE LATTER ACCOUNTS FOR PROBABLY THE LONGEST DURATION OF SUSTAINED HIGH NOISE LEVEL OF 70 TO 90 DECIBELS, WELL ABOVE AND EXCEEDING THE ACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF 60 DECIBELS," HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NOISE CONTROL ORDINANCE BY STAGES THIS YEAR WOULD HOPEFULLY SEE A PROGRESSIVE CONTROL OF THE NOISE PROBLEM FROM CONSTRUCTION WORK.

ON AIR POLLUTION, DR LEONG SAID THE WHITE PAPER HAD ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE HIGH LEVEL OF AIR POLLUTION TO WHICH THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG WERE CONSTANTLY EXPOSED WAS THE RESULT OF INDUSTRIAL SMOKE AND MOTOR VEHICLE EMISSION, AND HAD OUTLINED PLANS TO IMPROVE THESE CONDITION.

/YET THERE

YET THERE WERE A FEW ISSUES WHICH MIGHT PRODUCE VAST DISTURBANCES IN HEALTH AND SHOULD BE ADDRESSED, HE SAID, ADDING THAT THESE INCLUDED PASSIVE SMOKING AND LEGIONNAIRES' DISEASE OR "SICK BUILDING SYNDROME".

DR LEONG SAID LEGIONNAIRES' DISEASE, A SILENT KILLER LIKE INFLUENZA OR PNEUMONIA, WAS MOST COMMON IN AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS THAT USED WATER SPRAYS IN THE COOLING TOWERS.

"IT IS THROUGH THESE CENTRALISED CLOSED AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS THAT RAPID SPREAD OF SUCH DISEASE MAY UNSUE FROM OFFICE TO OFFICE, WARDS TO WARDS," HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THIS DISEASE WAS NOT AS YET A THREAT TO HONG KONG, ACTIVE MEASURES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BEFORE IT WAS TOO LATE.

DR LEONG SAID THE COMPLETE LACK OF CONSIDERATION IN THE PLANNING OF BUILDINGS IN RELATION TO ENVIRONMENTAL AIR POLLUTION HAD REACHED A PEAK IN THE ERECTING OF HOSPITALS SURROUNDED BY INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS.

"ONE TYPICAL EXAMPLE IS THE CARITAS MEDICAL CENTRE, WHICH, FOR LACK OF ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR CENTRALISED AIR CONDITIONING, NEEDS TO OPEN THE WINDOWS OF THE HOSPITAL FOR BETTER CROSS VENTILATION.

"THESE WINDOWS FACE DIRECTLY THE FULL BLAST OF EXHAUST FANS FROM THE SURROUNDING INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS COMPLETELY TO THE DETRIMENT OF HEALTH OF THE POOR SICK INMATES OF THE HOSPITAL.

"SUCH FALLACIES SHOULD BE ACKNOWLEDGED AND ADDRESSED AND BETTER INTEGRATION BE INSTITUTED, LESS HONG KONG DROWN IN ITS OWN POLLUTION," DR LEONG SAID.

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GOVT URGED TO HELP INDUSTRY IN POLLUTION CONTROL

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THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD HELP INDUSTRIALISTS AND MANUFACTURERS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POLLUTION, THE HON JAMES TIEN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE DEBATE ON THE WHITE PAPER ON POLLUTION.

MR TIEN NOTED THAT UNDER THE WHITE PAPER PROPOSALS, NEW WATER CONTROL ZONES WOULD BE DECLARED.

INDUSTRIES IN THE CONTROL ZONES WHICH WERE STILL NOT SERVED BY ADEQUATE SIZE SEWERS WOULD HAVE TO TREAT THEIR WASTE WATER TO A MUCH MORE STRINGENT DISCHARGE REQUIREMENT.

AS A RESULT, THE POLLUTION CONTROL COST TO BE BORNE BY INDUSTRY WOULD BE HIGHER.

TO HELP INDUSTRY REDUCE THE COST OF POLLUTION CONTROL, MR TIEN SUGGESTED THAT NEW SEWERS OF ADEQUATE SIZE BE CONSTRUCTED PRIOR TO THE DECLARATION OF A NEW WATER CONTROL ZONE OR PRIOR TO CONTROLLING INDUSTRIAL WASTE WATER FROM AN AREA WHICH HAD BEEN DECLARED A WATER CONTROL ZONE.

ON THE PROPOSAL TO PROHIBIT THE USE OF INDUSTRIAL FUEL OIL WITH A SULPHUR CONTENT EXCEEDING 0.5 PER CENT BY WEIGHT, HE SAID SULPHUR DIOXIDE WAS ONLY ONE OF MANY AIR POLLUTANTS.

THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD STATE THE AMOUNT OF REDUCTION OF AIR POLLUTANT WHICH WOULD RESULT FROM THE USE OF FUEL OIL HAVING A LOW SULPHUR CONTENT.

"THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALSO STATE THE COST IMPLICATIONS TO HONG KONG, PARTICULARLY TO INDUSTRY SUCH AS THE TEXTILE, BLEACHING AND DYEING INDUSTRY AND ITS DOWNSTREAM INDUSTRY, NAMELY THE GARMENT INDUSTRY," HE SAID.

MR TIEN ALSO SAID THAT FARMERS WERE GETTING MUCH MORE THAN JUST TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE FROM THE GOVERNMENT FOR CONTROLLING AGRICULTURAL WASTE.

HE SUGGESTED THAT OPERATORS OF SMALL FACTORIES WHO WERE FINANCIALLY NOT MUCH STRONGER THAN FARMERS SHOULD ALSO BE GIVEN SUCH ASSISTANCE.

ON SMOKE EMISSION FROM VEHICLES, MR TIEN HOPED THAT THE CONTROL STANDARDS FOR SUCH EMISSIONS COULD BE DRASTICALLY IMPROVED.

MR TIEN ADDED THAT THE KEY TO SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF POLLUTION ESSENTIALLY RESTED WITH SELF-DISCIPLINE.

THIS WAS NOT TO DENY THE NEED FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LAW. BUT THE POLICING OF POLLUTERS WAS ONLY LIKELY TO BE SUCCESSFUL IF A POLICEMAN STOOD BEHIND EVERY WOULD-BE POLLUTER, HE SAID.

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SUBSTANTIAL DEMAND FOR SEPARATE TAXATION
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THE DECISION TO INTRODUCE SEPARATE TAXATION IN HONG KONG NOT ONLY HAS THE SUPPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS BUT THERE IS SUBSTANTIAL DEMAND FOR IT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID NENDICK, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE COMMITTEE STAGE OF THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO.3) BILL 1989, MR NENDICK SAID THE DECISION WAS ALSO CONSISTENT WITH THE TREND IN THIS DIRECTION IN OTHER TAX ADMINISTRATIONS.

/NOTING THAT

NOTING THAT THERE WERE ARGUMENTS FOR RETAINING THE WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE. MR NENDICK SAID THE MAJOR FLAW IN THIS ALLOWANCE WAS THAT IT DISCRIMINATED IN FAVOUR OF A MARRIED COUPLE WHERE BOTH THE HUSBAND AND WIFE WORK.

"IN PARTICULAR, IT PROVIDES THEM WITH A GREATER ENTITLEMENT TO ALLOWANCES THAN IS AVAILABLE TO A SINGLE-INCOME FAMILY OR TWO UNMARRIED PERSONS WITH THE SAME INCOME.

"FURTHERMORE, AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE, AN ALLOWANCE SHOULD NOT BE BASED ON THE CONCEPT OF ITS BEING COMPENSATION FOR ANY ADDITIONAL FAMILY EXPENSES INCURRED AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE WIFE TAKING UP EMPLOYMENT.

"SAVE ITS USE AS AN INTERIM RELIEF MEASURE PENDING IMPLEMENTATION OF SEPARATE TAXATION, THERE ARE NO GROUNDS FOR PROVIDING WORKING MARRIED COUPLES WITH AN ADDITIONAL ALLOWANCE THAT IS NOT AVAILABLE TO TAXPAYERS IN GENERAL," HE SAID.

THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY NOTED THAT CONCERN WAS EXPRESSED THAT SOME MARRIED COUPLES WOULD PAY MORE TAX UNDER SEPARATE TAXATION THAN THEY WOULD HAVE PAID ON THE SAME INCOME HAD THE AGGREGATION SYSTEM BEEN RETAINED.

THIS CONCERN WAS BASED ON A COMPARISON OF THE TAX PAID BY A MARRIED COUPLE UNDER THE INTERIM WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE PROVISIONS WITH THAT WHICH WOULD BE PAYABLE UNDER SEPARATE TAXATION, MR NENDICK SAID.

"ONE OF THE REASONS WHY A FLAT RATE WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE COULD NOT BE ADOPTED AS A PERMANENT SOLUTION TO THE SO-CALLED 'MARRIAGE TAX' IS ITS INABILITY TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM EQUITABLY AT ALL LEVELS OF INCOME.

"IN PARTICULAR, WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE FAILS TO PROVIDE SOME TAXPAYERS WITH SUFFICIENT RELIEF TO NEGATE THE FULL EFFECTS OF THEIR 'MARRIAGE TAX' WHILE IT GIVES OTHERS A TAX BENEFIT EXCEEDING THEIR 'TAX'.

"IT IS CONCEPTUALLY INCORRECT TO COMPARE THE TAX PAYABLE UNDER THE INTERIM RELIEF PROVISIONS WITH THE TAX PAYABLE UNDER SEPARATE TAXATION TO EVALUATE THE EFFECT OF SEPARATE TAXATION ON VARIOUS CLASSES OF TAXPAYERS," MR NENDICK EXPLAINED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE MORE APPROPRIATE YARDSTICK WAS TO COMPARE THE TAX PAYABLE UNDER THE LEGISLATION PRIOR TO THE INTRODUCTION OF THE INTERIM RELIEF MEASURE WITH THE TAX PAYABLE UNDER SEPARATE TAXATION.

"USING THIS COMPARISON THE MAJORITY OF TWO-INCOME MARRIED COUPLES WILL, OVERALL, PAY LESS TAX.

"FOR THOSE ADVERSELY AFFECTED THE JOINT ASSESSMENT PROVISIONS ARE AVAILABLE TO ALLOW THEM TO CONTINUE TO BE ASSESSED JOINTLY.

/"THUS,

"THUS, WHILE NOT ALL MARRIED COUPLES WILL PAY LESS TAX UNDER SEPARATE TAXATION, NONE WILL PAY MORE," MR NENDICK NOTED.

WHEN THE RE-INTRODUCTION OF THE WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE WAS PROPOSED IN THE 1988/89 BUDGET, IT WAS MADE CLEAR THAT THIS WAS AN INTERIM MEASURE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE AN IMMEDIATE BENEFIT TO TAXPAYERS WHILE FURTHER CONSIDERATION WAS GIVEN AS TO HOW SEPARATE TAXATION COULD BEST BE INTRODUCED, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY POINTED OUT.

"THERE WAS NEVER ANY INTENTION THAT THE ALLOWANCE WOULD BECOME PERMANENT. WITH THE PASSING OF THIS BILL ALL WORKING WIVES WILL HAVE SEPARATE TAXATION WHICH, AMONG OTHER THINGS, REMOVES THE 'MARRIAGE TAX' AND THE INTERIM RELIEF MEASURE IS NO LONGER REQUIRED OR APPROPRIATE," HE ADDED.

TURNING TO A SUGGESTION TO ALLOW HUSBANDS AND WIVES TO OPT IN AND OUT OF SEPARATE TAXATION AT RANDOM, MR NENDICK SAID THIS RAN COUNTER TO THE PRINCIPLES OF INDEPENDENCE AND PRIVACY IN TAX METHODS.

"IN ADDITION, SUCH A SYSTEM WOULD NOT BE TENABLE IN A LOW TAX REGIME LIKE HONG KONG BECAUSE IT WOULD CREATE UNNECESSARY COMPLEXITY IN FILE MAINTENANCE, INTRODUCE UNCERTAINTY INTO THE TAXPAYER BASE AND PLACE AN ONEROUS ADVISORY ROLE ON THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT," HE SAID.

"HOWEVER, IN RECOGNITION THAT SOME HUSBANDS AND WIVES MAY NOT BE ABLE FULLY TO ABSORB THEIR ALLOWANCES AND THAT OTHERS MAY DERIVE A GREATER BENEFIT FROM A MARRIED PERSONS ALLOWANCE THAN FROM TWO SINGLE-PERSONS ALLOWANCES, JOINT ASSESSMENT ELECTION IS BEING MADE AVAILABLE TO THEM. TO THIS EXTENT, THE OPTION OF A COMBINED ASSESSMENT IS PROVIDED," HE ADDED.

MR NENDICK NOTED THAT THERE WAS A SUGGESTION THAT EXTENDING SEPARATE TAXATION TO MARRIED WOMEN WOULD UNDULY COMPLICATE THE SALARIES TAX LEGISLATION, AND THAT THE 'MARRIAGE TAX' SHOULD BE REDRESSED BY INCREASING THE EXISTING WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE.

"I HAVE ALREADY EXPLAINED WHY WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION ON EQUITY GROUNDS.

"IN ADDITION, IT SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED THAT THE ADVOCATES OF SEPARATE TAXATION HAVE ALSO BASED THEIR REPRESENTATIONS ON THE NEED TO PROVIDE WOMEN WITH INDEPENDENT RECOGNITION AND PRIVACY IN THEIR PERSONAL TAXATION AFFAIRS," MR NENDICK SAID.

THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY ASSURED COUNCIL MEMBERS THAT THE COMMISSIONER OF INLAND REVENUE WOULD IDENTIFY AND ISSUE THE APPROPRIATE NOTIFICATION IN EVERY CASE WHERE IT WOULD BE TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE MARRIED COUPLE TO ELECT TO BE JOINTLY ASSESSED SO THAT NO MARRIED COUPLE WOULD BECOME WORSE OFF UNDER SEPARATE TAXATION.

MR NENDICK NOTED THAT OPPONENTS OF THE BILL WERE OF THE VIEW THAT THE WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE WAS A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION TO THE 'MARRIAGE TAX' PROBLEM.

THEY ALSO SHARED THE VIEW THAT SEPARATE TAXATION OF MARRIED WOMEN WAS NOT JUSTIFIED, GIVEN THE ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS, THE ADDITIONAL TAX BURDEN ON THE MAJORITY OF FAMILIES. AND THE LACK OF CLAMOUR FROM MARRIED WOMEN FOR THE RIGHT TO MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY ABOUT THEIR INCOME AND TAXATION MATTERS FROM THEIR HUSBANDS.

MR NENDICK REITERATED THAT A FLAT RATE WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE DID NOT EQUITABLY RESOLVE ALL TAXPAYERS' 'MARRIAGE TAXES' AND THEREFORE THE UNDERLYING INEQUITY STILL REMAINED.

"WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE HAS NOT BENEFITTED EITHER MARRIED COUPLES WHERE ONLY ONE SPOUSE WORKS OR HUSBANDS AND WIVES INDIVIDUALLY CHARGEABLE AT STANDARD RATES. NOR WILL SEPARATE TAXATION PROVIDE THESE TWO GROUPS WITH ANY FINANCIAL BENEFIT.

"BUT THE MAJORITY OF ALL OTHER MARRIED COUPLES WITH BOTH SPOUSES WORKING WILL RECEIVE A BENEFIT FROM SEPARATE TAXATION.

"FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT, THERE WAS NO 'MARRIAGE TAX' IN THE FIRST INSTANCE AND ANY BENEFIT DERIVED FROM THE INTERIM WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE CAN ONLY BE REGARDED AS A WINDFALL GAIN -- THEIR TAX BURDEN HAS NOT BEEN MADE HEAVIER BECAUSE OF SEPARATE TAXATION," MR NENDICK EXPLAINED.

THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY NOTED THAT SOME MEMBERS QUITE RIGHTLY POINTED OUT THAT ADDITIONAL COSTS WOULD NEED TO BE INCURRED TO PROVIDE FOR SEPARATE TAXATION.

"FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS THE ADMINISTRATION DECLINED REQUESTS FROM MEMBERS TO GRANT SEPARATE TAXATION PARTLY ON THE GROUND OF THE REVENUE THAT WOULD BE FOREGONE AND THE ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATION COSTS.

"AT THE TIME THE DECISION TO IMPLEMENT SEPARATE TAXATION WAS TAKEN, THE EXTENT OF PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE ISSUE CLEARLY INDICATED THAT, NOT ONLY DID IT HAVE UNANIMOUS SUPPORT OF MEMBERS, BUT ALSO THERE WAS SUBSTANTIAL DEMAND FOR IT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, NOT LEAST BECAUSE OF PRIVACY AND INDIVIDUALITY CONSIDERATIONS," MR NENDICK SAID.

THE BILL WAS PASSED WITH SOME AMENDMENTS, ONE OF WHICH WAS TO EXTEND THE SCOPE OF THE JOINT ELECTION PROVISIONS TO MAKE THEM AVAILABLE TO A SMALL GROUP OF MARRIED TAXPAYERS WHO WOULD OTHERWISE PAY MORE TAX UNDER SEPARATE TAXATION.

