



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1991

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/JUNE EMPLOYMENT

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1991

GOVT CONFIDENT OVER LAND SUPPLY

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THE ADMINISTRATION IS CONFIDENT THAT ENOUGH LAND WITH APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT DENSITY WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO PRODUCE AROUND 70,000 RESIDENTIAL FLATS PER YEAR FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS TO SATISFY PUBLIC DEMAND.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR BOWEN LEUNG, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

MR LEUNG SAID THESE SHOULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT IN STABILISING THE PRICES OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES.

WHEN ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF LAND SUPPLY AND RESIDENTIAL UNITS TO BE PRODUCED, HE SAID THE AREA OF LAND TO BE MADE AVAILABLE WAS NOT THE ONLY CONSIDERATION, AND THAT DUE ACCOUNT MUST BE GIVEN TO THE DEVELOPMENT DENSITY PERMITTED ON THE SITES.

MR LEUNG WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON LAM KUI-CHUN. HE SAID HOWEVER IT WAS NOT THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY TO CONTROL THE PRICE OF PRIVATELY DEVELOPED PROPERTIES.

"HONG KONG'S PROSPERITY AND ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS ARE VERY MUCH BASED ON ITS BEING A FREE MARKET ECONOMY. THE PRICES OF OUR GOODS AND COMMODITIES, INCLUDING THAT OF PROPERTY, ARE PRINCIPALLY SET BY MARKET FORCES.

HOWEVER, MR LEUNG SAID, THE ADMINISTRATION HAD FOR SOME TIME BEEN DETERMINED TO DETER THE UNSCRUPULOUS TRADING IN, AND PREVENT PUBLIC DISORDER AT, THE SALE OF UNCOMPLETED RESIDENTIAL FLATS, AS WELL AS PROTECTING THE INTEREST OF GENUINE HOME BUYERS.

"WE AIM TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES THROUGH BETTER REGULATING THE SALE PROCEDURES, MORE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC, AND ENSURING AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF LAND TO MEET DEMAND," HE SAID.

IN THIS CONNECTION, MR LEUNG SAID, THE ADMINISTRATION INTRODUCED TWO BATCHES OF MEASURES IN DECEMBER LAST YEAR AND AUGUST THIS YEAR AFTER A SERIES OF CONSULTATION WITH VARIOUS PARTIES CONCERNED, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF OMELCO.

"THEY INCLUDE REQUIREMENTS ON THE DEVELOPERS TO MAKE AVAILABLE EARLY INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER AND PRICES OF FLATS FOR SALE, REGISTER POTENTIAL FLAT PURCHASERS, INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF DEPOSITS AND FORFEITURES, BALLOT THE ORDER OF SELECTING FLATS FOR PURCHASE, ETC.

"FURTHER MEASURES, SUCH AS DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION ON CONFIRMOR SALE AND RESTRICTION ON RE-SALE OF FLATS ALLOCATED PRIVATELY BY THE DEVELOPERS, ARE BEING CONSIDERED," HE SAID.

WITH REGARD TO THE SUPPLY OF LAND, ON AVERAGE 100 HECTARES WERE MADE AVAILABLE FOR BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HOUSING EACH YEAR OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

/"THIS YEAR

"THIS YEAR, ABOUT 90 HECTARES OF LAND ARE BEING SUPPLIED FOR THE PURPOSE," HE SAID.

RESPONDING TO RECENT PUBLIC CONCERN, THE LAND COMMISSION ALSO AGREED LAST WEEK THAT AN ADDITIONAL 5.9 HECTARES SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THIS YEAR'S LAND DISPOSAL PROGRAMME FOR PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL USE, MR LEUNG SAID.

REPLYING TO DR LAM'S OTHER QUESTIONS ON THE AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME OF THE MIDDLE AND LOWER INCOME GROUPS AND THE AVERAGE MONTHLY MORTGAGE REPAYMENT FOR AN AVERAGE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME FLAT, MR LEUNG SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT HAVE A GENERALLY AGREED DEFINITION ON THE LOWER AND MIDDLE INCOME GROUPS IN HONG KONG.

"FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPLY I HAVE ASSUMED THAT THE TOP 10 PER CENT OF HOUSEHOLDS IN TERMS OF INCOME DISTRIBUTION BELONGS TO THE HIGHER INCOME GROUP; THE NEXT 30 PER CENT THE MIDDLE INCOME GROUP; AND THE REMAINING 60 PER CENT THE LOWER INCOME GROUP.

"THESE GROUPINGS ARE BROADLY COMPATIBLE WITH THOSE USED IN COMPILING THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEXES.

"ON THE BASIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE GENERAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY CONDUCTED EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE MEDIAN MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF THE MIDDLE INCOME GROUP AND LOWER INCOME GROUP WAS \$17,800 AND \$7,200 RESPECTIVELY.

"THE AVERAGE PRICE OF A HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME FLAT UNDER PHASES 13B, WHERE SALES ARE IN PROGRESS, IS \$680,000. ASSUMING A DOWNPAYMENT AT 10 PER CENT OF THE FLAT PRICE, AND REPAYMENT SPREAD OVER 20 YEARS AT THE CURRENT MORTGAGE RATE OF 10 PER CENT PER ANNUM, THE MONTHLY MORTGAGE REPAYMENT IS ABOUT \$5,900.

"DIFFERENT DOWNPAYMENT AND REPAYMENT PERIODS WILL OF COURSE PRODUCE A DIFFERENT RESULT," MR LEUNG SAID.

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EFFECTS OF DREDGING ON ENVIRONMENT FULLY CONSIDERED

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A FILL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (FMC), SET UP IN 1989 WITH ALL INTERESTED POLICY BRANCHES AND DEPARTMENTS REPRESENTED, INVESTIGATES AND MANAGES FILL SOURCES SO AS TO ALLOCATE THEM AS NEEDED TO INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS.

THE FMC ALSO RECEIVED SUBMISSIONS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND AUTHORITIES SUCH AS THE INDUSTRIAL ESTATES CORPORATION, INCORPORATING THESE INTO A TOTAL FILL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY.

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

/MR BLAKE

MR BLAKE SAID CONSULTANTS APPOINTED BY FMC WERE PART WAY THROUGH A MAJOR DRILLING INVESTIGATION TO FIND THE BEST PLACES TO DREDGE SAND.

"DREDGED SAND HAS PROVED NOT ONLY TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY CHEAPER THAN THE TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUE OF CUTTING INTO HILLSIDES TO PROVIDE FILL, BUT ALSO HAS SIGNIFICANTLY LESS IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT, PARTICULARLY WITH THE NEW TECHNIQUES OF DREDGING THAT ARE BEING INSISTED ON BY THE GOVERNMENT," HE SAID.

MR BLAKE SAID SEVERAL PROMISING AREAS HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED, OF WHICH MIRS BAY OFFERED THE BEST POTENTIAL.

OTHER AREAS WHICH HAD BEEN GAZETTED DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS AS POSSIBLE DREDGING AREAS, INCLUDE THE SEABED BETWEEN LANTAU AND THE MAINLAND, SOUTH OF TSING YI, AROUND THE SOKO ISLANDS AND THE PO TOI ISLANDS, THE TATHONG CHANNEL AREA EAST OF HONG KONG ISLAND, AND AN AREA TOWARDS THE NINE PINS, HE SAID.