"INITIALLY IT WAS INTENDED THAT THESE TAXPAYERS SHOULD OBTAIN RELIEF THROUGH PERSONAL ASSESSMENT, BUT AFTER CONSIDERING REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS, IT HAS NOW BEEN AGREED THAT THEY WILL OBTAIN DIRECT RELIEF IN SALARIES TAX BY ELECTING TO BE JOINTLY ASSESSED," MR NENDICK SAID.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1989

- 18 -

SEPARATE TAXATION FOR MARRIED COUPLES WELCOMED

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THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT)(NO.3) BILL 1989, WHICH SOUGHT TO INTRODUCE SEPARATE TAXATION FOR MARRIED COUPLES IN RESPECT OF SALARIES TAX, WAS WELCOMED BY THE HON PETER POON IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL, MR POON SAID OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS THERE HAD BEEN STRONG COMPLAINTS THAT MANY MARRIED COUPLES SUFFERED AN UNREASONABLE ADDITIONAL TAX BURDEN WHEN BOTH PARTNERS WERE SALARY EARNERS.

FURTHERMORE, MANY WORKING WIVES COULD NO LONGER TOLERATE THE LACK OF PRIVACY OR INDEPENDENCE IN THEIR TAX AFFAIRS, SAID MR POON, CONVENER OF A LEGCO AD HOC GROUP FORMED TO STUDY THE BILL.

MR POON SAID THE BILL WAS GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO ADDRESS SUCH INEQUITY. HE PRAISED THE ADMINISTRATION FOR DOING A GREAT DEAL OF WORK AND RESEARCH AS WELL AS BEING REASONABLE IN ITS APPROACH IN GRANTING RELIEF IN APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES.

HE SAID THE AD HOC GROUP RECEIVED SIX REPRESENTATIONS WHICH CONTAINED MANY HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS AND IT HAD SEVERAL MEETINGS WITH THE ADMINISTRATION AND DISCUSSED THE VARIOUS KEY ISSUES, WHICH HAD BEEN AMICABLY RESOLVED. CONSEQUENTLY, A NUMBER OF COMMITTEE STAGE AMENDMENTS WOULD BE MOVED TO IMPROVE THE BILL.

IN REVIEWING THE BILL, MR POON SAID THE AD HOC GROUP HAD BEEN VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT THAT THOUGH NO SYSTEM OF TAX COULD BE ABSOLUTELY FAIR TO EVERY TAXPAYER, IT SHOULD BE AS EQUITABLE AS POSSIBLE.

THEREFORE, HE SAID, UNDER THE BILL, WITH THE AMENDMENTS PROPOSED, THE AIM WAS THAT NO MARRIED COUPLE WITH SALARY INCOME WAS WORSE OFF THAN BEFORE THE CONCEPT OF SEPARATE TAXATION FOR SALARIES TAX WAS MOOTED.

COMMENTING ON THE REQUEST FOR RETENTION OF THE WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE, MR POON SAID THE ADMINISTRATION INDICATED THAT THE ALLOWANCE WAS GRANTED ONLY AS AN INTERIM MEASURE BEFORE SEPARATE TAXATION OF MARRIED COUPLES FOR SALARIES TAX COULD BE INTRODUCED.

HE SAID: "WHILST WE ARE SYMPATHETIC THAT SOME LOWER INCOME COUPLES, BOTH EARNING SALARIES, MAY BE WORSE OFF UNDER SEPARATE TAXATION WHEN THE WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE IS ABOLISHED, THEY WOULD NOT BE WORSE OFF THAN BEFORE THE INTRODUCTION OF SUCH A WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE.

"PERHAPS, THE ANSWER LIES IN INCREASING THE BASIC PERSONAL ALLOWANCE SO THAT RELATIVELY LOWER INCOME GROUPS CAN ALL BENEFIT."

/THOUGH THE

THOUGH THE BILL WOULD CAUSE COMPLEXITY IN HONG KONG'S TAX SYSTEM, MR POON SAID OMELCO, HAVING CONSIDERED THAT ASPECT FOR MANY YEARS, DECIDED THAT SUCH COMPLEXITY WAS ACCEPTABLE TO REDRESS A LONG-HELD GRIEVANCE.

"IN PRACTICE, PRESENT DAY COMPUTER CAPABILITIES ALLEVIATE MANY OF THE DIFFICULTIES.

"FURTHERMORE, AS HONG KONG HAS BECOME AN IMPORTANT FINANCIAL CENTRE, SOME COMPLEXITY WHICH WILL RESULT FROM AMENDING MANY OF OUR LAWS TO COPE WITH OUR INCREASINGLY SOPHISTICATED ROLE IS INEVITABLE," HE SAID.

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PRINCIPLE OF EQUITY SUPPORTED

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THE LONG DRAWN OUT DEBATE ON SEPARATE TAXATION FOR MARRIED COUPLES HAS COME TO END WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO.3) BILL 1989, THE HON RITA FAN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL, MRS FAN SAID THE MEASURE WAS A COMPLICATED PIECE OF LEGISLATION.

HOWEVER, SHE SAID, SHE WOULD RATHER PAY THE PRICE OF A SLIGHTLY MORE COMPLEX TAX SYSTEM IN ORDER TO UPHOLD THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUITY, PRIVACY AND INDEPENDENCE FOR THE WORKING WIFE.

"I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT A WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE IS SUFFICIENT TO ENABLE MARRIED WOMEN TO EXERCISE INDEPENDENT CONTROL OF THEIR TAXATION AFFAIRS, IF THEY SO WISH, NOR IS IT FAIR FOR THEIR SPOUSE TO BE LANDED WITH THEIR TAX BILL," SHE SAID.

ON A REQUEST BY THE FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS TO RETAIN THE WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE, MRS FAN SAID THE ALLOWANCE WAS AN INTERIM MEASURE FOR SEPARATE TAXATION, WHICH MUST CEASE TO OPERATE WHEN THE COMPLETE PACKAGE CAME INTO BEING.

SHE SAID SHE WOULD RATHER SUGGEST THAT THE ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERED THE POSSIBILITY OF AN APPROPRIATE INCREASE IN BASIC ALLOWANCES FOR THE NEXT BUDGET, IN ORDER TO GIVE SOME RELIEF TO THE GROUP OF MARRIED COUPLES, OF COMPARATIVELY LOWER INCOME, WHO AS A RESULT HAD TO PAY MORE TAX.

WHILE APPRECIATING THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD LOSE A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF TAX REVENUE IF THE BILL WAS PASSED INTO LAW, MRS FAN REMINDED MEMBERS THAT THE BENEFICIARIES OF THE LEGISLATION WERE THE MIDDLE INCOME GROUP WHOSE JOINT ANNUAL EARNING RANGED FROM \$170,000 TO \$330,000.

/"THESE PEOPLE

"THESE PEOPLE ARE MAINLY YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AND MIDDLE MANAGEMENT. THEY ARE THE SANDWICHED CLASS, WHO ARE OFTEN OVERLOADED IN OUR SOCIAL AND TAX POLICIES. IT IS ONLY FAIR THAT THEY SHOULD ALSO BENEFIT OCCASIONALLY," SHE SAID.

"FURTHERMORE, WORKING WIVES WHO EARN A SMALL SALARY WILL ALSO BE BENEFITTED. THIS MAY SERVE TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO JOIN OUR WORK FORCE AND, IN TURN, ASSIST TO ALLEVIATE THE LABOUR SHORTAGE PROBLEM."

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MEMBER OBJECTS TO SEPARATE TAXATION BILL

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THE HON NELLIE FONG VOTED AGAINST THE BILL ON SEPARATE TAXATION FOR MARRIED COUPLES IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), SAYING IT UNNECESSARILY COMPLICATED TAX LEGISLATION IN HONG KONG.

SPEAKING IN THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL, MRS FONG SAID THE BILL WAS A SAD EXAMPLE OF HOW POLITICAL FORCES COULD GENERATE MOMENTUM AND GET THEMSELVES INTO A POSITION WHERE THEY ENDED UP SUPPORTING SOMETHING WHICH WAS UNNECESSARY AND NOT SOUGHT BY THE VERY PEOPLE WHO WERE SUPPOSED TO BENEFIT FROM IT.

SHE SAID THE BILL WAS REALLY NOT A BILL TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF TAXATION ON MARRIED WOMEN AS WAS POPULARLY BELIEVED.

"RATHER, IT IS A BILL TO DISTINGUISH SOME RELATIVELY INSIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS OF MARRIED WOMEN FROM THE COLLECTIVE RIGHTS OF THE FAMILY UNIT.

"THIS IS BECAUSE THE SUPPOSED INEQUALITIES IN TAXATION WHICH WERE USED TO JUSTIFY THE CHANGE, NO LONGER EXIST," SHE SAID.

MRS FONG SAID THE COST THAT THE BILL WOULD ADD TO THE OPERATING COSTS OF THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT WAS SUBSTANTIAL.

THE COST COULD PROBABLY BE JUSTIFIED IF THE BILL WERE NECESSARY TO BRING ABOUT A MORE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF THE TAX BURDEN. BUT THIS WAS NOT THE CASE. THAT WAS DONE ALREADY IN 1988 WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF THE WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE.

SHE SAID THE COST COULD ALSO BE JUSTIFIED HAD THERE BEEN A PUBLIC DEMAND FOR WIVES TO HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY ABOUT THEIR INCOME AND TAXATION MATTER FROM THEIR HUSBANDS BY HAVING THE RIGHT TO PREPARE THEIR OWN TAX RETURNS.

"HOWEVER, I HAVE NOT SEEN THE SOCIAL NEED FOR THIS, NOR HAVE I HEARD THE PUBLIC CALL FOR IT," SHE SAID.

MRS FONG SAID THE REAL TAX IMPACT AND THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF THE BILL HAD NOT BEEN FULLY EXPLAINED.

/SHE SAID

SHE SAID THAT UNDER THE BILL THE TAX BURDEN OF HIGHER INCOME FAMILIES WOULD REMAIN THE SAME AS AT PRESENT, AND THE TAX BURDEN OF MIDDLE INCOME FAMILIES WOULD BE REDUCED.

BUT THE TAX BURDEN ON THE LOWER INCOME FAMILIES WOULD BE HEAVIER BECAUSE THE NEW BENEFITS WOULD FALL SHORT OF THOSE THAT WOULD BE LOST BY THE CANCELLATION OF THE WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE.

THE NET TAX REVENUE TO HONG KONG WOULD BE REDUCED SIGNIFICANTLY BY THE ADDED COST THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT WOULD INCUR IN HANDLING A MASSIVE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF SALARIES TAX RETURNS TO BE PROCESSED, SHE SAID. IT WAS ESTIMATED THAT THE NUMBER OF RETURNS WOULD GO UP BY ABOUT 25 PER CENT.

"WOULD PEOPLE REALLY SUPPORT THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS BILL IF THEY REALISED THAT ITS EFFECT WOULD BE TO INCREASE THE TAX BURDEN ON THE MAJORITY OF FAMILIES AND ESPECIALLY ON THOSE WITH LOWER INCOME?" SHE ASKED.

MRS FONG ADDED THAT A VERY CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE OF THE INCREASE IN RECURRENT STAFF COST TO THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT WAS \$11 MILLION A YEAR.

THE ONE-OFF CAPITAL COST TO UPGRADE THE DEPARTMENT'S COMPUTER CAPACITY WAS AT LEAST \$28 MILLION.

IN ADDITION, THE BILL WOULD INCREASE THE SPACE NEEDS OF THE DEPARTMENT.

"I CAN ONLY SYMPATHISE WITH OUR ADMINISTRATION. THEY KNOW THAT THIS PIECE OF LEGISLATION WILL COMPLICATE THE TAX LAW; THEY KNOW THAT THIS WILL CREATE MUCH MORE WORK FOR THEM AND THAT THE LEGISLATION IS COMPLETELY NON-COST EFFECTIVE.

"THEY HAVE HAD TO COMPLY WITH THE INSTRUCTION GIVEN, AND COME UP WITH THE BEST POSSIBLE LEGISLATION TO HANDLE THE ISSUE THAT WAS GIVEN TO THEM BY OUR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP," SHE SAID.

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NO INCREASE IN BURDEN ON LOW INCOME FAMILIES

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THE HON MIRIAM LAU TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DISMISSED AS A "MISCONCEPTION" THE BELIEF THAT THE REMOVAL OF THE WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE WOULD RESULT IN A HEAVIER TAX BURDEN ON SOME FAMILIES IN THE LOWER INCOME GROUP.

SHE WAS SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO.3) BILL 1989 WHICH INTRODUCED THE SYSTEM OF SEPARATE TAXATION FOR MARRIED WOMEN.

/MRS LAU

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MRS LAU MAINTAINED THAT UNDER SEPARATE TAXATION, THESE FAMILIES WOULD NOT BE WORSE OFF THAN BEFORE THE INTRODUCTION OF THE WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE.

"IN FACT, THEY WOULD STILL BE BETTER OFF," SHE SAID.

MRS LAU SAID SHE WOULD REMIND THOSE SPEAKING AGAINST THE BILL THAT THE WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE WAS INTRODUCED AS AN INTERIM MEASURE TO AMELIORATE AN EXISTING INEQUITABLE STATE OF AFFAIRS, PENDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SEPARATE TAXATION.

"ONCE THAT INEQUITY IS REMOVED, THE ALLOWANCE CANNOT JUSTIFY ITS CONTINUANCE," SHE SAID.

IT WAS NEVER INTENDED TO BE A SUBSTITUTE FOR SEPARATE TAXATION, NOR WAS IT INTENDED TO PROVIDE RELIEF TO LOWER INCOME FAMILIES, SHE ADDED.

MRS LAU SAID SHE SUPPORTED THE GRANTING OF RELIEF TO LOWER INCOME FAMILIES BUT FELT THAT THIS SHOULD MORE APPROPRIATELY BE SOUGHT BY INCREASING THE LEVEL OF PERSONAL ALLOWANCES OR BY INTRODUCING OTHER ALLOWANCES.

ON THE ARGUMENT THAT THE WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE HAD ADEQUATELY ADDRESSED OR REDRESSED THE PROBLEM OF INEQUITY, MRS LAU SAID THAT THE REVENUE FIGURES SPOKE FOR THEMSELVES.

UNDER THE SCHEME FOR THE WORKING WIFE ALLOWANCE, THE FULL-YEAR COST TO THE REVENUE WAS IN THE REGION OF \$355 MILLION. IF SEPARATE TAXATION WERE IMPLEMENTED, THE FULL-YEAR COST TO THE REVENUE WOULD BE IN THE REGION OF \$585 MILLION.

"THIS MEANS THAT WITHOUT SEPARATE TAXATION, MARRIED COUPLES IN HONG KONG ARE ACTUALLY PAYING \$230 MILLION IN EXCESS OF WHAT THEY WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE TO PAY," SHE SAID.

MRS LAU DESCRIBED SEPARATE TAXATION AS "AN END THAT JUSTIFIES THE MEANS".

"THE VERY INEQUITY OF MAKING MARRIED COUPLES PAY MORE TAX THAN THEY WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE TO IF THEY WERE UNMARRIED IS, IN MY VIEW, SUFFICIENT JUSTIFICATION FOR INTRODUCING MEASURES AT ALL COSTS TO REMOVE THAT INEQUITY," SHE SAID.

SHE MAINTAINED THAT THE TAX SYSTEM MUST BE SIMPLE BUT, MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT MUST BE FAIR AND EQUITABLE.

SHE ALSO BELIEVED THAT THE SYSTEM SHOULD PROMOTE EQUALITY BETWEEN THE SEXES AND ALLOW WIVES TO MAINTAIN THEIR INDEPENDENCE AND PRIVACY.

"IT WOULD NOT BE RIGHT TO COMPROMISE OUR PRINCIPLES JUST BECAUSE THERE MAY BE TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES, OR JUST BECAUSE IT MAY BE SOMEWHAT EXPENSIVE TO DO SO," SHE ARGUED.

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MARRIED COUPLES NOT TREATED FAIRLY

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THE CONCEPT OF SEPARATE TAXATION FOR MARRIED COUPLES HAS NOT BEEN REGARDED BY HONG KONG'S TAX PROFESSIONALS AS BEING ONE WHICH CAN BENEFIT OUR ECONOMY OR SOCIETY, AND IT MERELY DEFLECTS THE ATTENTION AND RESOURCES OF THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT FROM MORE WORTHY AND REWARDING OBJECTIVES.

THE HON PETER WONG SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1989, WHICH SOUGHT TO INTRODUCE SEPARATE TAXATION FOR MARRIED COUPLES FOR SALARIES TAX.

HE SAID THE ADMINISTRATIVE COST OF THE CHANGE WOULD BE VERY HIGH AND YET THERE WOULD STILL BE SOME COUPLES WHO WERE WORSE OFF UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM THAN BEFORE.