"THE AVAILABILITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) AT THE FEASIBILITY PLANNING STAGE ENABLES THE FMC TO GIVE DETAILED CONSIDERATION TO THE EFFECTS OF POSSIBLE DREDGING ACTIVITIES ON RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND ON THE ENVIRONMENT BEFORE ALLOCATING THE SITE IN QUESTION," MR BLAKE SAID.

"IN THE CASE OF MIRS BAY, A FULL EIA IS UNDERWAY WHICH WILL TAKE DUE ACCOUNT OF THE EXISTING CORAL REEFS AND SEA FLOOR FAUNA," HE ADDED.

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TASK FORCE FORMED TO TACKLE INFLATION

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AN INTERNAL TASK FORCE UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY HAS BEEN FORMED TO EXAMINE THE PROBLEM OF INFLATION IN DEPTH, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID NENDICK, SAID TODAY (THURSDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON FUNG CHI-WOOD IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR NENDICK SAID IT WOULD ALSO CONSIDER WHAT WERE THE MOST APPROPRIATE RESPONSES WITHIN THE CONSTRAINTS OF HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL SITUATION.

NOTING THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO DO WHAT IT COULD TO BRING DOWN INFLATION, HE SAID THE ISSUE WAS A COMPLEX ONE INVOLVING A NUMBER OF FACTORS SUCH AS AN OVERHEATED RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY MARKET AND CONSTRAINTS IN THE SUPPLY OF LABOUR.

TO DEAL WITH HIGH PROPERTY PRICES AND SPECULATIVE ACTIVITY IN THE PROPERTY MARKET, MR NENDICK SAID THE SINO-BRITISH LAND COMMISSION AGREED LAST WEEK TO INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF RESIDENTIAL LAND BY 5.9 HECTARES IN THIS FINANCIAL YEAR.

"THIS SHOULD ASSIST THE SITUATION," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT IN AUGUST A SERIES OF MEASURES HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED TO DETER SPECULATIVE ACTIVITY AND UNRULY BEHAVIOUR IN THE PURCHASING OF UNCOMPLETED FLATS.

"THE ADMINISTRATION IS FULLY AWARE OF THE NEED TO DISCOURAGE PROPERTY SPECULATION WHILST PROTECTING THE INTERESTS OF GENUINE HOME BUYERS," HE SAID.

ON MANPOWER SHORTAGES, MR NENDICK SAID SHORTAGES OF MANPOWER IN SOME CRUCIAL SECTORS HAD CREATED BOTTLENECKS IN THE ECONOMY AND THUS IMPEDED ECONOMIC GROWTH, AND HAD ADDED ALSO TO INFLATIONARY PRESSURES.

THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSIDERING AN EXPANSION OF THE CURRENT SCHEME TO IMPORT WORKERS FOR THOSE SECTORS WHERE LABOUR CONSTRAINTS WERE MOST ACUTE, THE SECRETARY SAID.

"THERE IS, THOUGH, NO QUESTION OF MASSIVE IMPORTATION. THE INTEREST OF LOCAL WORKERS WILL CONTINUE TO BE PROTECTED.

"FOR THE NEW AIRPORT AND RELATED PROJECTS, A SPECIAL LABOUR IMPORTATION SCHEME IS ALSO IN HAND," HE SAID.

MR NENDICK POINTED OUT THAT THERE COULD BE NO EASY OR QUICK CURE TO THIS COMPLEX PROBLEM.

"ALTHOUGH THE PACKAGE OF MEASURES TO CURB INFLATIONARY EXPECTATIONS ANNOUNCED IN MAY HAS HAD SOME IMPACT, AND THE RATE FELL FROM A HIGH OF 13.9 PER CENT IN APRIL TO 12.7 PER CENT IN AUGUST, WE ARE STILL EXPERIENCING UNCOMFORTABLY HIGH INFLATION," HE NOTED.

REGARDING THE LEVEL OF PERSONAL ALLOWANCES AND THE PROFITS TAX RATE, THE SECRETARY SAID THEY WERE AMONG THE TAXATION MATTERS REVIEWED EACH YEAR IN THE PREPARATION OF THE ANNUAL BUDGET.

STRESSING THAT BOTH ECONOMIC AND FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS HAD TO BE TAKEN FULLY INTO ACCOUNT, HE SAID ANY CHANGE TO EXISTING LEVELS OF CONCESSIONS OR ANY PARTICULAR TAX RATE COULD NOT THEREFORE BE CONSIDERED IN ISOLATION.

"WE HAVE TO ASSESS CAREFULLY THE EFFECT SUCH A CHANGE WOULD HAVE ON TAXATION REVENUE, AS THIS WILL IN TURN AFFECT THE EXTENT TO WHICH WE CAN FUND IMPORTANT POLICY PROGRAMMES," HE SAID.

AS AN ASIDE TAKING IN ISOLATION, MR NENDICK SAID, INCREASING THE LEVEL OF PERSONAL ALLOWANCE FOR SALARIES TAX MIGHT, PARADOXICALLY, ITSELF BE INFLATIONARY.

MORE DISPOSABLE INCOME IN THE HANDS OF TAX-PAYERS COULD INCREASE CONSUMPTION LEVELS, HE ADDED.

GOVT REGULARLY REVIEWS VISA REQUIREMENTS

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THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY) THAT THE GOVERNMENT REVIEWS ITS VISA REQUIREMENTS REGULARLY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MR MARTIN BARROW, MR ASPREY SAID IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE GOVERNMENT HAD RELAXED RESTRICTIONS ON VISITORS FROM THE FORMER 'SOVIET BLOC'.

"THE EFFECT HAS BEEN BOTH TO REDUCE THE VISA PROCESSING TIME AND TO PERMIT TOURIST VISITS BY THE NATIONALS OF MOST SUCH COUNTRIES.

"WE ARE ALSO AT PRESENT NEGOTIATING VISA ABOLITION AGREEMENTS WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HUNGARY, AND POLAND," HE SAID.

AS REGARDS THE FORMER SOVIET UNION, MR ASPREY SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOW REVIEWING ITS VISA REQUIREMENTS WITH A VIEW TO FURTHER RELAXATION, AND WITH THE SPECIFIC AIM OF STREAMLINING PROCEDURES AND REDUCING THE PROCESSING TIME FOR THE ISSUE OF VISAS.

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GOVT'S RESERVATIONS ON CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND

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THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO HAVE MAJOR RESERVATIONS ABOUT A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND.

AT THE SAME TIME, IT RECOGNISED, AND HAD DONE SO FOR SOME TIME, THAT THERE WAS A NEED TO ENSURE THAT PEOPLE IN RETIREMENT OR IN THEIR OLD AGE SHOULD HAVE SUFFICIENT FINANCIAL MEANS TO MAINTAIN A REASONABLE STANDARD OF LIVING FOR THEMSELVES.

THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS TODAY (THURSDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LAU CHIN-SHEK.

MR CHAN SAID THE QUESTION OF A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND WAS LAST DEBATED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON JULY 10, WHEN THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION WAS EXPLAINED IN DETAIL.

THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION WAS THAT IT DID NOT FAVOUR A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND OR SIMILAR COMPULSORY RETIREMENT SCHEMES.

"OUR MAJOR RESERVATION WAS THAT, WHILE SUCH SCHEMES WOULD BENEFIT THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN IN STEADY EMPLOYMENT WITH A REASONABLE INCOME, THEY WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO BE OF MUCH ASSISTANCE TO THOSE WHO HAVE THE GREATEST NEED FOR RETIREMENT PROTECTION.