THEREFORE, MR WONG SAID, HE WOULD ABSTAIN FROM VOTING ON THE BILL AS "THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS EQUITY IN TAXATION AND THIS ATTEMPT TO TREAT FAIRLY MARRIED COUPLES AS THOUGH THEY ARE TWO SINGLES IS FLAWED IN THAT IT MAKES OUR SALARIES TAX SYSTEM NO LONGER SIMPLE."

MR WONG OBSERVED THAT THE BILL MUST BE CONSIDERED AS A POLITICAL ACT OF FAITH ON THE PART OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND THAT HE MUST COMPLIMENT THE COMMISSIONER OF INLAND REVENUE IN PRODUCING A VERY WORKMANLIKE BILL TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE SURRENDER BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE POWER OF THE FEMINIST LOBBY.

"THE COMMISSIONER HAS BENT OVER BACKWARDS TO BE SYMPATHETIC AND HELPFUL," HE SAID.

MR WONG ALSO ASKED THE ADMINISTRATION TO CONFIRM OFFICIALLY THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY THAT THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT'S COMPUTER PROGRAMMES WOULD SHOW WHETHER THE TAXPAYERS HAD MADE THE BEST CHOICE BASED ON THEIR PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES AND HAD INSTRUCTED THE ASSESSORS TO MAKE THE MOST ADVANTAGEOUS OPTION KNOWN TO THE TAXPAYERS EVEN IF THEY HAD MADE THE WRONG CHOICE INITIALLY IN THEIR RETURNS.

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BANKING BILL GIVES EFFECT TO CHANGES TO THREE-TIER SYSTEM

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THE BANKING (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1989 PROVIDES EFFECT TO CHANGES TO THE THREE-TIER SYSTEM OF DEPOSIT-TAKING INSTITUTIONS FOLLOWING A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW WHICH INCLUDED EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION WITH THE BANKING SECTOR, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID NENDICK, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN MOVING THE SECOND READING, MR NENDICK SAID THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE BILL WAS TO AMEND THE BANKING ORDINANCE TO GIVE EFFECT TO CERTAIN PROPOSED CHANGES ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNMENT IN MARCH THIS YEAR.

HE SAID THE OPPORTUNITY WAS ALSO BEING TAKEN TO INCORPORATE OTHER AMENDMENTS TO OVERCOME PROBLEMS AND REMOVE UNCERTAINTIES IDENTIFIED IN THE WORKING OF THE ORDINANCE.

"ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL FEATURES OF OUR BANKING LEGISLATION IS THE TIGHT CONTROL EXERCISED OVER THE USE OF BANKING NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS.

"AT PRESENT ONLY THOSE IN THE FIRST TIER, LICENSED BANKS, ARE ALLOWED THE PRIVILEGE OF DESCRIBING THEMSELVES AS BANKS. THOSE IN THE OTHER TWO TIERS, LICENSED AND REGISTERED DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES, CANNOT DO SO AND THIS HAS INHIBITED THOSE WHO WISH TO DEVELOP THEIR BUSINESS OVERSEAS," MR NENDICK EXPLAINED.

"SUCH INSTITUTIONS, WHICH MAY WISH TO OPERATE INTERNATIONALLY, FIND THE TERM 'DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES' EITHER NOT UNDERSTOOD OR PEJORATIVE, AND HAVE EXPERIENCED DIFFICULTY IN GETTING RECOGNISED AND TREATED AS CREDIT-WORTHY, WELL SUPERVISED INSTITUTIONS," HE ADDED.

TO OVERCOME THESE DIFFICULTIES, THE BILL REPLACES THE EXISTING CATEGORIES OF LICENSED DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANY AND REGISTERED DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANY IN THE ORDINANCE WITH THE CATEGORIES OF RESTRICTED LICENCE BANK AND DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANY, MR NENDICK EXPLAINED.

CLAUSE 39 AMENDS SECTION 97 TO PROVIDE THAT RESTRICTED LICENCE BANKS MAY USE THE WORD "BANK" OR ITS DERIVATIVES IN DESCRIBING THEIR BUSINESS, PROVIDED THAT THIS IS QUALIFIED BY SUCH ADJECTIVES AS "RESTRICTED LICENCE", "MERCHANT", "INVESTMENT", "WHOLESALE", OR A TERM SPECIFIED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING BY NOTICE IN THE GAZETTE.

OVERSEAS INCORPORATED BANKS AUTHORISED AS RESTRICTED LICENCE BANKS, AND OPERATING IN BRANCH FORM, WOULD BE ALLOWED TO USE THEIR CORPORATE NAMES WHICH INCLUDE THE WORD "BANK", PROVIDED THESE ARE QUALIFIED IN EQUAL PROMINENCE BY THE WORDS RESTRICTED LICENCE BANK" NEXT TO THEM.

"TO ENSURE THAT ONLY WELL CAPITALISED INSTITUTIONS ARE ENTRUSTED WITH PUBLIC DEPOSITS, THE MINIMUM CAPITAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE REGISTRATION OF NEW DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES HAS ALREADY BEEN INCREASED FROM \$10 MILLION TO \$25 MILLION AS FROM MARCH 10, 1989," MR NENDICK SAID.

/ "TO REFLECT

"TO REFLECT THE ADDITIONAL STATUS AND PRIVILEGES OF THE RESTRICTED LICENCE BANKS AND TAKING ACCOUNT OF INFLATION OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, CLAUSE 12 REQUIRES THESE INSTITUTIONS TO HAVE A PAID-UP CAPITAL OF \$100 MILLION AS AGAINST THE PRESENT REQUIREMENT OF \$75 MILLION FOR LICENSED DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES," HE ADDED.

EXISTING DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES WILL HAVE A GRACE PERIOD OF TWO YEARS FROM MARCH 10, 1989 TO COMPLY WITH THE NEW REQUIREMENT. CONSEQUENT TO THIS INCREASE, CLAUSE 7 AMENDS SECTION 18 TO RAISE THE MINIMUM CAPITAL LEVEL FOR LICENSED BANKS FROM \$100 MILLION TO \$150 MILLION TO REFLECT THE HIGHER CAPITAL REQUIREMENT APPROPRIATE TO LICENSED BANKS.

SECTION 63 OF THE BANKING ORDINANCE EMPOWERS THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING TO REQUIRE INFORMATION FROM AUTHORISED INSTITUTIONS IF SUCH INFORMATION IS "NECESSARY FOR THE PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE INSTITUTION".

"THIS IS CONSIDERED TO BE TOO RESTRICTIVE. TO ENABLE THE COMMISSIONER TO DISCHARGE HIS STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES EFFECTIVELY, HE NEEDS TO HAVE RELATIVELY UNFETTERED POWER TO OBTAIN INFORMATION FROM AUTHORISED INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR RELATED COMPANIES," MR NENDICK SAID.

"CLAUSE 26(A) THEREFORE AMENDS SECTION 63(2) TO EMPOWER THE COMMISSIONER TO REQUIRE ANY AUTHORISED INSTITUTION OR ITS SUBSIDIARIES TO SUBMIT TO HIM INFORMATION THAT MAY REASONABLY BE REQUIRED FOR THE EXERCISE OF HIS FUNCTIONS UNDER THE ORDINANCE," HE ADDED.

SECTION 81(1)(B)(1) OF THE BANKING ORDINANCE PROVIDES THAT THE FINANCIAL EXPOSURE OF AN AUTHORISED INSTITUTION TO TWO OR MORE COMPANIES WHICH ARE SUBSIDIARIES OF THE SAME HOLDING COMPANY SHALL NOT EXCEED AN AMOUNT EQUIVALENT TO 25 PER CENT OF THE PAID-UP CAPITAL AND RESERVES OF THE INSTITUTION.

"SINCE THE TERM 'THE SAME HOLDING COMPANY' IN THE SECTION INCLUDES AUTHORISED INSTITUTIONS, THE LIMITATION ON FINANCIAL EXPOSURE CONTAINED IN THE SECTION THEREFORE APPLIES TO EXPOSURE OF AUTHORISED INSTITUTIONS TO THEIR OWN SUBSIDIARIES.

"IT FOLLOWS FROM THIS THAT A BANK CANNOT LEND MORE THAN 25 PER CENT OF ITS OWN CAPITAL TO ITS OWN SUBSIDIARIES, EVEN THOUGH THOSE ARE SUBJECT TO THE COMMISSIONER'S CONSOLIDATED SUPERVISION," MR NENDICK SAID.

"TO REMOVE THIS ANOMALY, CLAUSE 33 AMENDS SECTION 81 TO PROVIDE THAT AN AUTHORISED INSTITUTION MAY BE EXEMPTED FROM SECTION 81(1)(B)(1) WHERE THE INSTITUTION IS ITSELF THE CONTROLLER OF THE SUBSIDIARIES CONCERNED, BUT THAT SUCH AN EXEMPTION SHALL BE SUBJECT TO THE PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE COMMISSIONER AND TO SUCH CONDITIONS AS HE MAY THINK PROPER TO ATTACH THERETO," HE EXPLAINED.

"THIS DISCRETION IS INTENDED TO BE USED SPARINGLY, AND WHERE THE COMMISSIONER IS SATISFIED THAT NO CREDIT RISK ON A GROUP BASIS SHOULD EXCEED THE 25 PER CENT LIMIT," HE ADDED.

FOLLOWING A BREACH OF EITHER THE SPECIFIED CAPITAL ADEQUACY RATIO OR THE SPECIFIED LIQUIDITY RATIO, THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING MAY, AFTER DISCUSSING THE MATTER WITH THE INSTITUTION, REQUIRE IT TO TAKE SUCH REMEDIAL ACTIONS AS HE CONSIDERS NECESSARY.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE COMMISSIONER'S DIRECTION IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE.

"AT PRESENT, THE INSTITUTION CAN APPEAL ONLY TO THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY AGAINST THE COMMISSIONER'S DIRECTION. ELSEWHERE IN THE ORDINANCE, APPEALS AGAINST THE COMMISSIONER'S USE OF HIS POWERS, WHERE NON-COMPLIANCE IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE, LIE TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL," MR NENDICK SAID.

"FOR THE SAKE OF CONSISTENCY, CLAUSE 41 AND 43 AMEND SECTIONS 100 AND 104 RESPECTIVELY TO REPLACE THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY WITH THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL AS THE APPEAL BODY," HE ADDED.

THE REQUIREMENT TO PRESERVE AND HELP IN PRESERVING SECRECY AS PROVIDED UNDER SECTION 120(1)(A) APPLIES ONLY TO THOSE SPECIFIED PERSONS PRESENTLY EXERCISING FUNCTIONS UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

"IT IS CONSIDERED IMPORTANT TO ENSURE THAT ALL THOSE WHO HAVE EXERCISED SUCH FUNCTIONS IN THE PAST BUT DO NOT PRESENTLY DO SO ARE SIMILARLY RESTRICTED. THIS CATEGORY INCLUDES RETIRED PUBLIC OFFICERS, PROFESSIONALS AND OTHERS WHOSE CONTRACTS HAVE EXPIRED," MR NENDICK SAID.

"CLAUSE 46(B) THEREFORE EXTENDS THE SECRECY OBLIGATION TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE AT ANY TIME OBTAINED RELEVANT INFORMATION IN THE COURSE OF EXERCISING ANY FUNCTION UNDER THE ORDINANCE," HE ADDED.

THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID THE BILL ALSO PROPOSED A MISCELLANY OF TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO CLARIFY MEANING AND ENSURE CONSISTENCY BETWEEN VARIOUS SECTIONS OF THE ORDINANCE.

"THE PRINCIPAL PROPOSALS IN THE BILL HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED WITH AND ARE SUPPORTED BY THE BANKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE," MR NENDICK SAID.

THE DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED UNTIL THE NEW SESSION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1989

- 27 -

BILLS SEEK TO ENHANCE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

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TWO BILLS AIMED AT ENHANCING AND MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY ARE THE ARCHITECTS REGISTRATION BILL 1989 AND THE ENGINEERS REGISTRATION BILL 1989.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF EACH BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID THE FIRST OBJECTIVE WAS TO ASSURE THE PUBLIC THAT THOSE WHO PROFESSED TO BE PROFESSIONALLY QUALIFIED ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS HAD INDEED RECEIVED APPROPRIATE TRAINING AND WERE COMPETENT TO PRACTISE IN HONG KONG.

HE ADDED THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF REGISTRATION DID NOT MEAN THERE WOULD BE A "CLOSED SHOP" OR THAT THE PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTES WOULD BE ABLE TO OPERATE RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES.

"THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE PROFESSIONS INVOLVED ALSO BELIEVE THAT THIS LEGISLATION WILL SERVE TO ENHANCE AND MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS," HE SAID.

IN SUPPORTING REGISTRATION OF PROFESSIONAL ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS, MR BARNES SAID THE ADMINISTRATION HAD RECOGNISED, WITH THE PROFESSIONS, A CERTAIN CONFUSION IN THE PUBLIC MIND AS TO THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE VARIOUS ENGINEERING DISCIPLINES, AND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN QUALIFIED ARCHITECTS AND THOSE WHO CALLED THEMSELVES ARCHITECTS BUT MIGHT NOT NECESSARILY BE PROFESSIONALLY QUALIFIED.

REGISTRATION OF THOSE QUALIFIED WOULD NOT BE COMPULSORY, BUT THERE WOULD BE OBVIOUS BENEFITS ACCRUING FROM THE USE OF THE TITLE "REGISTERED ARCHITECT" OR "REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER".

THE ENGINEERS REGISTRATION BILL REQUIRED (CLAUSE 29) THAT A REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER SHOULD SPECIFY THE DISCIPLINE IN WHICH HE OR SHE WAS QUALIFIED, SO THAT THERE WAS NO DOUBT AS TO THE ACTUAL FIELD OF EXPERTISE OF THE INDIVIDUAL CONCERNED.

NEVERTHELESS, PROFESSIONALS WHO WERE NOT REGISTERED WOULD STILL BE PERMITTED TO PRACTISE IN HONG KONG PROVIDING THAT THEY DID NOT IMPLY THAT THEY WERE REGISTERED.

THE MAIN REQUIREMENTS FOR REGISTRATION WERE THAT THE PERSON WAS ORDINARILY RESIDENT AND HAD AT LEAST ONE YEAR'S PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE IN HONG KONG, IN ADDITION TO MEETING THE RELEVANT ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING STANDARDS.

REGISTRATION INITIALLY WOULD NOT BE LINKED TO THE RIGHT TO CARRY OUT STATUTORY FUNCTIONS UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE, ALTHOUGH THE ADMINISTRATION COULD SEE POTENTIAL BENEFITS IN THIS APPLICATION AND THIS WOULD BE SOMETHING TO BE CONSIDERED ONCE THE REGISTRATION SYSTEM HAD BECOME WELL ESTABLISHED.

/MR BARNES

MR BARNES SAID THE BILLS PROVIDED FOR REGISTRATION TO BE ADMINISTERED BY REGISTRATION BOARDS WHICH WERE APPOINTED BY THE COUNCILS OF THE INSTITUTES BUT WERE INDEPENDENT OF THE PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTES IN THEIR OPERATION.

THE FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE BOARDS WERE SET OUT IN CLAUSES 8, 9 AND 10 OF THE ARCHITECTS REGISTRATION BILL AND 7, 8 AND 9 OF THE ENGINEERS REGISTRATION BILL.

"PROVISION IS MADE FOR A GOVERNMENT APPOINTEE TO EACH BOARD. THE ADMINISTRATION IS CONFIDENT THAT THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOARDS WILL PROVIDE THE RIGHT BALANCE AND THE NECESSARY DEGREE OF SELF REGULATION," MR BARNES SAID.

IN THE EVENT THAT A REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL COMMITTED A DISCIPLINARY OFFENCE THE BILL PROVIDED FOR INVESTIGATION BY AN ENQUIRY COMMITTEE WHICH MIGHT RESULT IN REMOVAL OF THE PROFESSIONAL'S NAME FROM THE REGISTER, EITHER PERMANENTLY OR FOR A SPECIFIED PERIOD.

ALTERNATIVELY, THE COMMITTEE MIGHT ORDER SOME FORM OF REPRIMAND. AS A SAFEGUARD, PROVISION WAS MADE FOR APPEAL TO THE COURT OF APPEAL AGAINST DISCIPLINARY ORDERS.

DEBATES ON THE BILLS WERE ADJOURNED UNTIL THE NEW SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

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BILL TO SPECIFY DISPLAY OF TAXI FARE TABLES

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A BILL EMPOWERING THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT TO SPECIFY THE DISPLAY AND POSITIONING OF FARE TABLES INSIDE TAXIS WAS INTRODUCED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1989, MR LEUNG SAID THE BILL ALSO PROVIDED THE COMMISSIONER WITH POWERS TO SPECIFY THE DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, SIZE, COLOUR, FORM AND POSITIONING OF ANY DESTINATION INDICATORS, NOTICES OR SIGNS DISPLAYED IN PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLES AND INSIGNIA WORN BY THE OPERATORS OF SUCH VEHICLES.

HE SAID THAT AT PRESENT, FARE TABLES WERE NORMALLY DISPLAYED AT THE FRONT PANEL INSIDE TAXIS WHERE IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR BACK SEAT PASSENGERS TO READ THEM.

THIS SOMETIMES HAD LED TO DISPUTES BETWEEN PASSENGERS AND DRIVERS AND COMPLAINTS OF OVERCHARGING.

THE PROPOSED REGULATION WOULD ENSURE THAT PASSENGERS WERE BETTER AND MORE CLEARLY INFORMED OF THE APPROVED TAXI FARE SCALES, THUS REDUCING LIKELY DISPUTES WITH TAXI DRIVERS.

/MR LEUNG

MR LEUNG SAID THE BILL ALSO SPECIFIED THE DISPLAY OF DESTINATION INDICATORS, NOTICES AND SIGNS IN PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLES SUCH AS PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES TO ENSURE UNIFORMITY OF PRACTICE BY THE TRADE AND FOR BETTER PUBLIC INFORMATION.

UPON PASSAGE OF THIS BILL, THE ROAD TRAFFIC (PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLES) REGULATIONS WILL BE AMENDED ACCORDINGLY, HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WOULD CONSULT THE PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLES TRADE ON THE SPECIFICATIONS, ALLOWING SUFFICIENT TIME FOR THE OPERATORS TO COMPLY WITH THE SPECIFICATIONS BEFORE THE NEW REQUIREMENTS ARE ENFORCED.

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AMENDMENTS TO CLARIFY BILL'S OPERATION

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CERTAIN AMENDMENTS WOULD BE MADE TO SECTION 7A OF CLAUSE 4 OF THE PROTECTION OF INVESTORS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989 TO CLARIFY ITS OPERATION AND TO REMOVE AN UNINTENTIONAL EFFECT, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID NENDICK, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE COMMITTEE STAGE OF THE BILL, HE EXPLAINED THAT SECTION 7A WAS DRAFTED TO IMPOSE A REPORTING REQUIREMENT IN RESPECT OF ADVERTISEMENTS RELATING TO CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT AND COMMERCIAL PAPER ISSUES.

HOWEVER, IT HAD BEEN SUGGESTED THAT SECTION 7A AS DRAFTED WAS INSUFFICIENTLY PRECISE AND WOULD ALSO CATCH ADVERTISEMENTS WHICH WERE ALREADY EXEMPT BY VIRTUE OF OTHER PROVISIONS OF THE ORDINANCE.

IN VIEW OF THE CONCERN EXPRESSED ON THIS PROVISION, MR NENDICK SAID THAT SUB-SECTION (1) WOULD BE AMENDED TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE INFORMATION TO BE SUBMITTED WOULD RELATE TO THE ADVERTISEMENT AND WOULD BE SPECIFIED BY THE SECURITIES AND FUTURES COMMISSION BY NOTICE IN THE GAZETTE.

"WE DO NOT INTEND THAT THIS OBLIGATION SHOULD BE EITHER UNCLEAR OR ONEROUS," HE SAID.

"THUS THE INFORMATION REQUIRED WILL BE KNOWN AT THE TIME OF ISSUE OF THE ADVERTISEMENT."

IT WAS ENVISAGED THAT THIS INFORMATION WOULD ONLY RELATE TO THE BASIC TERMS OF THE CAPITAL MARKET ISSUE AS REFLECTED IN THE ADVERTISEMENT. MR NENDICK NOTED.

THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ARRANGING WITH THE COMMISSION FOR EARLY PUBLICATION OF THE NECESSARY GAZETTE NOTICE.

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ON THE SECOND AMENDMENT, MR NENDICK SAID: "A NEW SUB-SECTION (5) IS ADDED TO PROVIDE A REVISED DEFINITION OF 'AUTHORISED REPRESENTATIVE', PRESENTLY IN CLAUSE 2, TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT IT MEANS ANY PERSON IN HONG KONG AUTHORISED BY AN OVERSEAS ISSUER IN RELATION TO THE ADVERTISEMENT IN QUESTION.

"WE DO NOT INTEND THAT THE REPORTING OBLIGATION SHOULD FALL UPON A GENERAL AGENT OR PROFESSIONAL ADVISER WHO MAY NOT BE AUTHORISED OR ABLE TO SUPPLY THE INFORMATION REQUIRED."

THE THIRD AMENDMENT, MR NENDICK SAID, WAS TO ADD A NEW SUB-SECTION (4) TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT SECTION 7A DID NOT APPLY TO ANY ADVERTISEMENTS WHICH WERE ALREADY EXEMPT BY VIRTUE OF SECTION 4(3) AND (5).

"IT IS NOT OUR INTENTION TO AFFECT EXISTING EXEMPTIONS ENJOYED BY PROFESSIONALS OR SUPERVISED PERSONS UNDER THESE PROVISIONS," HE EXPLAINED.

MR NENDICK ALSO PROPOSED THE DELETION OF A NEW SECTION G OF CLAUSE 5 WHICH GRANTED AN IMMUNITY TO PUBLIC OFFICERS AND THE COMMISSION AND ITS EMPLOYEES IN THE BONA FIDE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR FUNCTIONS UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

"IN VIEW OF THE SIMILAR IMMUNITY IN SECTION 56(1) OF THE SECURITIES AND FUTURES COMMISSION ORDINANCE WHICH COVERS ANY PERSON ACTING IN THE BONA FIDE PERFORMANCE OF HIS FUNCTIONS UNDER THAT ORDINANCE AND OTHER 'RELEVANT ORDINANCES' INCLUDING THE PROTECTION OF INVESTORS ORDINANCE, THIS PROVISION IS UNNECESSARY AND IS DELETED," HE SAID.

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BILL INTENDED TO STRENGTHEN LEGAL PROFESSION
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED A BILL WHICH SEEKS TO STRENGTHEN THE LEGAL PROFESSION IN HONG KONG.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, EXPLAINED THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989.

"THAT PHILOSOPHY HAS TWO MAIN ASPECTS," MR MATHEWS SAID IN THE RESUMED SECOND READING DEBATE ON THE BILL.

"THE FIRST SEEKS TO STRENGTHEN THE LEGAL PROFESSION IN HONG KONG BY IMPOSING SOME RESTRICTIONS ON THE PRESENT UNFETTERED RIGHT OF ENTRY OF UNITED KINGDOM LAWYERS TO PRACTISE IN HONG KONG.

"THE SECOND IS TO PERMIT A SMALL NUMBER OF LAWYERS IN GOVERNMENT LEGAL SERVICE WHO ARE NOT PRESENTLY ENTITLED TO BECOME HONG KONG BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS TO JOIN THE LEGAL PROFESSIONS HERE.

/"THOSE THAT

"THOSE THAT ARE ELIGIBLE TO BE ADMITTED UNDER THE SCHEME IN THIS BILL WILL HAVE CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE IN GOVERNMENT LEGAL SERVICE.

"THOSE WHO ARE ADMITTED UNDER THIS SCHEME, WHILE A LOSS TO GOVERNMENT, WILL BE AN ASSET TO WHICHEVER BRANCH OF THE PROFESSION THEY JOIN."

MR MATHEWS SAID THE AMENDMENTS WHICH HE AND THE HON EDWARD HO WOULD BE MOVING AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE WOULD NOT DETRACT FROM THIS PHILOSOPHY.

ON THE AMENDMENTS, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID THE BILL SET OUT A LIST OF COUNTRIES IN THE SCHEDULE. THOSE COUNTRIES WERE THE ONES (OTHER THAN THE UNITED KINGDOM) FROM WHICH, FOR MANY YEARS, EXPATRIATE LAWYERS HAD COME TO HONG KONG TO WORK IN THE GOVERNMENT LEGAL SERVICE.

"THOSE COUNTRIES, TO WHICH I SHALL BE PROPOSING, DURING COMMITTEE STAGE, ADDING SINGAPORE, HAVE, LIKE HONG KONG, HIGH STANDARDS OF LEGAL EDUCATION, HIGH STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND A REPUTATION FOR PRODUCING LAWYERS OF HIGH QUALITY. THEY ARE COUNTRIES WITH A STRONG COMMON LAW TRADITION OR, CERTAINLY, INFLUENCE."

HE SAID THE LIST WAS COMPREHENSIVE AND HE WOULD NOT READILY SEE THE NEED FOR IT TO BE EXTENDED THOUGH THE CASE OF MALAYSIA WAS BEING EXAMINED.

"BUT WERE WE TO PROPOSE SUCH AN EXTENSION, IT WOULD ONLY BE TO INCLUDE COUNTRIES THAT HAVE THE ATTRIBUTES I HAVE JUST MENTIONED," HE SAID.

MR MATHEWS SAID THAT DURING THE CONSULTATION WITH THE LEGAL PROFESSIONS OVER THE BILL, SOME ANXIETY WAS EXPRESSED OVER THE ABSENCE OF ANY EXPRESS PROVISION REQUIRING THE COURT TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE PUBLIC INTEREST WHEN ADMITTING A FORMER LAWYER IN GOVERNMENT LEGAL SERVICE, AS A BARRISTER OR AS A SOLICITOR UNDER THE SCHEME IN THE BILL.

HE EXPLAINED: "THE BILL DID NOT CONTAIN SUCH AN EXPRESS PROVISION, BECAUSE IT IS NOT NECESSARY. THE COURT HAS A DISCRETION UNDER THE BILL AS TO SUCH ADMISSIONS. IN EXERCISING THAT, AS WITH ANY OTHER JUDICIAL DISCRETION, CONSIDERATIONS OF THE PUBLIC INTEREST ARE ALWAYS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT."

ON THE QUESTION OF EXAMINATIONS, ONE OF THE AMENDMENTS MOVED WAS TO REQUIRE THOSE SEEKING ADMISSION AS SOLICITORS TO UNDERTAKE AN EXAMINATION IN SOLICITORS' ACCOUNTS UNLESS OTHERWISE EXEMPTED.

"THIS AMENDMENT ACCEPTS A PROPOSAL FROM THE LAW SOCIETY, WHICH RECOGNISES THAT SOLICITORS, WHO HANDLE CLIENTS' MONEY, MUST BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY HAVE HAD SUFFICIENT TRAINING AND OBTAINED QUALIFICATION IN SOLICITORS' ACCOUNTS," MR MATHEWS SAID.

- 32 -

HE SAID THE BILL MADE NO PROVISION FOR THOSE FORMER GOVERNMENT LAWYERS ADMITTED AS BARRISTERS TO UNDERGO EXAMINATIONS.

"BUT ALL WHO ARE ADMITTED WILL BE REQUIRED BY THE BARRISTERS (QUALIFICATION) RULES TO UNDERGO A PERIOD OF PUPILLAGE WITH A PRACTISING BARRISTER.

"THIS REQUIREMENT WILL ENSURE THAT THOSE WHO INTEND PRACTISING AT THE BAR BY THIS ROUTE WILL HAVE HAD A PERIOD OF TRANSITION DURING WHICH THEY WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACQUIRE A KNOWLEDGE OF PRACTICE AT THE PRIVATE BAR," HE EXPLAINED.

TURNING TO THE FUTURE, MR MATHEWS SAID HE WAS MINDFUL OF THE NEED FOR A GENERAL REVIEW OF ADMISSION TO PRACTISE LAW IN HONG KONG FOR LAWYERS COMING FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE COMMONWEALTH.

"THAT GENERAL REVIEW WILL BE UNDERTAKEN IN CONSULTATION WITH THE BAR ASSOCIATION AND THE LAW SOCIETY," HE ADDED.

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REGULATION OF USE OF AIR-WAVES APPROPRIATE

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IT IS APPROPRIATE FOR THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY TO BE EMPOWERED TO INTRODUCE REGULATION OVER THE USE OF VALUABLE COMMERCIAL PROPERTY SUCH AS AIR-WAVES, THE HON LEUNG WAI-TUNG TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE TELECOMMUNICATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989 AND THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, MISS LEUNG SAID THAT IN THE CASE OF RADIO BROADCASTING, THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY HAD NOT HAD ANY FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE REGULATION OF THIS IMPORTANT MEDIUM.

"NOW WITH THE IMPENDING GRANT OF ONE NEW LICENCE IN AUGUST AND ANOTHER IN EARLY 1990 IT IS THE TIME FOR THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY TO BE GIVEN FORMAL RESPONSIBILITIES," SHE SAID.

NOTING THAT IN THE CASE OF TELEVISION, THERE WAS A FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE, MISS LEUNG SAID IT WAS RIGHT THAT FOR RADIO, TOO, THE PUBLIC SHOULD HAVE AN INDEPENDENT BODY TO WHICH COMPLAINTS COULD BE REFERRED AND ACTION COULD BE TAKEN IF NECESSARY.

AS A MEMBER OF THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY, MISS LEUNG LOOKED FORWARD TO GOOD WORKING RELATIONS WITH RADIO LICENSEES SO THAT THEY COULD ENCOURAGE AND ASSIST IN ACHIEVING STANDARDS OF BROADCASTING IN HONG KONG THAT COULD MATCH THOSE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1989

- 33 -

MOTION ON TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS APPROVED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED A MOTION PROVIDING FOR THE TRANSFER OF CERTAIN STATUTORY FUNCTIONS TO THE NEW SECRETARY FOR RECREATION AND CULTURE WHO WILL ASSUME HIS ROLE FROM SEPTEMBER 1.

THE MOTION WAS MOVED BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, UNDER THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES ORDINANCE.

SIR DAVID EXPLAINED THAT THE MOTION AROSE FROM THE PROPOSAL TO CREATE A RECREATION AND CULTURE BRANCH TO IMPROVE CO-ORDINATION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE VARIOUS ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN THE FIELDS OF SPORTS, RECREATION AND CULTURE.

"THE NEW BRANCH WILL TAKE OVER SOME OF THE EXISTING RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MUNICIPAL SERVICES BRANCH, SUCH AS CULTURE AND RECREATION, SPORTS, ANTIQUITIES AND COUNTRY PARKS MANAGEMENT, AND SOME OF THE EXISTING RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION BRANCH, SUCH AS BROADCASTING, ENTERTAINMENT AND CENSORSHIP POLICY.

"THE REMAINDER OF THESE TWO BRANCHES' RESPONSIBILITIES WILL BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER BRANCHES AND UNITS. THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION BRANCH WILL CEASE TO EXIST ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1989," HE SAID.

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MOTION ON REORGANISATION OF BRANCH

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED A MOTION IN CONNECTION WITH THE REORGANISATION OF THE LANDS AND WORKS BRANCH OF THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT LATER THIS YEAR.

IN MOVING THE MOTION, UNDER THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES ORDINANCE, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, EXPLAINED THAT WITH EFFECT FROM SEPTEMBER 1 THIS YEAR THE LANDS AND WORKS BRANCH WOULD BE REORGANISED INTO TWO BRANCHES -- THE PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS BRANCH AND THE WORKS BRANCH.

HE SAID THE MOTION SET OUT CERTAIN STATUTORY FUNCTIONS WHICH NEEDED TO BE TRANSFERRED TO THE NEW SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS AND SECRETARY FOR WORKS IN ORDER TO ENABLE THEM TO ASSUME THEIR RESPECTIVE ROLES BY THEN.

/"THESE STATUTORY

- 34 -

"THESE STATUTORY FUNCTIONS INCLUDE THOSE PRESENTLY EXERCISABLE BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE IN RESPECT OF POLLUTION MATTERS, RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHICH HAS RESTED WITH THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS SINCE NOVEMBER 1, 1988," HE ADDED.

MR BARNES SAID THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL WOULD BE ASKED TO CONSIDER LATER TODAY THE STAFF RESOURCES TO ESTABLISH THE TWO NEW BRANCHES WHICH HAD BEEN RECOMMENDED BY THE ESTABLISHMENT SUB-COMMITTEE.

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CHARGES FOR NEW EMERGENCY PHONE EQUIPMENT APPROVED

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PROPOSED CHARGES FOR "EMERGENCY ALERT TELEPHONE" EQUIPMENT, TO BE PROVIDED BY THE HONG KONG TELEPHONE COMPANY FOR ELDERLY AND HANDICAPPED CUSTOMERS, ON A NON-PROFIT MAKING BASIS, WERE APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

A MOTION TO MAKE THE NECESSARY AMENDMENT TO THE RELEVANT SCHEDULE OF CHARGES IN THE TELEPHONE ORDINANCE WAS MOVED BY THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID NENDICK.

MR NENDICK EXPLAINED HOW THE EQUIPMENT WOULD WORK.

"IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY, THE TELEPHONE HAS THE FACILITY TO DIAL AN ALERT MESSAGE TO UP TO FOUR TELEPHONE NUMBERS ON RECEIPT OF AN ALARM SIGNAL FROM A PORTABLE RADIO TRIGGER UNIT CARRIED ON THE PERSON OF THE SUBSCRIBER.