"WE WERE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE IMPACT OF A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND OR SIMILAR COMPULSORY SCHEMES ON THE FINANCIAL MARKET AND ON THE ECONOMY AS A WHOLE," HE SAID.

THE SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD SINCE 1987 INTRODUCED A SERIES OF MEASURES TO ENHANCE SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY, TO IMPROVE THE LONG SERVICE PAYMENT SCHEME, TO ENCOURAGE THE VOLUNTARY ESTABLISHMENT OF PROVIDENT FUNDS OR RETIREMENT SCHEMES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND TO INSTITUTE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PRUDENTIAL REGULATION OF OCCUPATIONAL RETIREMENT SCHEMES.

"THESE EFFORTS WILL CONTINUE," HE STRESSED.

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MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES TO IMPROVE

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THE REFORMS TO BE INTRODUCED IN HOSPITALS AND PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SERVICES SHOULD FURTHER IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES IN THE TERRITORY, INCLUDING TAI PO AND NORTH DISTRICT, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TIK CHI-YUEN, MRS WONG SAID THREE NEW HOSPITALS WERE BEING PLANNED TO COPE WITH THE ANTICIPATING DEMANDS FROM POPULATION GROWTH IN TAI PO AND NORTH DISTRICT.

THE PRESENT POPULATION IN THE TWO DISTRICTS TOGETHER WAS 0.38 MILLION. THIS WAS EXPECTED TO INCREASE TO 0.52 MILLION BY 1998.

THE THREE NEW HOSPITALS BEING PLANNED WERE THE TAI PO NETHERSOLE HOSPITAL, THE TAI PO INFIRMARY AND CONVALESCENT HOSPITAL AND THE NORTH DISTRICT HOSPITAL.

IN ADDITION, MRS WONG SAID THE FACILITIES IN TAI PO JOCKEY CLUB CLINIC WOULD BE IMPROVED AND THE FANLING MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH CENTRE WOULD BE REPROVISIONED.

"SITES HAVE ALSO BEEN RESERVED FOR TWO NEW CLINICS, ONE IN TAI PO AND THE OTHER IN NORTH DISTRICT," SHE SAID.

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SIX SCHEME OF CONTROL AGREEMENTS IN FORCE

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AT PRESENT THERE ARE SIX SCHEME OF CONTROL AGREEMENTS (SCA'S) IN FORCE, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ANSON CHAN, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LEE WING-TAT, MRS CHAN SAID THE COMPANIES CONCERNED AND THE RELEVANT EXPIRY DATES OF THE AGREEMENTS WERE :

* CHINA MOTOR BUS CO. LTD, AUGUST 31, 1993;

/* CHINA LIGHT

- * CHINA LIGHT AND POWER CO. LTD AND EXXON ENERGY LTD, TOGETHER WITH THEIR THREE WHOLLY OWNED GENERATING COMPANIES, SEPTEMBER 30, 1993;
- * THE HONGKONG ELECTRIC CO. LTD, DECEMBER 31, 1993;
- * HONG KONG AIR TERMINAL SERVICES LTD, DECEMBER 31, 1996;
- * HONG KONG AIR CARGO TERMINALS LTD, JUNE 27, 1997; AND
- * KOWLOON MOTOR BUS COMPANY (1933) LTD, AUGUST 31, 1997.

SHE SAID WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THOSE WITH THE POWER COMPANIES, THE ABOVE SCA'S FORMED PART OF THE COMPANY'S FRANCHISE WHICH EXPIRED AT THE SAME TIME AS THE AGREEMENT WHEREAS THE POWER COMPANIES DID NOT HOLD ANY FRANCHISE.

MRS CHAN ADDED THAT THE SCA WITH HONG KONG TELEPHONE CO. LTD LAPSED ON MARCH 31 THIS YEAR AND ALTERNATIVE REGULATORY ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE FORMULATED IN THE COURSE OF THE CURRENT REVIEW OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY.

THE SECRETARY SAID THE BASIC PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE OPERATION OF SCA'S WERE TWO-FOLD.

FIRST, THEY WERE INTENDED TO ASSIST THE GOVERNMENT IN ENSURING THAT CONSUMERS OF UTILITY SERVICES PROVIDED BY PRIVATE SECTOR COMPANIES RECEIVED AN EFFICIENT AND RELIABLE SERVICE AT REASONABLE COST.

SECONDLY, THEY WERE INTENDED TO ENSURE THAT THE INVESTORS IN THE COMPANY RECEIVED A REASONABLE RETURN AND WERE THUS ENCOURAGED TO CONTINUE TO MAKE THE INVESTMENTS NECESSARY TO MEET GROWING DEMAND AND IMPROVEMENT IN SERVICE STANDARDS.

"THE ADMINISTRATION HAVE REVIEWED THE BASIC PRINCIPLES AND CONSIDER THAT, IN THE MAIN, THE CURRENT SCA'S HAVE FULFILLED THESE OBJECTIVES," MRS CHAN SAID.

"WE KEEP UNDER CLOSE SCRUTINY THE PERFORMANCE AND EFFICACY OF INDIVIDUAL AGREEMENTS.

"MOST SCA'S CONTAIN PROVISIONS FOR REGULAR INTERIM REVIEWS OF THEIR OPERATION, WHEN MUTUALLY AGREED MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGREEMENT MAY BE MADE."

ON THE CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT IN NEGOTIATING SCA'S, THE SECRETARY SAID THEY DEPENDED IN PART ON THE NATURE OF THE COMPANY'S SERVICES AND OBLIGATIONS.

"WHERE A UTILITY COMPANY HAS BEEN GRANTED EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS BY GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE A SERVICE IT WOULD FIRST BE NECESSARY TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT TO GRANT OR EXTEND THE FRANCHISE BEFORE DETERMINING THE NEED FOR A SCHEME OF CONTROL AGREEMENT," MRS CHAN SAID.

/SHE ALSO

SHE ALSO POINTED OUT TO MEMBERS THAT IN CONSIDERING THE NEED FOR A FRANCHISE THE FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED WOULD INCLUDE :

- * THE DESIRABILITY OF ENCOURAGING GREATER COMPETITION IN ORDER TO MEET CONSUMERS' ASPIRATIONS;
- * THE OPERATING PERFORMANCE DURING THE CURRENT FRANCHISE;
- * THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT FACING THE FRANCHISEES, SUCH AS THE POTENTIAL FOR GROWTH AND THE PROSPECTS FOR COMPETITION; AND
- * THE NEED TO ATTRACT MORE INVESTMENT TO MEET GROWTH IN DEMAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES.

MEANWHILE, MRS CHAN SAID THE SPECIFIC CRITERIA ADOPTED IN NEGOTIATION OF AN SCA MIGHT INCLUDE :

- * WHETHER IT WAS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST FOR THE SERVICE IN QUESTION TO BE MONITORED THROUGH SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT (GENERALLY SPEAKING THIS WOULD BE APPROPRIATE ONLY IF THE COMPANY WAS ENJOYING EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS OR A DE FACTO MONOPOLY IN THE PROVISION OF A PARTICULAR SERVICE); WHERE A COMPETITIVE MARKET EXISTED THE GOVERNMENT GENERALLY PREFERRED TO LET MARKET FORCES DICTATE PRICING AND PROFIT LEVELS;
- * WHAT SPECIFIC FEATURES SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE AGREEMENT TO ENSURE THAT IT WAS TAILORED TO SUIT THE PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE COMPANY AND THE SERVICE THAT IT WAS PROVIDING;
- * WHAT SAFEGUARDS IN TERMS OF FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL MONITORING PROCEDURES SHOULD BE INCORPORATED TO ENSURE THAT THE INTERESTS OF CONSUMERS WERE PROTECTED; AND
- * WHAT RETURN TO SHAREHOLDERS WOULD BE REASONABLE AND NECESSARY TO ENCOURAGE CONTINUING INVESTMENT.