"ONCE ONE OF THE TELEPHONE NUMBERS HAS RECEIVED THE ALERT MESSAGE, A CONFIRMATION UNIT SOUNDS A REASSURANCE TONE," HE SAID.

MR NENDICK SAID THE ADMINISTRATION HAD EXAMINED THE PROPOSED CHARGES AND COULD CONFIRM THAT THE INSTRUMENT WOULD BE PROVIDED ON A NON-PROFIT MAKING BASIS.

IN THE LIST OF CHARGES PUT BEFORE THE COUNCIL, THE RENTAL CHARGE FOR AN EMERGENCY ALERT TELEPHONE (INCLUSIVE OF ONE RADIO TRIGGER UNIT AND ONE CONFIRMATION UNIT) WOULD BE \$1,692 A YEAR.

THE CHARGE FOR EACH ADDITIONAL RADIO TRIGGER UNIT WOULD BE \$324 A YEAR, AND FOR EACH ADDITIONAL CONFIRMATION UNIT THE CHARGE WOULD BE \$204 A YEAR.

THE CONNECTION CHARGE WOULD BE \$200, AND THERE WOULD BE A FEE OF \$140 FOR THE CONNECTION OF EACH RADIO TRIGGER UNIT OR CONFIRMATION UNIT.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1989

- 35 -

PUBLIC URGED TO GIVE VIEWS ON CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) URGED MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO COME OUT STRONGLY TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS GREATER DEMOCRACY IN 1991.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, SIR DAVID SAID THE MOST CAREFUL CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN TO THE FULL SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC VIEWS EXPRESSED IN CONSIDERING THE PACE OF CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

AT THIS STAGE, HE SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON RONALD CHOW, IT WAS TOO EARLY TO SAY WHETHER THERE WOULD BE A FORMAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION SIMILAR IN PROCEDURE TO THE REVIEW WHICH PRECEDED THE PUBLICATION OF THE 1988 WHITE PAPER.

"A CLEAR CONSENSUS ON THE WAY FORWARD WILL MAKE SUCH A TIME-CONSUMING EXERCISE UNNECESSARY.

"I WOULD THEREFORE URGE THAT OUR COMMUNITY COME OUT STRONGLY TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON THIS VERY IMPORTANT MATTER," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID HE HAD STRESSED IN THE COUNCIL ON JULY 5 HOW IMPORTANT IT WAS TO OBTAIN THE CLEAR SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNITY BEFORE ANY PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE SHOULD BE PUT INTO EFFECT.

"IN THIS RESPECT, I REMAIN CONFIDENT THAT MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE THE LEAD IN BUILDING ON THE CONSENSUS THAT HAS EMERGED AND WILL PROVIDE THE GOVERNMENT WITH A CLEAR DIRECTION ON WHICH TO BASE ITS DECISIONS," HE SAID.

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RELOCATION OF TSING YI OIL DEPOTS INTENDED

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THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO MOVE THE MOBIL, HONG KONG OIL AND NGA YING CHAU OIL DEPOTS IN TSING YI AND NEGOTIATIONS WITH MOBIL TO MOVE TO THE SOUTHWEST OF THE ISLAND ARE GOING WELL, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCI, TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON MIRIAM LAU, MR BARNES SAID THE CONCLUSION OF THE NEGOTIATION WITH MOBIL WAS EXPECTED TO BE ANNOUNCED VERY SOON.

HE ALSO SAID THAT DISCUSSIONS WITH HONG KONG OIL ON ITS FUTURE PLANS HAD STARTED AND DISCUSSIONS WITH CHINA RESOURCES COMPANY ON THE NGA YING CHAU DEPOT WOULD BE RESUMED WHEN THE OUTCOME OF THE STUDY ON ROUTE 3 WAS AVAILABLE.

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- 36 -

AS TO THE TSING YI ISLAND RISK REASSESSMENT REPORT 1989, MR BARNES SAID THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNED MAINLY THREE SUBJECTS - IMPROVEMENTS IN LAND USE PLANNING, ADOPTION OF TECHNICAL MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF THE INSTALLATIONS ON TSING YI, AND ADOPTION OF VARIOUS TECHNICAL AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES TO REDUCE TRANSPORT RISKS.

"ON LAND USE PLANNING, THE CONSULTANTS CONFIRMED THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO POTENTIAL HAZARDOUS INSTALLATIONS (PHI) DEVELOPMENT EAST OF THE TSING YI MAIN RIDGELINE AND THAT THE RIDGELINE SHOULD BE VIGOROUSLY MAINTAINED TO PRESERVE THE NATURAL BARRIER BETWEEN PHI'S AND MOST OTHER DEVELOPMENT," MR BARNES SAID.

"THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW DISCUSSING WITH THE OPERATORS OF INSTALLATIONS TO PERSUADE THEM TO ADOPT THE TECHNICAL SAFETY MEASURES, SUCH AS INSTALLATION OF GAS LEAKAGE DETECTION SYSTEMS, AND IMPROVEMENTS TO MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.

"TO REDUCE TRANSPORT RISKS, THE GOVERNMENT IS EXAMINING IN DETAIL THE PRACTICABILITY OF THE CONSULTANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS.

"AS A START, LPG VEHICLES WILL BE GIVEN SPECIAL APPROVAL TO FOLLOW A SHORTER ROUTE OFF THE ISLAND AWAY FROM THE LOCAL RESIDENTS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE."

MR BARNES ADDED THAT TO ENSURE THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 1989 REPORT WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED EFFECTIVELY, AN AD HOC INTER-DEPARTMENTAL STEERING GROUP HAD BEEN SET UP UNDER THE LANDS AND WORKS BRANCH TO MONITOR PROGRESS OF THE FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS.

AS TO THE 1982 TSING YI HAZARD POTENTIAL STUDY, MR BARNES SAID THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS WERE THAT THE RISKS TO THE RESIDENTIAL POPULATION NEAREST TO MOBIL'S OIL INSTALLATION ON EAST TSING YI SHOULD BE REDUCED; THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF TSING YI SHOULD BE IMPROVED; AND THE LAND USE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS ON TSING YI SHOULD BE RE-CONSIDERED.

MR BARNES SAID A NUMBER OF MEASURES HAD BEEN TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS, INCLUDING THE SHELIVING OF DEVELOPMENT OF PHASE THREE OF MAYFAIR GARDENS, MEASURES TO REDUCE THE RISK FROM THE MOBIL DEPOT AND MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF TSING YI.

ON LAND USE PLANNING, CONSULTATION ZONES HAD BEEN DEFINED FOR EACH HAZARDOUS INSTALLATION WITHIN WHICH OTHER NEW DEVELOPMENTS WERE CONSTRAINED, MR BARNES SAID.

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ACTION AGAINST SUPPLIER OF GAS TO HOSPITAL

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LEGAL ACTION IS BEING TAKEN AGAINST THE SUPPLIER OF GAS TO A HOSPITAL AND THE HEARING HAS BEEN SET FOR AUGUST 24 IN THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON GEOFFREY BARNES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE ACTION WAS BEING TAKEN UNDER SECTIONS 10(A) AND 14 OF THE DANGEROUS GOODS ORDINANCE, MR BARNES SAID IN REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON LEONG CHE-HUNG.

DR LEONG HAD ASKED, IN THE LIGHT OF THE VERDICT IN A CORONER'S INQUEST THAT THE DEATH OF A WOMAN IN THE HOSPITAL IN JANUARY WAS DUE TO THE WRONG SUPPLY OF GAS, WHAT ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN CONCERNING THE SUPPLIER, AND TO ENSURE THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JURY WERE IMPLEMENTED.

MR BARNES SAID THE RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE INQUEST JURY COULD BE BROADLY CATEGORISED IN FIVE PARTS, AND WENT ON TO DEAL WITH THESE.

ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ACADEMY OF MEDICINE, HE SAID THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE HAD ADVISED THAT CAREFUL CONSIDERATION WAS BEING GIVEN TO THIS.

SUCH AN ACADEMY WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FURTHER TRAINING OF DOCTORS, AND THE ADMINISTRATION'S INTENTIONS WOULD BE ANNOUNCED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

ON MONITORING DEVICES, MR BARNES SAID SHORTLY AFTER THE TRAGIC INCIDENT, THE THEN DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES HAD, ON JANUARY 21, ISSUED A CIRCULAR TO ALL GOVERNMENT, SUBVENTED AND PRIVATE HOSPITALS, PROVIDING DETAILED GUIDELINES ON THE SUPPLY AND USE OF OXYGEN IN HOSPITALS AND CLINICS.

"THE DIRECTOR OF HOSPITAL SERVICES ISSUED A FURTHER CIRCULAR ON JUNE 21 TO ALL HOSPITAL MANagements, DRAWING THEIR ATTENTION TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INQUEST JURY ON THE INSTALLATION AND USE OF MONITORING DEVICES FOR EVERY OPERATION INVOLVING GENERAL ANAESTHESIA," HE SAID.

AS TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A WORKING PARTY TO CONDUCT AN OVERALL REVIEW OF THE SAFETY SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES OF THE GAS SUPPLIER, MR BARNES SAID THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES WAS NOW LIAISING WITH RELEVANT GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND THE GAS SUPPLIER TO SET UP SUCH A WORKING PARTY.

THE FIRST MEETING WOULD BE IN AUGUST.

"THIS WORKING PARTY WILL ALSO BE ASKED TO EXAMINE OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED BY THE GAS SUPPLIER AND TO CONSIDER APPROPRIATE MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS BY THE ADMINISTRATIONS, HE SAID.

MR BARNES SAID THE RECOMMENDATION TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION ON COLOUR CODING FOR GAS CONTAINERS WOULD BE ADDRESSED BY THE SEPARATE WORKING GROUP WHICH WAS ALREADY CONDUCTING A REVIEW OF THE DANGEROUS GOODS ORDINANCE.

FISCAL RESERVE STANDS AT \$63.9 BILLION
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THE ACCUMULATED FISCAL RESERVE AT THE END OF MAY THIS YEAR WAS \$63.9 BILLION, THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS INFORMED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"SOME OF THIS IS PLACED ON DEPOSIT WITH BANKS IN HONG KONG TO CATER FOR THE MORE IMMEDIATE CASH REQUIREMENTS OF GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE," THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID NENDICK, SAID IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON MIRIAM LAU.

"BUT THE BULK, \$52.7 BILLION, HAS BEEN TRANSFERRED TO THE EXCHANGE FUND IN RETURN FOR DEBT CERTIFICATES."

THESE DEBT CERTIFICATES WERE INTEREST BEARING AND THE INTEREST RATE PAYABLE BY THE EXCHANGE FUND TO THE GENERAL REVENUE REFLECTED THE LEVEL OF INTEREST RATES IN THE WHOLESALE MONEY MARKET, HE SAID.

"THE EXCHANGE FUND CONFINES ITS INVESTMENTS TO LOW RISK MARKETABLE FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS AND BANK DEPOSITS DENOMINATED IN THE MAJOR INTERNATIONAL CURRENCIES," MR NENDICK CONTINUED.

"IT ALSO HAS A MODEST PORTFOLIO OF HONG KONG DOLLAR DENOMINATED DEBT INCLUDING SHAREHOLDINGS IN HONG KONG TELECOMMUNICATIONS, THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL AND HACTL (HONG KONG AIR CARGO TERMINALS LTD)."

MR NENDICK POINTED OUT THAT ANY FOREIGN EXCHANGE OR INTEREST RATE RISKS INVOLVED WERE BORNE BY THE EXCHANGE FUND AND NOT THE GENERAL REVENUE.

"IF THE INVESTMENTS OF THE EXCHANGE FUND ATTRACT A HIGHER OR LOWER RATE OF RETURN THAN THE INTEREST RATE PAID TO THE GENERAL REVENUE, THE PROFIT OR LOSS IS FOR THE ACCOUNT OF THE EXCHANGE FUND," HE SAID.

EXPLAINING THE ARRANGEMENT, WHICH HAD BEEN IN PLACE FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, MR NENDICK SAID IT ENSURED A STABLE RATE OF RETURN ON THE FISCAL RESERVE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE GENERAL REVENUE, AND RELIEVED IT OF ANY FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND OTHER INVESTMENT RISKS THAT MIGHT OTHERWISE BE INCURRED.

"IN EFFECT, THE BULK OF THE FISCAL RESERVE IS PLACED ON DEPOSIT WITH THE EXCHANGE FUND, EARNING A MARKET RATE OF INTEREST," HE SAID.

"AT THE SAME TIME, THIS PUTS ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE EXCHANGE FUND TO BETTER ENABLE IT TO CARRY OUT ITS FUNCTION, AS NECESSARY, OF MAINTAINING THE STABILITY OF THE HONG KONG DOLLAR."

ON INFORMING THE PUBLIC OF THE ACCOUNTS, MR NENDICK SAID THE AMOUNT TRANSFERRED TO THE EXCHANGE FUND WAS PUBLISHED.

THE MONTHLY ACCOUNTS OF THE GENERAL REVENUE ACCOUNT AND THE MAJOR FUNDS WERE PUBLISHED IN THE GOVERNMENT GAZETTE, HE SAID.

AND THE FINAL ACCOUNTS OF HONG KONG WERE PRESENTED IN THE DIRECTOR OF ACCOUNTING SERVICES' REPORT WHICH WAS LAID BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN THE AUTUMN OF EACH YEAR.

"THIS REPORT SHOWS DETAILS OF THE GENERAL REVENUE ACCOUNT AND THE VARIOUS FUNDS AS WELL AS A CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT," MR NENDICK SAID.

"IT ALSO EXPLAINS THE ACCOUNTING POLICIES ADOPTED IN THE ACCOUNTS, SIGNIFICANT ITEMS AND THE APPLICATION OF BALANCES, INCLUDING THE FISCAL RESERVE."

IN THIS CONNECTION, MR NENDICK NOTED THAT SINCE NEITHER THE GENERAL REVENUE NOR THE EXCHANGE FUND WAS A SEPARATE LEGAL ENTITY, IT HAD BEEN DETERMINED THAT THE TRANSFER OF MONEY FROM ONE TO THE OTHER DID NOT CONSTITUTE A BORROWING.

"THE TRANSFER, THEREFORE, IS NOT SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS IN THE EXCHANGE FUND ORDINANCE RESTRICTING THE POWERS OF THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY WHEN HE BORROWS FOR THE ACCOUNT OF THE EXCHANGE FUND, SUCH AS THE BORROWING LIMIT OF \$50 BILLION IN SECTION 3(4) OF THE ORDINANCE," HE SAID.

MR NENDICK ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE BORROWING LIMIT WAS LAST RAISED BY RESOLUTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON MARCH 11, 1987 WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

IT WAS AGREED THEN THAT THE LIMIT HAD TO BE RAISED TO ACCOMMODATE FURTHER TRANSFERS FROM THE GENERAL REVENUE AS THE FISCAL RESERVE GREW.

"SUBSEQUENT EXTENSIVE RESEARCH ON THE LEGAL POSITION CARRIED OUT IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROPOSAL TO ISSUE EXCHANGE FUND BILLS HAS INDICATED THAT SUCH TRANSFERS FALL OUTSIDE THIS LIMIT," MR NENDICK SAID.

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DUAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY NOT A GENERAL NEED

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THE MAJORITY OF LAWYERS WILL NOT HAVE TO BE PROFICIENT IN BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE DESPITE THE MOVE TOWARDS BILINGUAL LEGISLATION, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THIS WAS BECAUSE BOTH THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXT AND THE CHINESE LANGUAGE TEXT OF A BILINGUAL ORDINANCE WERE DECLARED TO BE EQUALLY AUTHENTIC, MR MATHEWS SAID IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON PETER WONG.

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"ACCORDINGLY, PROVIDED A LAWYER CAN UNDERSTAND EITHER CHINESE OR THE ENGLISH VERSION OF AN ORDINANCE HE WILL BE ABLE TO TREAT THAT VERSION AS ACCURATE AND LEGALLY BINDING," HE SAID.

NEVERTHELESS, WHILE MOST LAWYERS WOULD NOT REQUIRE PROFICIENCY IN BOTH LANGUAGES IT WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR A RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBER OF LAWYERS, BEING LEGISLATIVE DRAFTSMEN, TO ACQUIRE PROFICIENCY IN BOTH LANGUAGES FOR THE NECESSARY WORK OF TRANSLATION AND FOR ORIGINAL DRAFTING OF BILLS IN CHINESE.

"IN RECOGNITION OF THAT NEED A BILINGUAL LAW TEAM WAS ESTABLISHED IN THE LAW DRAFTING DIVISION OF MY CHAMBERS IN 1986. PRESENTLY THIS TEAM CONSISTS OF SEVEN DRAFTSMEN AND 19 LAW TRANSLATORS," HE SAID.

"TO ACHIEVE THE GOVERNMENT'S OBJECTIVE OF HAVING ALL OF HONG KONG'S LEGISLATION AVAILABLE IN BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE BY 1997 IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO EXPAND THIS TEAM.

"MY CHAMBERS ARE SEEKING COMPETENT BILINGUAL LAW DRAFTSMEN AND TRANSLATORS AND EVERY EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO RECRUIT APPROPRIATELY QUALIFIED, BILINGUAL LAWYERS AND TRANSLATORS TO JOIN THE LAW DRAFTING DIVISION."

MR WONG HAD ASKED WHAT STEPS THE GOVERNMENT WAS TAKING TO ENSURE HONG KONG LAWYERS' PROFICIENCY IN BOTH LANGUAGES IN VIEW OF THE PRESENT REQUIREMENT TO ENACT ALL NEW LEGISLATION IN BILINGUAL FORM.

FROM APRIL 7, 1989 ALL NEW PRINCIPAL ORDINANCES, THAT IS TO SAY ORDINANCES WHICH STAND ON THEIR OWN AND WHICH ARE NOT AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING LEGISLATION, ARE TO BE DRAFTED IN BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE.

WORK IS ALSO WELL UNDERWAY WITHIN THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS UPON THE TRANSLATION OF EXISTING LEGISLATION INTO CHINESE.

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MEASURES TO MINIMISE HAZARDS TO FIRE FIGHTING

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MEASURES ARE BEING TAKEN TO MINIMISE HAZARDS TO FIRE FIGHTING OPERATIONS IN PREMISES WHERE WINDOWS ARE BOARDED OVER FOR DECORATIVE PURPOSES, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON GEOFFREY BARNES, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON JAMES TIEN, MR BARNES POINTED OUT THAT THE COUNCIL HAD EARLIER BEEN INFORMED THAT WINDOW OPENINGS WERE NOT ESSENTIAL MEANS OF ACCESS AND ESCAPE IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE IN A MULTI-STORY BUILDING.

/HE NOTED

HE NOTED THAT STAIRCASES PROVIDED THE MAIN MEANS OF ESCAPE FOR OCCUPANTS OF MULTI-STOREY BUILDINGS AND THE MAIN MEANS OF ACCESS FOR FIREMEN IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE.

"WINDOWS WHICH HAVE BEEN BOARDED OVER EXTERNALLY FOR WALL DECORATION OR SIGN PURPOSES IN RESTAURANTS SHOULD NOT BE A PROBLEM AND ARE MAINTAINED TO SERVE THEIR DESIGNED PURPOSES," MR BARNES SAID.

"THIS TYPE OF EXTERNAL BOARDING, HOWEVER, CAN AFFECT THE MOVEMENT OF SMOKE AND AGGRAVATES THE SPREAD OF FIRE WITHIN THE PREMISES TO MAKE FIRE FIGHTING MORE DIFFICULT," HE ADDED.

MR BARNES SAID THAT THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES WAS CONSIDERING WAYS AND MEANS OF ABATING THIS HAZARD AND THAT A SERIES OF MEASURES WERE NOW BEING FINALISED.

THESE INCLUDED REQUIRING THE INSTALLATION OF AN AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEM FOR PREMISES EXCEEDING A SPECIFIED AREA AND WHERE THE AVERAGE QUANTITY OF COMBUSTIBLE SUBSTANCES EXCEEDED A SPECIFIED QUANTITY.

ANOTHER REQUIREMENT WAS THE INSTALLATION OF A SMOKE EXTRACTION SYSTEM OR A STIPULATION THAT A CERTAIN PERCENTAGE OF THE OPENABLE WINDOWS ON THE EXTERNAL WALL OF THE BUILDINGS SHOULD NOT BE OBSTRUCTED BY DECORATION.

"WHEN DETAILS ARE FINALISED, THE INDUSTRIES WILL BE CONSULTED BEFORE THE REQUIREMENTS ARE IMPLEMENTED. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE NEW REQUIREMENTS WILL TAKE EFFECT BY THE END OF THIS YEAR," MR BARNES SAID.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE OPERATION OF A RESTAURANT WITHOUT A LICENCE WAS AN OFFENCE UNDER THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES ORDINANCE AND THE OPERATOR WAS LIABLE TO PROSECUTION.

"THE LICENSING AUTHORITIES ARE AWARE OF THE FACT THAT SOME RESTAURANTS ARE OPERATING WITHOUT LICENCES AND WILL TAKE LEGAL ACTION AGAINST THEM.

"WHERE THE SITUATION CONSTITUTES A FIRE HAZARD, THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES WILL TAKE ACTION UNDER SECTION 9 OF THE FIRE SERVICES ORDINANCE," MR BARNES SAID.

FOLLOWING THE AMENDMENT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES ORDINANCE IN OCTOBER 1988, THE LICENSING AUTHORITIES WERE EMPOWERED TO APPLY TO COURT FOR CLOSURE ORDERS TO CLOSE UNLICENSED PREMISES, HE NOTED.

"A PHASED PROGRAMME HAS BEEN DRAWN UP BY THE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENTS TO DEAL WITH THE UNLICENSED PREMISES. UNTIL NOW, FIVE CLOSURE ORDERS HAVE BEEN EXECUTED," MR BARNES SAID.

FURTHER MEASURES TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC ON TSING YI

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AN EXTENSIVE TRAFFIC DIVERSION SCHEME TO MAINTAIN TRAFFIC FLOW AND REDUCE CONGESTION WAS IN EFFECT DURING THE TSING YI SOUTH BRIDGE IMPROVEMENT WORKS, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON LAM WAI-KEUNG, MR LEUNG SAID FURTHER MEASURES TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC ON TSING YI HAD BEEN DECIDED AFTER A SPECIAL MEETING WITH KWAI TSING DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS.

THESE INCLUDE:

- * EXAMINING THE PROVISION OF A BUS LANE ON TSING YI HEUNG SZE WUI ROAD TO IMPROVE THE SPEED AND RELIABILITY OF BUS SERVICES WHICH HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY THE CURRENT TRAFFIC DIVERSION SCHEME;
- * ADDING A 7 AM - 7 PM STOPPING PROHIBITION ZONE ALONG CHEUNG FAI ROAD (TSING YI SEAFRONT) TO PREVENT GOODS VEHICLES QUEUEING BACK TO TSING YI HEUNG SZE WUI ROAD;
- * ADJUSTING THE TRAFFIC LIGHT ON THE KWAI TSING ROAD/KWAI FUK ROAD JUNCTION TO ALLOW MORE VEHICLES TO LEAVE THE KWAI TSING ROAD ROUNDABOUT;
- * OPENING THE ACCESS ROAD LEADING TO RIVIERA GARDEN TO REDUCE THE USE OF THE TEXACO ROAD ROUNDABOUT FOR ACCESS; AND
- * ON THE SECTION OF TSUEN WAN ROAD BETWEEN TSING YI BRIDGE AND TSING TSUEN BRIDGE, ADDING CONTINUOUS WHITE LINES TO SEPARATE THE KWAI CHUNG BOUND TRAFFIC AND KOWLOON BOUND TRAFFIC TO GIVE A SMOOTH FLOW TO THE KOWLOON BOUND VEHICLES.

ON A PROPOSAL TO RE-OPEN THE SOUTH BRIDGE DURING MORNING PEAK HOURS, MR LEUNG SAID IT WAS NOT ADVISABLE ON ROAD SAFETY GROUNDS.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE BRIDGE IMPROVEMENT WORKS WERE IN FULL SWING.

MOREOVER, TO RE-OPEN THE LANE WOULD MEAN DELAYING THE PROJECT'S COMPLETION, INCREASING COST, AND LEAD TO POSSIBLE CLAIMS FOR COMPENSATION FROM THE CONTRACTOR.

MR LEUNG SAID THE BRIDGE IMPROVEMENT WORKS WERE EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED EARLY NEXT YEAR.

TRAFFIC CONDITIONS IN THE AREA WERE BEING CLOSELY MONITORED. EFFORTS WOULD CONTINUE TO BE MADE TO CONTAIN TRAFFIC CONGESTION UNTIL THE WORKS WERE COMPLETED, HE ADDED.

CASTLE PEAK HOSPITAL STAFF ESTABLISHMENT BEING REVISED

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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BOTH DOCTORS AND NURSES AT CASTLE PEAK HOSPITAL IS CURRENTLY BEING REVISED IN LINE WITH ACTUAL REQUIREMENTS, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON NIGEL SHIPMAN, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"THE WORKLOAD OF STAFF IS HEAVY BECAUSE THE NUMBER OF PATIENTS NOW ACCOMMODATED IN CASTLE PEAK HOSPITAL IS HIGHER THAN THE DESIGNED CAPACITY," MR SHIPMAN SAID IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO THE HON PEGGY LAM.

THERE WAS AT PRESENT NO ACUTE SHORTAGE OF DOCTORS OR NURSES IN THE HOSPITAL, HE SAID.

ON JULY 1 THIS YEAR, THERE WERE 27 DOCTORS AND 578 NURSES WORKING IN THE HOSPITAL AGAINST ESTABLISHMENTS OF 28 AND 453 RESPECTIVELY.

REFERRING TO OTHER ASPECTS OF MRS LAM'S QUESTION, MR SHIPMAN SAID THE SUPPLY OF TOILET PAPER TO THE HOSPITAL WAS ADEQUATE, AND ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE IF REQUIRED.

"IT IS RECOGNISED THAT THE SUPPLY OF CLOTHING AND LINEN ITEMS IS SOMETIMES INADEQUATE IN CASTLE PEAK HOSPITAL AND OTHER GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS.

"IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLIES, THE HOSPITAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT SET UP A WORKING PARTY IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR TO REVIEW THE LINEN SERVICES AND TO RECOMMEND IMPROVEMENT MEASURES," HE ADDED.

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POWERS TO REMOVE DANGEROUS SIGNS SUFFICIENT

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THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY AS REGARDS ADVERTISEMENT SIGNBOARDS IS TO ENSURE THAT THOSE SIGNBOARDS WHICH MIGHT POSE A THREAT TO PUBLIC SAFETY ARE REMOVED EITHER BY THE OWNERS THEMSELVES OR, WHERE NECESSARY, BY THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY), IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON JAMES MCGREGOR.

"THERE ARE SUFFICIENT LEGAL POWERS TO ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO DO SO," MR BARNES SAID.

/DURING THE

DURING THE TWO YEARS FROM APRIL 1, 1987, THE DANGEROUS SIGNS UNIT OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE HAD CAUSED THE REMOVAL OF OVER 4,000 DANGEROUS SIGNS.

"AN ELABORATE LICENSING SYSTEM WOULD INVOLVE MORE MONEY AND MORE STAFF, AND WOULD NOT NECESSARILY PRODUCE ANY BETTER RESULTS," HE SAID.

"IT IS THEREFORE NOT THE INTENTION TO INTRODUCE SUCH A SYSTEM."

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ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL SOLICITATION OF DONATIONS

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APART FROM MOUNTING PROSECUTIONS, THE POLICE ALSO ISSUE WARNINGS TO THE PUBLIC WHENEVER CASES OF ILLEGAL SOLICITATION OF DONATIONS ARE REPORTED.

THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON GEOFFREY BARNES, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON HUI YIN-FAT.

MR HUI HAD REFERRED TO A RECENT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF CASES OF ILLEGAL SOLICITATION OF DONATIONS AND FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY BOGUS ORGANISATIONS, AND ASKED WHAT BEING DONE TO CONTROL THIS TO PREVENT THE PUBLIC FROM BEING DECEIVED.

MR BARNES SAID THE SIMPLEST AND MOST EFFECTIVE CHANNEL OF COMPLAINT WAS TO THE NEAREST POLICEMAN OR POLICE STATION, POINTING OUT THE OFFENDER OR GIVING SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO ENABLE THE POLICE TO MAKE A PROSECUTION.

HE EXPLAINED THAT UNDER SECTION 4 (17) OF THE SUMMARY OFFENCES ORDINANCE, ANY PERSON WHO, 'ORGANISES, PROVIDES EQUIPMENT FOR, OR PARTICIPATES IN ANY COLLECTION OF MONEY OR SALE OF BADGES IN A PUBLIC PLACE SAVE UNDER AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH A PERMIT IN WRITING ISSUED BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE' COMMITTED AN OFFENCE AND WAS LIABLE TO A FINE OF \$500 OR THREE MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT.

"IF THE POLICE COME ACROSS SUCH PERSONS IN THE COURSE OF THEIR DUTIES, OR IF A COMPLAINT IS LAID BY THE PUBLIC, THEN UNDER THIS SECTION THEY CAN AND DO MAKE PROSECUTIONS," MR BARNES SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1989

- 45 -

THIRTEEN BILLS PASSED IN FINAL MEETING

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THIRTEEN BILLS WERE PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IT WAS THE LAST MEETING OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE 1988-89 SESSION.

THE 13 BILLS PASSED WERE: THE LEGAL AID (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, THE HONG KONG INDUSTRIAL ESTATES CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1989, THE PROTECTION OF INVESTORS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, THE SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (1988-89) BILL 1989, THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, THE LEGAL OFFICERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, THE CHARITABLE TRUST FUNDS (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, THE LI PO CHUN CHARITABLE TRUST FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, THE ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1989, THE TELECOMMUNICATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989 AND THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989.

FOUR BILLS WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS.

THEY WERE THE BANKING (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1989, THE ARCHITECTS REGISTRATION BILL 1989, THE ENGINEERS REGISTRATION BILL 1989 AND THE ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1989.

DEBATES ON THESE BILL WERE ADJOURNED UNTIL THE NEW SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

THREE MOTIONS WERE APPROVED. TWO OF THEM WERE MOVED UNDER THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES ORDINANCE BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY AND THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, WHILE THE OTHER WAS MOVED BY THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY UNDER THE TELEPHONE ORDINANCE.

THE REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE ON REPORT NO. 13 OF THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT ON THE RESULTS OF VALUE FOR MONEY AUDITS JUNE 1989 WAS TABLED BY THE HON PETER POON.

THE COUNCIL ALSO DEBATED A MEMBER'S MOTION CONCERNING THE WHITE PAPER ON POLLUTION IN HONG KONG.

THE MOTION, MOVED BY THE HON PETER POON. READ: "THAT THIS COUNCIL SUPPORTS THE AIMS OF THE 'WHITE PAPER ON POLLUTION IN HONG KONG -- A TIME TO ACT' AND URGES EVERYBODY TO KEEP OUR ENVIRONMENT CLEAN."

NINETEEN MEMBERS SPOKE ON THE MOTION. THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS SPOKE FOR THE GOVERNMENT. THE MOTION WAS PASSED.

THE NEW SESSION OF THE COUNCIL IS DUE TO BEGIN ON OCTOBER 11.

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/46

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1989

- 46 -

FC APPROVES FUNDS FOR QUALITY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED FUNDS OF OVER \$9.6 MILLION TO MOUNT A CAMPAIGN TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF QUALITY AWARENESS AMONG LOCAL MANUFACTURERS.

THE FUNDS WILL COVER A FOUR-YEAR PERIOD FROM 1989-90 TO 1992-93.

THE LAUNCHING OF THE CAMPAIGN IS ONE OF THE THREE COMPONENTS OF A QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME ENDORSED BY THE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT BOARD TO PROMOTE THE ADOPTION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AMONG LOCAL MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES.

THE OTHER TWO COMPONENTS ARE THE SETTING UP OF A HONG KONG QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY AND THE IMPROVING OF THE EXISTING RANGE OF QUALITY SUPPORT SERVICES ADMINISTERED BY THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT.

THE HONG KONG QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY, WHICH IS BEING SET UP WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRY, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR OPERATING AN ACCREDITATION SCHEME FOR LOCAL MANUFACTURING COMPANIES WHICH ADOPT QUALITY PRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS CONFORMING WITH INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED STANDARDS FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THE IMPROVEMENTS TO HONG KONG'S EXISTING QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THE VOLUNTARY ACCREDITATION SCHEME WOULD ENABLE THE LOCAL MANUFACTURING SECTOR TO MEET INCREASINGLY STRINGENT PRODUCT STANDARDS IN ITS MAJOR OVERSEAS MARKETS.

"THEY WILL ALSO ADVERTISE TO OVERSEAS BUYERS THAT HONG KONG IS PLACING GREATER EMPHASIS ON THE QUALITY OF ITS PRODUCTS," HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE QUALITY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN WAS AIMED AT BRINGING ABOUT A SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE OF ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF THE MANUFACTURERS TOWARDS QUALITY MANAGEMENT.

"THIS IS IMPORTANT IF HONG KONG IS TO SECURE A PERMANENT INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION FOR QUALITY, BASED ON A SOUND AND DEMONSTRABLE QUALITY MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY," HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE MAIN TARGET OF THE QUALITY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN WOULD BE THE 2,500 LARGEST MANUFACTURERS IN HONG KONG, WHICH ACCOUNTED FOR ABOUT 55 PER CENT OF GROSS MANUFACTURING OUTPUT.