"IN THE LIGHT OF THESE CRITERIA THE GOVERNMENT WILL ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE COMPANY CONCERNED WITH A VIEW TO REACHING AGREEMENT IN DETAIL ON THE TERMS OF THE SCA," THE SECRETARY SAID.

"SUCH NEGOTIATIONS ARE NORMALLY CONDUCTED IN CONFIDENCE AS MATTERS OF COMMERCIAL SENSITIVITY MUST BE DISCUSSED," SHE SAID.

ALL AGREEMENTS, MRS CHAN SAID, WERE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL FOLLOWING WHICH THEY WERE PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH AND IN CHINESE.

SHE ALSO SAID THERE WAS NO GENERAL RULE ON THE QUESTION OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION DURING THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION OF SCA'S.

"IN PRACTICE EACH CASE IS AND WILL BE CONSIDERED ON ITS MERITS," SHE SAID.

/AS REGARDS

AS REGARDS FRANCHISES, MRS CHAN SAID THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE WAS CONSULTED ON ALL FRANCHISES RELATED TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND SPECIFIC CONSIDERATION WAS BEING GIVEN TO THE NEED FOR CONSULTING THE PUBLIC MORE WIDELY ON THE BROAD PRINCIPLES GOVERNING RENEWAL OF THE BUS COMPANIES' FRANCHISES.

SHE ADDED THAT ON A MORE GENERAL POINT LEGCO MEMBERS WERE ALWAYS ABLE TO DEBATE THE POLICY ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE COUNCIL.

THE SECRETARY ALSO SAID THAT ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN AGREED IN THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP TO KEEP THE CHINESE SIDE INFORMED OF MAJOR FRANCHISES EXTENDING BEYOND 1997 AND TO GIVE THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS VIEWS ON THEM.

THESE ENCOMPASSED THE VARIOUS FRANCHISES AND SCA'S APPLICABLE TO THE PUBLIC UTILITIES.

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NEW BULLET-PROOF VESTS IN USE

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ABOUT 400 NEW BULLET-RESISTANT VESTS, OF A DESIGN WHICH OFFERS ADEQUATE PROTECTION AGAINST THE 7.62 MM BULLET, HAVE BEEN ACQUIRED AND ARE NOW IN USE BY THE POLICE, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PEGGY LAM, MR ASPREY SAID THESE NEW VESTS ARE ALSO MORE COMFORTABLE TO WEAR.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE OLD-STYLE VESTS WERE ABLE TO STOP AMMUNITION FROM ALL TYPES OF HANDGUNS USED BY CRIMINALS IN HONG KONG AT THE TIME THEY WERE PURCHASED.

"THE VESTS HAVE, HOWEVER, PROVEN LESS EFFECTIVE AGAINST THE STEEL JACKETED 7.62 MM BULLET NOW USED BY SOME VIOLENT CRIMINALS IN HONG KONG," HE SAID.

IN ORDER TO ENHANCE SELF-DEFENCE AND FIGHT-CRIME CAPACITY OF THE POLICE IN CASE OF IMMINENT DANGER, THE SECRETARY SAID ABOUT 1,200 OFFICERS HAD BEEN ISSUED WITH AMMUNITION ADDITIONAL TO THE SIX ROUNDS LOADED IN THEIR REVOLVERS. MOST HAD ALSO BEEN ISSUED WITH A BULLET LOADING DEVICE TO ASSIST THEM IN SPEED RELOADING.

"THIS IS A TRIAL SCHEME, DURING WHICH DIFFERENT TYPES OF SPEED LOADING EQUIPMENT WILL BE TRIED AND VALUATED, AS WILL BE THE NEED TO ISSUE ADDITIONAL AMMUNITION TO THE REMAINDER OF THE POLICE FORCE," HE ADDED.

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1991

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STEPPED-UP EFFORTS TO SAFEGUARD INTERESTS OF IMPORTED WORKERS

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS STEPPED UP ITS EFFORTS TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS OF THE LABOUR IMPORTATION SCHEMES AND SAFEGUARD THE INTERESTS OF IMPORTED WORKERS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON JOHN CHAN, AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PANG CHUN-HOI, MR CHAN SAID THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT HAD RECENTLY SET UP AN ADDITIONAL SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT TEAM TO INCREASE THE FREQUENCY OF INSPECTIONS.

LABOUR INSPECTORS OF THE SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT TEAMS VISITED IMPORTED WORKERS NOT ONLY AT THEIR PLACES OF WORK BUT ALSO AT THEIR PLACES OF RESIDENCE TO VERIFY WAGE RECORDS, CHECK ACCOMMODATION STANDARDS AND ENSURE THAT EMPLOYERS MET ALL THE REQUIREMENTS, HE SAID.

NOTING THAT PARTICULAR EMPHASIS HAD BEEN PLACED ON MEASURES TO PREVENT THE UNDERPAYMENT OR UNLAWFUL DEDUCTION OF WAGES, HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSIDERING STRENGTHENING THE SANCTIONS AGAINST SUCH MALPRACTICES.

TO ENSURE THAT ALL IMPORTED WORKERS WERE FULLY AWARE OF THEIR CONTRACTUAL RIGHTS, COPIES OF ACTUAL EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS WERE BEING DISTRIBUTED TO INDIVIDUAL WORKERS, TOGETHER WITH A LEAFLET SETTING OUT THEIR RIGHTS.

BESIDES, THERE WERE TWO 24-HOUR TELEPHONE HOT-LINES THROUGH WHICH THEY COULD LODGE COMPLAINTS.

MR CHAN REITERATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSIDERING AN EXPANSION OF THE CONTROLLED SCHEME TO INPUT OVERSEAS WORKERS IN THOSE SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY WHERE THE LABOUR SHORTAGE WAS MOST ACUTE, AS STATED BY THE GOVERNOR LAST WEEK IN HIS POLICY ADDRESS.

"NO CONCLUSIONS HAVE YET BEEN REACHED ON HOW THIS MIGHT BE DONE," HE SAID.

A TOTAL OF ABOUT 13,700 WORKERS HAD BEEN IMPORTED SINCE 1989. OF THESE, 915 HAD HAD THEIR CONTRACTS TERMINATED PREMATURELY BY THEIR EMPLOYERS.

UP TO NOW, 52 IMPORTED WORKERS HAD BEEN REPORTED MISSING: SIX OF THEM HAD SINCE BEEN FOUND AND REPATRIATED AND EFFORTS TO LOCATE THE REMAINING 46 WERE CONTINUING, MR CHAN SAID.

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RECRUITMENT OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS DIFFICULT
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THE GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCES DIFFICULTIES IN RECRUITING SUFFICIENT CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, TODAY (THURSDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HUI YIN-FAT, MRS WONG SAID CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS WERE DEPLOYED IN THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, HOSPITAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE FORCE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

SHE SAID THE PRESENT QUALIFICATIONS FOR THEIR APPOINTMENT WERE EITHER A RECOGNISED HONOURS DEGREE IN PSYCHOLOGY, PLUS AT LEAST TWO YEARS' POST-GRADUATE EXPERIENCE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY, OR A RECOGNISED MASTER'S DEGREE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY.

HOWEVER, MRS WONG POINTED OUT THAT MOST OF THE APPOINTEES IN RECENT YEARS WERE HOLDERS OF A MASTER'S DEGREE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY.

SHE SAID IN THE PAST ACADEMIC YEAR (1990-91), MASTER'S DEGREE COURSES IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY WERE PROVIDED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG AND THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG.

THE FORMER, HOWEVER, HAD RECENTLY DECIDED TO SUSPEND THE INTAKE TO ITS COURSE FOR ONE YEAR IN 1991-92 BECAUSE OF A LACK OF QUALIFIED AND INTERESTED CANDIDATES.

IN VIEW OF THIS, THE UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNIC GRANTS COMMITTEE HAD RECENTLY SUPPORTED THE CONTINUATION OF THE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMME IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY AT THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG AND WOULD PROVIDE FUNDING FOR IT AT LEAST UNTIL 1994-95.

MRS WONG EXPLAINED THAT ONE OF THE MAIN PROBLEMS FACING THE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMMES AT THE TWO UNIVERSITIES WAS THAT THERE WERE INSUFFICIENT QUALIFIED STUDENTS ENROLLING FOR THE PROGRAMMES.

SHE SAID MEASURES WOULD BE TAKEN TO PUBLICISE THE CAREER PROSPECTS OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN GOVERNMENT AND THE SUBVENTED SECTOR.

MRS WONG TOLD MEMBERS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ALSO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATES WITH AN HONOURS DEGREE IN PSYCHOLOGY TO GAIN WORKING EXPERIENCE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY SO AS TO QUALIFY FOR APPOINTMENT AS CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS.

SHE SAID ONE POSSIBILITY WAS TO CREATE A NEW RANK TO TRAIN GRADUATES WITH AN HONOURS DEGREE IN PSYCHOLOGY FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST RANK.

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HOUSING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 INTRODUCED
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THE HOUSING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR BOWEN LEUNG, SAID UNDER SECTION 17AA(1) OF THE HOUSING ORDINANCE, THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING MAY STIPULATE, BY NOTICE IN THE GAZETTE, THAT DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE SALE OF HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME AND PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION SCHEME FLATS SHALL BE SUBJECT TO THE TERMS, COVENANTS AND CONDITIONS MENTIONED IN THE SCHEDULE TO THE HOUSING ORDINANCE.

"THE INTENTION IS THAT SUCH NOTICE IS ADMINISTRATIVE RATHER THAN LEGISLATIVE IN NATURE," MR LEUNG SAID.

"TO REMOVE ANY DOUBT AS TO THE STATUS OF A NOTICE OF A STIPULATION MADE BY THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING, THE BILL ADDS A SUB-SECTION TO THE ORDINANCE TO CLEARLY PROVIDE THAT THE NOTICES IN THE GAZETTE RELATING TO THE STIPULATIONS ARE NOT SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION," HE EXPLAINED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL MANAGER
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THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER, ACTING AS THE PROVISIONAL LIQUIDATOR, WILL CONSIDER A SPECIAL MANAGER'S QUALIFICATIONS, HIS EXPERIENCE AND HIS TRACK RECORD IN PREVIOUS INSOLVENCY CASES WHEN MAKING THE APPOINTMENT.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID NENDICK, IN HIS CAPACITY AS THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

IN REPLY TO A WRITTEN QUESTION BY THE HON WONG HONG-YUEN, HE SAID THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER WOULD ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE ABILITY OF THE SPECIAL MANAGER'S FIRM TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY STAFF AND RESOURCES, INCLUDING IF NECESSARY INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES, TO DEAL WITH THE PARTICULAR LIQUIDATION.

ALSO UNDER CONSIDERATION WAS THE POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST, HE ADDED.

THE ORDER OF APPOINTMENT OF A SPECIAL MANAGER FIXED THE LEVEL OF HIS AND HIS STAFF'S REMUNERATION, WHICH WAS USUALLY ON A TIME-COST BASIS.

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A SPECIAL MANAGER WOULD PRESENT HIS BILLS TO THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER ON A PERIODIC BASIS, AND IF APPROVED BY THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER, THEY WERE SENT TO THE COURT FOR TAXATION OF HIS FEES.

IF THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER WAS NOT SATISFIED WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF A SPECIAL MANAGER AND THE STAFF HE WAS EMPLOYING ON AN INDIVIDUAL COMPANY LIQUIDATION, HE MIGHT TELL THE COURT THAT HE WAS REFUSING TO PAY THE BILL AND MIGHT APPLY TO WITHDRAW THE APPOINTMENT AND APPOINT ANOTHER SPECIAL MANAGER TO ACT IN HIS PLACE.

AS REGARDS THE PERFORMANCE OF SPECIAL MANAGERS IN TERMS OF VALUE FOR MONEY, HE SAID THIS COULD BE PROPERLY ASSESSED ONLY IN RELATION TO THE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF INDIVIDUAL LIQUIDATIONS.

HOWEVER, RELEVANT FACTORS MIGHT INCLUDE WHETHER THE REALISATION AND COLLECTION OF ASSETS FOR DISTRIBUTION TO CREDITORS WAS CARRIED OUT EXPEDITIOUSLY; WHETHER A TIMELY AND THOROUGH ASSESSMENT WAS MADE OF THE EXTENT OF THE LIABILITIES OF THE COMPANY CONCERNED, AND THE HANDLING OF ANY INVESTIGATION INTO THE CONDUCT OF DIRECTORS, HE SAID.

A SPECIAL MANAGER IS REQUIRED TO FILE ACCOUNTS OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS WITH THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER AND WOULD REPORT TO AND MEET THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER ON A REGULAR BASIS.

IN THE COURSE OF CARRYING OUT HIS WORK, A SPECIAL MANAGER UNDERTOOK SIMILAR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THOSE OF A LIQUIDATOR AND HAD A SIMILAR GENERAL DUTY OF CARE TO THE LIQUIDATOR, THE COMPANY, THE CREDITORS AND THE CONTRIBUTORIES.

THE NETED THAT SECTION 276 OF THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE PROTECTED THE INTERESTS OF CREDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORIES BY PROVIDING FOR THEM TO SEEK REDRESS THROUGH THE COURT FOR ANY MISFEASANCE OR BREACH OF DUTY BY A LIQUIDATOR OR RECEIVER IN RELATION TO THE COMPANY BEING WOUND UP.

THE TERM 'LIQUIDATOR' IN THIS CONTEXT WAS WIDE ENOUGH TO COVER A SPECIAL MANAGER EMPLOYED BY A PROVISIONAL LIQUIDATOR, MR NENDICK SAID.

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BILL MODERNISES FORGERY AND COUNTERFEITING LAWS

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THE CRIMES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1991 WAS DESIGNED TO MODERNISE AND SIMPLIFY THE LAW RELATING TO FORGERY, COUNTERFEITING OF BANK NOTES AND COINS, AND RELATED CRIMINAL OFFENCES, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, SAID TODAY (THURSDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR MATHEWS SAID THE BILL WAS MODELLED SUBSTANTIALLY ON THE ENGLISH FORGERY AND COUNTERFEITING ACT 1981, WHICH REPEALED THE FORGERY ACT 1913 ON WHICH THE CURRENT FORGERY AND COUNTERFEITING LAWS IN HONG KONG WERE BASED.