/THE MESSAGE

THE MESSAGE TO BE PUT ACROSS WOULD BE "GOOD QUALITY MANAGEMENT REDUCES COSTS, IMPROVES OUTPUT AND SECURES MARKETS".

DURING THE CAMPAIGN PERIOD, THIS MESSAGE WOULD BE DISSEMINATED THROUGH FACTORY VISITS, SEMINARS, PRESENTATIONS AND A VARIETY OF CONVENTIONAL PUBLICITY METHODS.

THE CAMPAIGN WOULD FOLLOW THE "TOP-DOWN" APPROACH, AIMING AT CHIEF EXECUTIVES IN THE FIRST YEAR, AT LINE MANAGEMENT IN THE SECOND YEAR, AND AT WORKERS IN THE THIRD YEAR, BEFORE RETURNING TO THE TOP MANAGEMENT TOWARDS THE CLOSE OF THE CAMPAIGN.

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MOBIL OIL AGREES TO RELOCATION

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS REACHED AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE WITH MOBIL OIL HONG KONG LIMITED ON THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE RELOCATION OF THE COMPANY'S OIL INSTALLATIONS ON THE EAST COAST OF TSING YI ISLAND.

MOBIL WILL SURRENDER TO GOVERNMENT THEIR EXISTING SITE OF SOME 14 HECTARES OF INDUSTRIAL LAND. IN RETURN, MOBIL WILL BE GRANTED A SMALLER SITE OF ABOUT 10 HECTARES IN AREA 17 IN SOUTHWEST TSING YI TO BUILD A NEW OIL DEPOT.

THE 1989 TSING YI ISLAND RISK REASSESSMENT STUDY HAD CONFIRMED THAT THE SITE IN AREA 17 IS ACCEPTABLE FROM THE RISK POINT OF VIEW. MOREOVER, THE RELOCATION OF MOBIL'S OIL INSTALLATIONS WOULD ALSO BE DESIRABLE ON ENVIRONMENTAL GROUNDS.

THE FUTURE USE OF THE EXISTING OIL DEPOT SITE ON EAST TSING YI HAS YET TO BE FINALISED.

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HK'S ADVANTAGES AS OFFSHORE MANUFACTURING LOCATION APPRECIATED

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THERE ARE SIGNS OF CONTINUING JAPANESE APPRECIATION OF THE ADVANTAGES OF HONG KONG AS AN OFFSHORE MANUFACTURING LOCATION, ACCORDING TO THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRY, MR ANDREW K.P. LEUNG.

HE NOTED THAT THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT AND ITS INVESTMENT PROMOTION OFFICE IN TOKYO WERE CURRENTLY HELPING 80 JAPANESE FIRMS WITH THEIR ENQUIRIES WHILE SIX OF THEM HAD ENTERED INTO COMMITMENTS TO COMMENCE OR EXPAND PRODUCTION IN HONG KONG WITHIN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS.

/SPEAKING AT

SPEAKING AT A RECEPTION TO CELEBRATE THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF DAI NIPPON PRINTING CO (HK) LTD TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR LEUNG SAID JAPAN'S TOTAL VALUE OF OVERSEAS INVESTMENT IN OUR MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES HAD BEEN GROWING SIGNIFICANTLY FROM 21 PER CENT IN 1986 TO 27 PER CENT IN 1987.

DAI NIPPON IS NOW ONE OF THE 160 JAPANESE MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN HONG KONG.

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF 1988, THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT AND ITS INVESTMENT PROMOTION OFFICE IN TOKYO HAD HELPED 16 NEW JAPANESE FIRMS IN SETTING UP MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS IN HONG KONG AND FIVE OTHER JAPANESE FIRMS IN HONG KONG WITH THEIR EXPANSION PROJECTS, MR LEUNG ADDED.

HE CITED DAI NIPPON AS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF JAPANESE FORESIGHT AND ENTERPRISE IN HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIAL SECTOR.

"DAI NIPPON PRINTING FIRST CAME TO HONG KONG IN 1964 TO SET UP A JOINT VENTURE FACILITY.

"TODAY, IT IS EQUIPPED WITH SOME OF THE MOST ADVANCED FACILITIES IN ASIA FOR PRODUCING BOOKS AND MAGAZINES, SERVING A LARGE INTERNATIONAL CLIENTELLE," HE SAID.

"THE CELEBRATION OF THE COMPANY'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY MARKS ITS LONG-TERM CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG AS A BASE FOR THE WORLDWIDE MARKET," HE ADDED.

MR LEUNG SAID DAI NIPPON WAS AT PRESENT PRINTING MAINLY BOOKS AND MAGAZINES IN HONG KONG, ADDING THAT THERE WAS AMPLE SCOPE FOR IT TO EXPAND FURTHER.

HE INVITED DAI NIPPON TO MANUFACTURE ITS OTHER PRODUCTS SUCH AS PACKAGING MATERIALS, PHARMACEUTICALS, MARKS FOR INTEGRATED CIRCUIT (IC) WAFER FABRICATION, MAGNETIC CARDS AND CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS IN HONG KONG.

ON HONG KONG'S PRINTING INDUSTRY, MR LEUNG SAID OVER THE YEARS, THE INDUSTRY HAD MADE GREAT STRIDES IN TERMS OF PRODUCTIVITY, VERSATILITY AND QUALITY, TURNING HONG KONG INTO THE SECOND LARGEST PRINTER IN ASIA AFTER JAPAN.

"THE INDUSTRY IS RENOWNED FOR ITS QUALITY, COMPETITIVE PRICES QUICK DELIVERY AND ABILITY TO COPE WITH SHORT-RUN PRINTING JOBS.

"PUBLICATIONS FROM WORLD RENOWNED PUBLISHERS ARE PRINTED IN HONG KONG.

"THE PRESENCE OF COMPANIES LIKE DAI NIPPON PRINTING HAS CONTRIBUTED IN NO SMALL WAY TO THIS DEVELOPMENT," HE SAID.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1989

- 49 -

HD'S MATERIALS TESTING LAB ACCREDITED BY HOKLAS

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THE MATERIALS TESTING LABORATORY OF THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN ACCREDITED FOR TESTING OF CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS BY THE HONG KONG LABORATORY ACCREDITATION SCHEME (HOKLAS).

THE DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRY, MR T. H. BARMA, IN HIS CAPACITY AS HEAD OF HOKLAS, PRESENTED A CERTIFICATE OF ACCREDITATION TO THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF HOUSING (CONSTRUCTION), MR DEREK MESSLING, AT A CEREMONY TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

CONGRATULATING THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT ON ITS ACHIEVEMENTS, MR BARMA SAID THE HOKLAS HAD ATTAINED AN INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION FOR HIGH STANDARDS.

"IT IS NOW RECOGNISED WORLDWIDE AS ONE OF THE ADVANCED AND MAJOR SCHEME," HE SAID.

"ANY LABORATORY ACCREDITED BY HOKLAS IS SIMILARLY RECOGNISED AND SO HAS TO BE OPERATING AT INTERNATIONAL LEVELS OF COMPETENCY."

ACCORDING TO MR BARMA, FOLLOWING THE MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENT SIGNED BETWEEN HOKLAS AND NAMAS (THE NATIONAL MEASUREMENT ACCREDITATION SERVICE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM) IN MARCH THIS YEAR, STEPS WERE BEING TAKEN TO CONCLUDE SIMILAR AGREEMENTS WITH A NUMBER OF OTHER REPUTABLE SCHEMES IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

ON THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY AWARENESS, MR BARMA SAID EMPHASIS ON QUALITY WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT THESE DAYS AND WAS NOT ONLY BEING DEMANDED BY OVERSEAS BUYERS BUT ALSO BY PEOPLE AT HOME HERE IN HONG KONG.

"IT IS PARTICULARLY ENCOURAGING TO NOTE THAT THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT IS RESPONDING TO THIS DEMAND BY PROVIDING QUALITY HOUSING FOR THE COMMUNITY IN THEIR NEW HARMONY BLOCK RANGE.

"LABORATORY ACCREDITATION IS AFTERALL QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE LABORATORY AND IS THEREFORE A QUALITY SERVICE FOR ALL WHO USE THE LABORATORY," HE SAID.

MR BARMA SAID THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT HAD FROM THE ONSET BEEN A KEEN AND OFTEN OUTSPOKEN SUPPORTER OF HOKLAS AND WAS ONE OF THE MOTIVATING ORGANISATIONS WHICH INFLUENCED THE GOVERNMENT TO EXTEND THE LABORATORY ACCREDITATION SCHEME TO INCLUDE CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS TESTING.

AT PRESENT, HOKLAS HAD ACCREDITED NINE LABORATORIES FOR TESTING CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS, INCLUDING THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT ONE, HE SAID.

/ALSO SPEAKING

- 50 -

ALSO SPEAKING AT THE CEREMONY, MR MESSLING SAID THE ACCREDITATION OF HOUSING DEPARTMENT'S MATERIALS TESTING LABORATORY HAD FORGED A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DEPARTMENTS IN THE COMMON GOAL OF RAISING STANDARDS WITHIN THE HONG KONG BUILDING INDUSTRY.

HE EXTENDED HIS GRATITUDE TO THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT FOR ITS ASSISTANCE IN DEVELOPING BETTER PROCEDURES IN REGARD TO THE SPECIFICATION AND PROCUREMENT OF COMPONENTS FOR THE NEW HARMONY BLOCK RANGE.

HE SAID IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT PLAYED ITS PART IN NOT ONLY EXTENDING ITS LABORATORY'S CAPABILITY IN RESPECT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE, BUT IN SO DOING ENCOURAGED AND SET GOALS FOR THE REST OF THE INDUSTRY.

"I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT WHAT IS GOOD FOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY IS GOOD FOR THE BUILDING INDUSTRY, AND WHAT IS GOOD FOR THE BUILDING INDUSTRY IS GOOD FOR HONG KONG," MR MESSLING SAID.

SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN 1985, HOKLAS HAD RESPONDED TO DEMANDS FROM VARIOUS SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY BY PROVIDING A DIVERSITY OF ACCREDITED TESTINGS.

ACCORDING TO MR BARMA, THE NUMBER OF HOKLAS ACCREDITED LABORATORIES NOW STOOD AT 18. THEY COVER TESTING OF MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS FOR EXPORT, DOMESTIC PRODUCTS, MATERIALS FOR CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, WEIGHTS AND MEASURES, CALIBRATIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUBSTANCES.

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MERCHANT FINED \$5,000 FOR USING INACCURATE SCALES

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A SEAFOOD MERCHANT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BECAME THE FIRST PERSON TO BE PROSECUTED AND FINED FOR USING INACCURATE WEIGHING INSTRUMENTS UNDER THE RECENTLY INTRODUCED WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ORDINANCE.

MR HO PING, SHOPOWNER OF "HO PING KEE" WHICH IS A RETAILER OF SEAFOOD, WAS FINED \$5,000 AT THE WESTERN MAGISTRACY AND HAD THREE OF HIS WEIGHING STEELYARDS (COMMONLY CALLED "CHING" IN CHINESE) CONFISCATED.

THE CHARGES WERE BROUGHT AGAINST HIM BY THE TRADING STANDARDS INVESTIGATION BUREAU OF THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT FOLLOWING AN INVESTIGATION ON JANUARY 13 IN RESPONSE TO A COMPLAINT AGAINST "HO PING KEE" AT SHOP NO. 11, WESTERN PORTION, NORTH POINT FERRY PIER, GROUND FLOOR, NORTH POINT.

GOVERNMENT LABORATORY EXAMINATIONS OF THE THREE SETS OF STEELYARD SCALES TAKEN FROM "HO PING KEE" SHOWED THAT THEY WERE INACCURATE BY +193.75 PER CENT, +181.25 PER CENT AND +110 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY.

/THE 40-YEAR-OLD

THE 40-YEAR-OLD SHOP PROPRIETOR PLEADED GUILTY TO THE CHARGES UNDER THE WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ORDINANCE, WHICH CAME INTO EFFECT ON JANUARY 1 THIS YEAR.

HEAD OF THE BUREAU, MR LI HUNG-YUE, SAID: "I HOPE THE CASE TODAY WOULD SERVE AS FAIR WARNING TO OTHERS SCHEMING TO SHORTCHANGE THEIR CUSTOMERS BY DOCTORING THEIR WEIGHT MEASURING INSTRUMENTS.

"IT IS OUR INTENTION TO IMPLEMENT THIS ORDINANCE WITH AN INITIAL SIX-MONTH PUBLIC EDUCATION APPROACH - EXCEPT FOR THE MOST FLAGRANT VIOLATORS - AND TO BE FOLLOWED LATER BY STRICT ENFORCEMENT ACTION. THIS EXPLAINS WHY WE HAVE SO FAR TAKEN ONLY ONE CASE TO COURT," MR LI SAID.

THE ORDINANCE CARRIES A MAXIMUM FINE OF \$20,000 PLUS SIX MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT.

REVIEWING THE INITIAL SIX-MONTH IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD OF THE ORDINANCE, MR LI SAID A TOTAL OF 47 COMPLAINTS WERE RECEIVED. OF THESE, 33 HAVE BEEN INVESTIGATED. OF THE INVESTIGATED CASES, 20 COMPLAINTS COULD NOT BE SUBSTANTIATED. 12 OTHERS WERE SUBSTANTIATED AND RESULTED IN THE ISSUE OF WARNINGS, WHILE ONE CASE WAS SUBSTANTIATED AND SUCCESSFULLY PROSECUTED.

HE ADDED THAT RETAILERS OF FOOD ITEMS ACCOUNTED FOR SOME 77 PER CENT OF THE SUBSTANTIATED COMPLAINTS AND THE ERRORS OF THE WEIGHING EQUIPMENT USED BY THESE TRADERS DEVIATED SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE TRADERS' FAVOUR FROM THE NORMALLY ACCEPTED TOLERANCE OF 0.6 PER CENT AT INSPECTION LEVEL.

NOTING THAT 40 PER CENT OF THE COMPLAINTS WERE SUBSTANTIATED, MR LI STRESSED THAT THE BUREAU WOULD FROM NOW ON TAKE STERN ACTION AGAINST OFFENDERS TO PROTECT THE INTEREST OF CONSUMERS.

"AT THE MOMENT, MOST OF OUR INVESTIGATIONS ARE INITIATED IN RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS. BUT WE ALSO MAKE SPOT CHECKS AT ALL TYPES OF BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS, INCLUDING PETROL FILLING STATIONS, RESTAURANTS AND FOOD RETAILERS," MR LI SAID.

ANY PERSON WISHING TO MAKE ANY COMPLAINT ABOUT MALPRACTICE IN RESPECT OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES MAY CONTACT EITHER THE TRADING STANDARDS INVESTIGATION BUREAU OF THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT (TEL. NO. 5-441711) OR THE CONSUMER COUNCIL.

JULY DEADLINE FOR RETURNING SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

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A SPOKESMAN OF THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) REMINDED LOCAL ESTABLISHMENTS THAT THE CLOSING DATE IS DRAWING NEAR FOR THE RETURN OF FIVE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES IN RESPECT OF 1988.

THESE ARE:

- (I) THE SURVEY OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION;
- (II) THE SURVEY OF WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS;
- (III) THE SURVEY OF BUILDING, CONSTRUCTION AND REAL ESTATE SECTORS;
- (IV) THE SURVEY OF TRANSPORT AND RELATED SERVICES; AND
- (V) THE SURVEY OF STORAGE, COMMUNICATIONS, FINANCING INSURANCE AND BUSINESS SERVICES.

THESE SURVEYS ARE CONDUCTED ANNUALLY BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT AS PART OF A CONTINUOUS PROGRAMME OF COLLECTING ECONOMIC STATISTICS ON THE STRUCTURE AND PERFORMANCE OF DIFFERENT SECTORS IN THE ECONOMY.

SUCH ECONOMIC DATA ARE NEEDED FOR ASSESSING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF VARIOUS ECONOMIC SECTORS TO THE GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT OF HONG KONG.

THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEYS WILL ALSO BE USEFUL TO BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN FORMULATING POLICIES AND MAKING DECISIONS.

QUESTIONNAIRES WERE SENT BY RECORDED DELIVERY IN APRIL AND MAY TO SOME 27,000 ESTABLISHMENTS WHICH HAD BEEN SAMPLED FOR THE SURVEYS. THE ESTABLISHMENTS CONCERNED ARE LEGALLY REQUIRED TO COMPLETE AND RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRES TO THE DEPARTMENT BY JULY 31.

THE COMMISSIONER FOR CENSUS AND STATISTICS APPEALS TO THE MANAGERMENTS OF THE SAMPLED ESTABLISHMENTS TO COMPLETE AND RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRES WITHOUT DELAY. ANY RESPONDENT WHO FAILS TO DO SO MAY BE COMMITTING AN OFFENCE.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE HAS BEEN SO DESIGNED THAT RESPONDENTS MAY COMPLETE IT THEMSELVES. IF NECESSARY, CENSUS AND SURVEY OFFICERS, WHO CARRY A GOVERNMENT IDENTITY CARD, CAN VISIT THE ESTABLISHMENTS CONCERNED TO ASSIST THEM IN COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRES.