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"UNDER THE EXISTING LAW THERE ARE A LARGE NUMBER OF OFFENCES CARRYING DIFFERENT MAXIMUM PENALTIES, DEPENDING ON THE NATURE OF THE DOCUMENT FORGED. THIS MULTIPLICITY OF OFFENCES IS NOT WARRANTED," THE ATTORNEY GENERAL EXPLAINED.

HE SAID THE BILL WOULD REPLACE THE NUMEROUS FORGERY PROVISIONS WITH THREE BASIC FORMS OF CRIMINAL CONDUCT: MAKING A FALSE INSTRUMENT; MAKING A COPY OF A FALSE INSTRUMENT; AND USING A FALSE INSTRUMENT.

THE BILL WOULD ABOLISH THE OLD COMMON LAW OFFENCE OF FORGERY WHICH HAD FALLEN INTO DISUSE, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ADDED.

THE NEW STATUTORY OFFENCE OF FORGERY WAS DEFINED AS THE MAKING OF A FALSE INSTRUMENT WITH THE INTENTION THAT IT BE ACCEPTED AS GENUINE TO CAUSE SOMEBODY WHO SO ACCEPTED IT TO ACT TO HIS OR ANOTHER'S PREJUDICE.

THE BILL DEFINED "INSTRUMENT" SO AS TO INCLUDE NOT ONLY DOCUMENTS, BUT ANY DEVICE ON WHICH INFORMATION WAS RECORDED OR STORED BY MECHANICAL, ELECTRONIC, OPTICAL OR OTHER MEANS.

"THE LAW WILL THUS NOT ONLY EMBRACE SUCH ITEMS AS CHEQUES AND LETTERS OF CREDIT, BUT WILL BE APT TO INCLUDE MODERN FORMS OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY," HE SAID.

ON COUNTERFEITING CURRENCY NOTES AND COINS, MR MATHEWS SAID THE BILL BROUGHT TOGETHER THE VARIOUS PROVISIONS INTO A SINGLE OFFENCE.

THERE WERE CORRESPONDING OFFENCES OF PASSING A COUNTERFEIT NOTE OR COIN, POSSESSING A COUNTERFEIT NOTE OR COIN, AND POSSESSING AN IMPLEMENT FOR THE MANUFACTURE OF SUCH COUNTERFEIT, HE SAID.

MR MATHEWS NOTED THAT THE BILL WOULD GIVE THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS A DISCRETION TO PERMIT THE REPRODUCTION OF HONG KONG CURRENCY NOTES AND COINS.

"THIS WILL, FOR EXAMPLE, ENABLE THE LEGITIMATE PRODUCTION OF IMITATION OR THEATRICAL MONEY, WHICH MAY BE MADE WITHOUT ANY CRIMINAL INTENT," HE SAID.

IN LINE WITH THE SIMPLIFICATION OF OFFENCES, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID THE BILL RATIONALISED THE SYSTEM OF PENALTIES.

"IN GENERAL TERMS, A MAXIMUM PENALTY OF 14 YEARS' IMPRISONMENT IS PRESCRIBED WHERE THERE IS AN INTENT TO USE AS GENUINE THE FORGED INSTRUMENT OR COUNTERFEIT NOTE OR COIN; AND THREE YEARS' IMPRISONMENT WHERE SUCH INTENT IS NOT PROVEN," HE SAID.

MR MATHEWS SAID SOME FORGERY AND COUNTERFEITING OFFENCES CURRENTLY CARRIED A MAXIMUM PENALTY OF LIFE IMPRISONMENT.

"IN ABANDONING THIS PENALTY, THE BILL RECOGNISES THAT CURRENT SENTENCING PRINCIPLES RENDER THE IMPOSITION OF SUCH SENTENCE EXTREMELY UNLIKELY. THERE IS NO KNOWN EXAMPLE IN MODERN TIMES," HE SAID.

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MR MATHEWS NOTED THAT EXISTING POWERS OF SEARCH AND FORFEITURE WERE RETAINED IN A MODERNISED FORM IN THE BILL.

"THERE IS A SAVING PROVISION FOR POWERS OF SEARCH AND FORFEITURE IN RESPECT OF OFFENCES OR SUSPECTED OFFENCES COMMITTED BEFORE THE NEW PROVISIONS COME INTO FORCE," HE ADDED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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RABIES BILL INTRODUCED
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THE RABIES BILL SEEKS TO CONSOLIDATE THE EXISTING PROVISIONS FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF RABIES INTO A SINGLE PIECE OF LEGISLATION AND INTRODUCES SUCH ADDITIONAL MEASURES AS ARE NECESSARY TO DEAL COMPREHENSIVELY WITH THE THREAT OF RABIES.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ANSON CHAN, WHEN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

MRS CHAN NOTED THAT RABIES WAS A VIRAL DISEASE WHICH COULD AFFECT ANY SPECIES OF MAMMAL. IT COULD BE SPREAD WIDELY AND RAPIDLY FROM ANIMAL TO ANIMAL AND FROM ANIMAL TO MAN AND WAS FATAL ONCE SYMPTOMS DEVELOP.

"IT IS THEREFORE IMPORTANT TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO PREVENT THE DISEASE FROM BEING INTRODUCED INTO HONG KONG AND, IN THE EVENT OF AN OUTBREAK, TO REACT SWIFTLY WITH FIRM MEASURES TO CONTROL THE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE AND ERADICATE IT," SHE SAID.

MRS CHAN SAID THE EXISTING PROVISIONS FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF RABIES WERE FOUND UNDER TWO ORDINANCES, NAMELY, THE DOGS AND CATS ORDINANCE AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH (ANIMALS AND BIRDS) ORDINANCE.

A REVIEW HAD FOUND THAT THESE PROVISIONS WERE INADEQUATE TO ENSURE THAT THE THREAT POSED BY RABIES COULD BE DEALT WITH EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY, SHE NOTED.

THE ADDITIONAL MEASURES WHICH THE BILL INTRODUCED FELL INTO THREE MAIN CATEGORIES, MRS CHAN SAID.

FIRST, CONTROLS WERE TO BE MADE MORE UNIFORM AND SPECIFIC, SHE SAID, NOTING THAT THE RABIES CONTROL PROVISIONS OF THE DOGS AND CATS ORDINANCE DID NOT APPLY TO OTHER MAMMALS.

"ALTHOUGH THE PREVENTION OF RABIES AMONG DOGS, CATS AND MOST OTHER MAMMALS IS PROVIDED FOR UNDER THE PUBLIC HEALTH (ANIMALS AND BIRDS) ORDINANCE, THE PROVISIONS ARE TOO GENERAL TO ALLOW SPECIFIC SITUATIONS TO BE DEALT WITH EFFECTIVELY DURING A RABIES OUTBREAK.

"THE BILL THEREFORE PROVIDES FOR ALL THESE MAMMALS TO BE SUBJECT TO THE SAME SET OF MORE SPECIFIC CONTROLS," SHE EXPLAINED.

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IT WAS INTENDED THAT THESE CONTROLS SHOULD INCLUDE, IN REGULATIONS AUTHORISED TO BE MADE BY THE BILL, AN IMPORT PERMIT SYSTEM APPLICABLE TO ALL MAMMALS, IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR PLACE OF ORIGIN, MRS CHAN SAID.

ONE CONSEQUENCE WOULD BE TO BRING THE IMPORTATION OF ANIMALS FROM CHINA UNDER THE SAME DEGREE OF CONTROL AS APPLIED TO OTHER COUNTRIES, SHE ADDED.

SECONDLY, ADDITIONAL POWERS WERE TO BE GIVEN TO THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES AND OFFICERS AUTHORISED BY HIM TO FACILITATE THE SUPPRESSION OF A RABIES OUTBREAK.

"FOR EXAMPLE, THE DIRECTOR IS TO BE EMPOWERED TO DECLARE RABIES CONTROL AREAS AND TO CONTROL THE MOVEMENT OF ANIMALS WITHIN, TO AND FROM SUCH AREAS," SHE SAID.

AUTHORISED OFFICERS WERE TO BE EMPOWERED TO ISSUE DIRECTIONS IN THE INTERESTS OF RABIES PREVENTION AND CONTROL, TO REQUEST INFORMATION, TO SEIZE, DETAIN AND DESTROY ANIMALS AND ARTICLES ASSOCIATED WITH THEM AND TO ARREST WHEN NECESSARY, MRS CHAN SAID.

THIRDLY, SAID MRS CHAN, GREATER RESPONSIBILITY FOR RABIES PREVENTION AND CONTROL WAS TO BE PLACED UPON KEEPERS OF ANIMALS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

"STIFFER PENALTIES ARE PROPOSED FOR VIOLATIONS OF CONTROL MEASURES," SHE SAID.

"CERTAIN ACTS WHICH MIGHT FACILITATE THE SPREAD OF RABIES AND WHICH WERE PREVIOUSLY NOT OFFENCES, SUCH AS THE ABANDONMENT OF AN ANIMAL AND THE FEEDING OF ANIMALS BY PERSONS WHO ARE NOT THEIR KEEPERS IN SUCH PLACES AS MAY BE SPECIFIED BY THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, ARE NOW MADE OFFENCES."

MRS CHAN STRESSED THAT THESE MEASURES WERE PROPOSED IN THE INTERESTS OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND WOULD NOT AFFECT THOSE WHO KEPT ANIMALS UNDER PROPER CARE AND CONTROL.

THEY WOULD ENSURE THAT THE PUBLIC WAS BETTER PROTECTED AGAINST THE THREAT OF RABIES AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO REACT TO ANY OUTBREAK OF THIS DEADLY DISEASE MORE EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY, SHE ADDED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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THREE BILLS INTRODUCED INTO LEGCO

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THREE BILLS WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

THEY WERE CRIMES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1991, HOUSING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 AND RABIES BILL.

DEBATES ON THEM WERE ADJOURNED.

IN ADDITION, THE HONG KONG TOURIST ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1990/91 WAS TABLED BY THE HON MARTIN BARROW.

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14 MORE TAKEN ILL EATING TAINTED VEGETABLES

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FOURTEEN MORE PEOPLE - EIGHT WOMEN AND SIX MEN - BECAME ILL TODAY (THURSDAY) AFTER EATING PESTICIDE-CONTAMINATED CHOI SUM (CHINESE FLOWERING CABBAGE).

ELEVEN OF THEM - SIX WOMEN AND FIVE MEN - WERE ADMITTED TO HOSPITAL FOR TREATMENT AND OBSERVATION. THEY ARE ALL IN SATISFACTORY CONDITION. THE OTHER THREE WERE TREATED AND DISCHARGED.

THEY BOUGHT THE VEGETABLES FROM MARKETS AND STREET HAWKERS IN KOWLOON AND TSUEN WAN.

SINCE THE FIRST CASE OF VEGETABLE-POISONING WAS REPORTED LAST WEEK, 40 PEOPLE FROM 27 FAMILIES HAVE BEEN INVOLVED.

OF THE THREE WHO WERE ADMITTED TO HOSPITAL EARLIER THIS WEEK, ONE HAD BEEN DISCHARGED. THE CONDITION OF THE OTHER TWO MEN WAS DESCRIBED AS SATISFACTORY.

THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HEALTH (HYGIENE), DR M.B. ALI, AGAIN URGED THE PUBLIC TO WASH VEGETABLES THOROUGHLY BEFORE COOKING.

HE ADDED THAT BORDER-CHECKING AND SAMPLING HAD BEEN INTENSIFIED.

UP TO THIS MORNING, A TOTAL OF 583 VEGETABLE SAMPLES HAVE BEEN TAKEN FROM STREET HAWKERS, MARKET STALLS AND MAN KAM TO FOR EXAMINATION.

OF THE 539 SAMPLES TESTED SO FAR, SEVEN, INCLUDING TWO FOOD RAMNANTS, WERE FOUND TO HAVE CONTAINED METHAMIDOPHOS. RESULTS OF THE OTHER 44 SAMPLES ARE STILL PENDING.

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STATEMENT ON GOLF COURSE PROPOSAL

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IN RESPONSE TO PRESS ENQUIRIES ABOUT A PROPOSAL TO BUILD A GOLF COURSE IN SHA LO TUNG, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (THURSDAY) THAT PUBLIC INTEREST WAS FULLY TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE COUNTRY PARKS BOARD'S DELIBERATION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND RECOMMENDATION TO THE GOVERNMENT.

THE BOARD ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE IN ENSURING THAT SHA LO TUNG WILL REMAIN OPEN AND GREEN WITH MORE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND BETTER ACCESS FOR PUBLIC USE.

THE SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT THOUGH ABOUT HALF OF THE PROPOSED GOLF COURSE AREA WILL FALL WITHIN THE COUNTRY PARK BOUNDARIES, ONLY A VERY SMALL AREA OF 0.75 HECTARE WILL BE REQUIRED FOR BUILDING OF VILLAGE HOUSES. IN FACT, MOST OF THE PROPOSED LOW-DENSITY BUILDING DEVELOPMENT WILL BE LOCATED WITHIN THE DEVELOPER'S PRIVATE LAND.

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IN ENDORSING THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT, THE COUNTRY PARKS BOARD INCORPORATED THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS TO SAFEGUARD PUBLIC INTEREST:

- * THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY SHOULD NOT BE DISRUPTED,
- * THE DEVELOPER SHOULD ENTER INTO A COMMITMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE THAT THE GOLF COURSE MUST ALSO BE OPENED FOR PUBLIC USE IN TERMS AND CONDITIONS SPECIFIED IN THE LICENCE,
- * PUBLIC ACCESS AND PARKING FACILITIES SHOULD BE IMPROVED,
- * THE DEVELOPER SHOULD PROVIDE MORE PUBLIC RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, SUCH AS FOOTPATHS, TOILETS, SHELTERS, PICNIC SITES AND A VISITOR CENTRE,
- * THE TRADITIONAL HAKKA VILLAGE AT SHA LO TUNG WITH SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL VALUE SHOULD BE PRESERVED,
- * BEFORE WORKS BEGIN, THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE FULLY ASSESSED,
- * THE VILLAGE WOODLAND SHOULD BE PRESERVED AND THERE SHOULD BE A COMPREHENSIVE LANDSCAPING SCHEME, AND
- * TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE ABOVE CONDITIONS, A PERFORMANCE BOND WILL BE REQUIRED FROM THE DEVELOPER.

THE SPOKESMAN ALSO STRESSED THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF KEEPING THE PROPOSAL SECRETIVE.

"THE VILLAGERS TO BE AFFECTED ARE WELL AWARE OF THE DETAILS AND HAVE GENERALLY SUPPORTED IT. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WAS REPORTED IN THE PRESS AS EARLY AS 1987.

"APART FROM THE COUNTRY PARKS BOARD'S INVOLVEMENT, ADVICE WAS ALSO SOUGHT FROM THE ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD IN RESPECT OF PRESERVATION OF THE HAKKA VILLAGE. BOTH OF THESE ADVISORY BOARDS HAVE WIDE PUBLIC REPRESENTATION.