THE COMMISSIONER POINTED OUT THAT AUDITED ACCOUNTS ARE NOT ESSENTIAL FOR PROVIDING INFORMATION RELATING TO INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.

/THE DEPARTMENT

THE DEPARTMENT ACCEPTS FIGURES BASED ON PRELIMINARY ACCOUNTS OR ESTIMATES WHICH ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF THE RESPONDENTS' KNOWLEDGE AT THE TIME OF SUBMISSION OF RETURNS. THE ESTABLISHMENTS CONCERNED THEREFORE NEED NOT WAIT FOR THEIR AUDITED ACCOUNTS BEFORE COMPLETING THEIR QUESTIONNAIRES.

HE ALSO STRESSED THAT INFORMATION RELATING TO INDIVIDUAL ESTABLISHMENTS WILL BE TREATED IN STRICT CONFIDENCE AND THAT ONLY AGGREGATE INFORMATION WHICH DOES NOT REVEAL DETAILS OF INDIVIDUAL ESTABLISHMENTS WILL BE RELEASED.

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HK ENERGY STATISTICS 1978-88 NOW ON SALE

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A STATISTICAL REPORT ENTITLED "HONG KONG ENERGY STATISTICS, 1978-1988", WHICH PRESENTS THE SITUATION OF ENERGY SUPPLIES IN HONG KONG, HAS RECENTLY BEEN PUBLISHED BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

THE REPORT CONTAINS COMPREHENSIVE STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON DIFFERENT FORMS OF ENERGY, INCLUDING OIL PRODUCTS, COAL AND CHARCOAL, ELECTRICITY AND GAS.

FOR VARIOUS OIL PRODUCTS, STATISTICS ON LIST PRICES, STORAGE CAPACITY, TANK STOCKS, IMPORTS, RE-EXPORTS, AND QUANTITY OF SALES BY TYPE OF USER ARE PRESENTED IN THE REPORT.

FOR COAL AND CHARCOAL, FIGURES ON IMPORTS AND RE-EXPORTS ARE GIVEN.

FOR ELECTRICITY AND GAS, THE REPORT SHOWS TARIFF CHARGES, GENERATING CAPACITY, PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION BY TYPE OF USER.

ANNUAL FIGURES FOR THE YEARS 1978 TO 1988 ARE PROVIDED WITH RESPECT TO MOST OF THESE STATISTICS. IN ADDITION, QUARTERLY FIGURES FOR 1987 AND 1988 ARE PRESENTED FOR SELECTED ITEMS.

THE REPORT IS NOW ON SALE AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE, GENERAL POST OFFICE BUILDING, CONNAUGHT PLACE, CENTRAL AND AT THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT PUBLICATIONS SALES COUNTER, WANCHAI TOWER I, 12, HARBOUR ROAD, WAN CHAI, AT \$17 A COPY.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1989

- 54 -

SOUTHERN DB TO DISCUSS MASTER SEWERAGE PLAN

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REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT WILL PRESENT THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE HONG KONG ISLAND SOUTH MASTER SEWERAGE PLAN FOR DISCUSSION AT A MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT BOARD TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AFTERNOON.

ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, BEACH POLLUTION IS WORSENING DUE TO INCREASING DEVELOPMENTS IN THE DISTRICT, AND POORLY OPERATED PRIVATE TREATMENT FACILITIES ARE A MAJOR SOURCE OF POLLUTION.

AS A LONG TERM SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM, THE REPORT HAS RECOMMENDED THAT MAJOR SEWERAGE WORKS BE CARRIED OUT IN THREE AREAS -- DEEP WATER BAY TO TAI TAM, SHEK O AND SHOUSON HILL -- AT A TOTAL COST OF \$281 MILLION.

TOGETHER WITH PROJECT CONSULTANTS, EPD REPRESENTATIVES WILL BRIEF MEMBERS ON THE REPORT AND LISTEN TO THEIR VIEWS.

MEMBERS WILL ALSO DISCUSS THE GREEN PAPER ON TRANSPORT POLICY IN HONG KONG. THEY ARE EXPECTED TO ASK QUESTIONS ON MATTERS AREAS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO THE DISTRICT, SUCH AS ROUTE 7, ROUTE 81 (STANLEY TO CHAI WAN), THE SECOND AP LEI CHAU BRIDGE, THE RAIL LINK BETWEEN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN, THE ACCESS ROAD TO WONG CHUK HANG ESTATE AND BUS SERVICES AND FARES FOR THE DISTRICT.

A PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE TRANSPORT BRANCH, MR PETER PANG, AN ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT, MR R. MEAKIN, AND SENIOR OFFICIALS FROM THE TRANSPORT AND THE HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENTS WILL BE PRESENT TO EXPLAIN THE GREEN PAPER.

OTHER DISCUSSION ITEMS INCLUDE URBAN COUNCIL'S FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT, AND A PROPOSAL FOR INTRODUCING LEGISLATION TO PROTECT THE USE OF DISTRICT BOARD LOGOS.

A WHITE PAPER ON POLLUTION IN HONG KONG; AND REPORTS OF THE BOARD'S VARIOUS COMMITTEES, DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, AND AREA COMMITTEES WILL ALSO BE TABLED AT THE MEETING.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO COVER THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT BOARD MEETING WHICH WILL BEGIN AT 2.30 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE DB CONFERENCE ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, MEI FUNG COURT, 7-11 NAM NING STREET, ABERDEEN CENTRE.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1989

- 55 -

ESTABLISHMENT OF SPORTS DEVELOPMENT BOARD ON DB COMMITTEE AGENDA
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THE CULTURE, RECREATION AND SPORTS COMMITTEE OF THE ISLANDS DISTRICT BOARD WILL BE INFORMED OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SPORTS DEVELOPMENT BOARD (SDB) AT ITS MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE MUNICIPAL SERVICES BRANCH WILL BRIEF MEMBERS ON THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SDB, WHICH WILL BE SET UP NEXT YEAR AS A STATUTORY BODY TO PROMOTE AND DEVELOP SPORTS.

THE COMMITTEE WILL ALSO DISCUSS THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF A TEMPORARY FOOTBALL PITCH IN MUI WO, LANTAU AS THE EXISTING ONE WILL HAVE TO BE CLOSED FOR ONE YEAR TO FACILITATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SPORTS COMPLEX.

OTHER ITEMS ON THE AGENDA INCLUDE APPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL COUNCIL SUBSIDY AND ALLOCATION OF DISTRICT BOARD FUNDS.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING OF THE ISLANDS DISTRICT BOARD'S CULTURE, RECREATION AND SPORTS COMMITTEE TO BE HELD TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE ISLANDS DISTRICT OFFICE, 20TH FLOOR, HARBOUR BUILDING, 38 PIER ROAD, CENTRAL.

THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 2 PM.

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DB COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT SERVICE
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THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT BOARD'S COMMUNITY WELFARE COMMITTEE WILL DISCUSS AT ITS MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY) WHETHER THE NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (NLCDP) SERVICE SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO MARKS III TO VI PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES AFFECTED BY REDEVELOPMENT IN THE DISTRICT.

A PAPER TO BE PRESENTED BY THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT OFFICE WILL OUTLINE THE BACKGROUND TO THE NLCDP SERVICE AND LIST OUT THE ESTATES COVERED BY THE CURRENT COMPREHENSIVE REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN THE DISTRICT, NAMELY THE PAK TIN AND THE UN CHAU STREET ESTATES.

MEMBERS WILL BE ASKED TO SELECT THE PRIORITY AREAS FOR EXTENSION OF THE SERVICE.

/THEY WILL

THEY WILL ALSO DISCUSS THE IMPACT OF THE PAK TIN ESTATE REDEVELOPMENT ON LOCAL SOCIAL FACILITIES.

PROGRESS REPORTS BY THE COMMITTEE'S VARIOUS WORKING GROUPS WILL BE TABLED AT THE MEETING.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING OF THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT BOARD'S COMMUNITY WELFARE COMMITTEE TO BE HELD TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE SHEK KIP MEI COMMUNITY HALL, BLOCK 42, SHEK KIP MEI ESTATE, NAM CHEONG STREET.

THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 2 PM.

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KWAI TSING DB COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS IMPACT OF ROUTE 5
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THE KWAI TSING DISTRICT BOARD'S TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE WILL DISCUSS THE TRAFFIC SITUATION IN KWAI CHUNG FOLLOWING THE OPENING OF ROUTE 5 AT ITS MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE MEETING WILL ALSO DISCUSS THE TRAFFIC CONGESTION CAUSED BY THE TSING YI SOUTH BRIDGE IMPROVEMENT WORKS.

MEMBERS WILL MOVE A MOTION REQUESTING THE KOWLOON MOTOR BUS COMPANY TO SUBMIT QUARTERLY INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION CONDITION OF BUS ROUTES IN THE DISTRICT.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING OF THE KWAI TSING DISTRICT BOARD'S TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE, TO BEGIN AT 2.30 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM, 10TH FLOOR, KWAI HING GOVERNMENT OFFICES BUILDING, HING FONG ROAD, KWAI CHUNG.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1989

- 57 -

SEMINAR ON RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD

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A SEMINAR TO COMMEMORATE THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR THE CHILD AND TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF THE CONCEPT OF RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD WILL BE HELD AT A HOTEL IN CAUSEWAY BAY ON SATURDAY (JULY 22).

THE SEMINAR IS AMONG A NUMBER OF TERRITORY-WIDE ACTIVITIES ON THE TOPIC OF RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD BEING ORGANISED BY THE FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE, WHICH COMPRISES REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES.

THE SEMINAR AIMS TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY'S UNDERSTANDING OF CHILDREN'S NEEDS AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SHARING THE EXPERIENCE OF PARENTING, AND TO PUBLICISE THE IMPORTANCE OF "RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD".

ABOUT 150 PROFESSIONALS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS FROM VARIOUS DISTRICTS WILL TAKE PART IN THE SEMINAR.

THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MR STEPHEN LAW, WILL DELIVER AN OPENING ADDRESS.

THE PANEL OF SPEAKERS, COMPRISING EDUCATIONALIST MR YEUNG PO-KWAN, ACADEMIC DR CATHERINE TANG AND VETERAN SOCIAL WORKER MR CHEUNG SIU-KAU, WILL TALK ON THE EXPERIENCE OF PARENTING, THE NEW CHALLENGE OF PARENTING IN A CHANGING SOCIETY, AND THE PROSPECTS OF PROMOTING FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION.

THERE WILL ALSO BE A SLIDE-PRESENTATION AND GROUP DISCUSSIONS.

LATER THIS YEAR, A SERIES OF PUBLICITY ACTIVITIES WILL BE HELD TO PROMOTE THE CONCEPT OF RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD.

A SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY PROMOTING FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION SINCE 1979 TO HELP INCREASE RESIDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF AND CARE FOR THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS SO AS TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF FAMILY LIFE.

/FAMILY LIFE

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION ALSO HELPS TO PREVENT THE BREAK-UP OF FAMILIES WHICH IN TURN MAY LEAD TO SUCH SOCIAL PROBLEMS AS JUVENILE DELINQUENCY, GIRLS RUNNING AWAY FROM HOME AND CHILD ABUSE. IT ALSO HELPS TO FOSTER HARMONIOUS INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP AND AROUSE SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS SO THAT OUR COMMUNITY WILL BECOME A MORE CARING ONE.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

THE SEMINAR ON RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE MARINA ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, EXCELSIOR HOTEL, CAUSEWAY BAY, FROM 9.15 AM TO 2.30 PM ON SATURDAY (JULY 22).

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO COVER THE SEMINAR. INFORMATION OFFICERS OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT WILL BE ON HAND TO ASSIST.

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TWO GOVT LOTS TO LET BY TENDER
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TENDERS ARE BEING INVITED BY THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT FOR LETTING TWO LOTS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES:

THE FIRST LOT, IN AREA 2B IN SHA TIN, MEASURES ABOUT 2,040 SQUARE METRES AND IS FOR A FEE-PAYING PUBLIC CARPARK (EXCLUDING CONTAINERS).

THE LEASE IS FOR ONE YEAR, RENEWABLE ON A QUARTERLY BASIS.

THE SECOND LOT, IN AREA 26D IN KWAI CHUNG, MEASURES ABOUT 5,315 SQUARE METRES AND IS FOR A FEE-PAYING PUBLIC CARPARK FOR CONTAINER TRACTORS AND TRAILERS ONLY.

THE LEASE IS FOR THREE YEARS (EXCEPT SITE A), RENEWABLE QUARTERLY AFTERWARDS.

TENDERS FOR BOTH LOTS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY NOON ON AUGUST 4.

FORM OF TENDER, TENDER NOTICE AND CONDITIONS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM AND TENDER PLAN INSPECTED AT THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, KWAI TSING; THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT, 14TH FLOOR, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD; AND THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICES KOWLOON, 10TH FLOOR, YAU MA TEI CARPARK BUILDING, 250 SHANGHAI STREET, KOWLOON.

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ILLEGAL STRUCTURE IN NORTH POINT TO BE CLOSED

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THE BUILDING AUTHORITY IS SEEKING TO CLOSE AN ILLEGAL STRUCTURE AT TANNER COURT, 60 TANNER ROAD, NORTH POINT, HONG KONG SO THAT IT CAN BE DEMOLISHED WITHOUT DANGER TO THE OCCUPIERS AND TO THE PUBLIC.

THE STRUCTURE IS ON THE FLAT ROOF ADJACENT TO FLAT B ON THE 25TH FLOOR OF THE BUILDING.

THE CLOSURE IS PART OF AN EXERCISE TO ENFORCE AN ORDER ISSUED UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE IN MAY LAST YEAR REQUIRING THE DEMOLITION OF THE ILLEGAL STRUCTURE.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR CLOSURE ORDER FROM THE HONG KONG DISTRICT COURT ON SEPTEMBER 22 THIS YEAR WAS POSTED ON A CONSPICUOUS PART OF THE STRUCTURE TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IT IS INTENDED THAT DEMOLITION WORK WILL BE CARRIED OUT ONCE THE CLOSURE ORDER IS OBTAINED.

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN CENTRAL, WESTERN

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES THAT FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (JULY 21), THE FOLLOWING ROAD SECTIONS IN SHEUNG WAN WILL BE DESIGNATED URBAN CLEARWAYS ROUND-THE-CLOCK TO FACILITATE ROAD WORKS:

- * THE NORTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF CONNAUGHT ROAD WEST FROM A POINT ABOUT 20 METRES WEST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH WILMER STREET TO A POINT ABOUT 20 METRES EAST OF THE SAME JUNCTION;
- * THE SOUTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF CONNAUGHT ROAD WEST FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH WILMER STREET TO A POINT ABOUT 15 METRES EAST OF THE SAME JUNCTION; AND
- * THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF WILMER STREET FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH CONNAUGHT ROAD WEST TO A POINT ABOUT 25 METRES SOUTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION.

AT THE SAME TIME, TWO ROAD SECTIONS IN SAI YING PUN WILL BE MADE 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY URBAN CLEARWAYS FOR ABOUT TWO MONTHS FOR DRAINAGE WORKS. THEY ARE:

- * THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF CHIU KWONG STREET BETWEEN CONNAUGHT ROAD WEST AND DES VOEUX ROAD WEST; AND

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* THE NORTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF DES VOEUX ROAD WEST FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH CHIU KWONG STREET TO A POINT FIVE METRES EAST OF THE SAME JUNCTION.

IN THE MID-LEVELS, THE EXISTING 24-HOUR DAILY URBAN CLEARWAY ON THE NORTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF CONDUIT ROAD FROM A POINT ABOUT EIGHT METRES WEST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH CASTLE ROAD TO A POINT ABOUT 74 METRES EAST OF THE SAME JUNCTION, EXCLUDING THE LAY-BY OUTSIDE HOUSE NUMBER 54, WILL REMAIN IN FORCE FOR ANOTHER SIX WEEKS TO FACILITATE DRAINAGE WORKS.

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

ALSO FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY, NO VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES AND TRAMS WILL BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE WESTBOUND OFF-SIDE LANE OF DES VOEUX ROAD CENTRAL BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH HILLIER STREET AND A POINT ABOUT 70 METRES EAST OF THE SAME JUNCTION.

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BUS LANE DESIGNATED ON MUT WAH STREET

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES THAT FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (JULY 21), A SECTION OF MUT WAH STREET IN KWUN TONG WILL BE DESIGNATED A BUS LANE.

NO VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE BUS LANE WHICH IS LOCATED ON MUT WAH STREET BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH HIP WO STREET AND A POINT ABOUT 23 METRES TO THE WEST.

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ENTRY BAN AT FANLING KCR STATION FORECOURT

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES THAT FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (JULY 21), NO VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE SOUTH DEPARTURE BAY IN THE NORTHERN SECTION OF THE FANLING KCR STATION FORECOURT.

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