"THE RURAL COMMITTEE CONCERNED IS SOON TO BE CONSULTED ON THE VILLAGE RELOCATION PROPOSAL AND THE DISTRICT BOARD WILL BE BRIEFED IN DETAIL," THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

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JUNE EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL STATISTICS RELEASED

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IN JUNE 1991, LABOUR RESOURCES CONTINUED TO SHIFT FROM MANUFACTURING TO SERVICES. THE NUMBER OF VACANCIES IN MOST SECTORS FELL. EARNINGS IN ALL MAJOR SECTORS RECORDED FURTHER INCREASES IN MONEY TERMS OVER A YEAR EARLIER.

THE RATE OF INCREASE IN SEVERAL SECTORS WAS, HOWEVER, SLOWER THAN IN THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR, ACCORDING TO THE FIGURES RELEASED TODAY (THURSDAY) BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

NEVERTHELESS, THESE STATISTICS REFER TO THE JUNE POSITION ONLY. THE LATEST UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT FIGURES SHOW THAT THE LABOUR MARKET HAS TIGHTENED UP IN THE MOST RECENT MONTHS.

THERE WERE 681,100 PERSONS ENGAGED IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR IN JUNE 1991, REPRESENTING A DECREASE OF 9.8 PER CENT FROM JUNE 1990.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS SECTOR, AT 874,300 IN JUNE 1991, WAS 8.7 PER CENT HIGHER THAN IN JUNE 1990.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR, AT 283,600, WAS UP BY 5.3 PER CENT.

PROVISIONAL FIGURE FOR EMPLOYMENT ON CONSTRUCTION SITES, AT 63,500, WAS 9.8 PER CENT LOWER THAN IN JUNE 1990.

THE EMPLOYMENT FIGURES FOR JUNE 1991 IN THE SELECTED MAJOR ECONOMIC SECTORS, WITH COMPARISONS WITH THE CORRESPONDING FIGURES FOR JUNE 1990 AND MARCH 1991, ARE AS FOLLOWS :

SELECTED MAJOR SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY	PERSONS ENGAGED (EMPLOYMENT) IN @			PERCENTAGE CHANGE #	
	JUN 90	MAR 91	JUN 91	JUN 91 OVER JUN 90	JUN 91 OVER MAR 91
MANUFACTURING	755,000	696,800	681,100	-9.8	-2.3
CONSTRUCTION (MANUAL WORKERS ON CONSTRUCTION SITES ONLY)	70,400	66,700	63,500*	-9.8	-4.8
WHOLESALE, RETAIL** AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS	804,300	852,700	874,300	+8.7	+2.5

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FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES	269,300	276,700	283,600	+5.3	+2.5
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* PROVISIONAL FIGURE.

@ FIGURES ARE ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST HUNDRED.

BASED ON UNROUNDED EMPLOYMENT FIGURES.

** EXCLUDING HAWKERS, STREET VENDORS, RETAIL PITCHES (OTHER THAN MARKET STALLS)

A DEPARTMENTAL SPOKESMAN SAID THE STATISTICS FOR SELECTED MAJOR SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY IN JUNE 1991 WERE DERIVED FROM THE QUARTERLY SURVEY OF EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL AND THE QUARTERLY EMPLOYMENT SURVEY OF CONSTRUCTION SITES CONDUCTED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

BEGINNING FROM THE 1ST QUARTER 1991, THE QUARTERLY SURVEY OF EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL ADOPTED THE HONG KONG STANDARD INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION (HSIC) CODES FOR THE CLASSIFICATION OF ECONOMIC SECTORS.

FIGURES FOR JUNE 1990 HAVE ALSO BEEN REVISED TO CONFORM TO THE HSIC CODES FOR COMPARISON PURPOSE.

THUS, THE FIGURES CONTAINED IN THIS PRESS RELEASE MAY NOT BE FULLY COMPARABLE WITH THOSE IN THE PREVIOUS REPORTS DUE TO THE CHANGE IN CLASSIFICATION.

THE TWO SURVEYS ALSO PROVIDE VACANCY STATISTICS FOR SELECTED MAJOR SECTORS. THE VACANCY DATA TOGETHER WITH A COMPARISON WITH THE CORRESPONDING FIGURES FOR JUNE 1990 AND MARCH 1991 ARE AS FOLLOWS :

SELECTED MAJOR SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY	NUMBER OF REPORTED VACANCIES IN @			PERCENTAGE CHANGE #	
	JUN 90	MAR 91	JUN 91	JUN 91 OVER JUN 90	JUN 91 OVER MAR 91
MANUFACTURING	37,410	31,760	25,250	-32.5	-20.5
CONSTRUCTION (MANUAL WORKERS ON CONSTRUCTION SITES ONLY)	2,160	1,150	940*	-56.5	-18.2
WHOLESALE, RETAIL** AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS	27,550	33,240	24,910	-9.6	-25.1

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FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES	9,530	9,150	8,730	-8.4	-4.6
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- * PROVISIONAL FIGURE.
- @ FIGURES ARE ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST TEN.
- # BASED ON UNROUNDED VACANCY FIGURES.
- ** EXCLUDING HAWKERS, STREET VENDORS AND RETAIL PITCHES (OTHER THAN MARKET STALLS)

COMPARING JUNE 1991 WITH JUNE 1990, THE NUMBER OF VACANCIES DECLINED IN THESE MAJOR SECTORS, IN LINE WITH THE EARLIER EASING OF THE LABOUR MARKET IN THE SECOND QUARTER. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF REPORTED VACANCIES, AT AROUND 79,560, DECREASED BY 19.0 PER CENT IN JUNE 1991 OVER JUNE 1990.

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DECLINE WAS RECORDED ON CONSTRUCTION SITES, BY 56.5 PER CENT, FOLLOWED BY THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR; THE WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS SECTOR; AND THE FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR; BY 32.5 PER CENT, 9.6 PER CENT AND 8.4 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY.

ALSO AVAILABLE FROM THE SURVEY OF EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL ARE STATISTICS ON THE MONTHLY TOTAL PAYROLL. QUARTERLY TOTALS FOR THE MAJOR SECTORS ARE SHOWN IN THE FOLLOWING TABLE :

SELECTED MAJOR SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY	TOTAL QUARTERLY PAYROLL IN		% CHANGE*
	2ND QTR 1990	2ND QTR 1991	2ND QTR 1991 OVER 2ND QTR 1990
	HK\$ MN	HK\$ MN	
MANUFACTURING	11,398	11,508	+1.0
WHOLESALE, RETAIL** AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS	12,678	15,477	+22.1
FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES	6,881	8,075	+17.4

* BASED ON UNROUNDED PAYROLL FIGURES

** EXCLUDING HAWKERS, STREET VENDORS AND RETAIL PITCHES (OTHER THAN MARKET STALLS)

/COMPARED WITH

COMPARED WITH THE SAME QUARTER A YEAR AGO, TOTAL PAYROLL IN THE MANUFACTURING, THE WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS, AND THE FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTORS INCREASED BY 1.0 PER CENT, 22.1 PER CENT AND 17.4 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1991.

AFTER ADJUSTMENT FOR VARIATIONS IN TOTAL MONTHLY PAYROLL BETWEEN JUNE 1990 AND JUNE 1991, ARISING FROM CHANGES IN THE LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT, A NOMINAL INDEX OF PAYROLL PER PERSON ENGAGED IS OBTAINED.

TO ALLOW FOR THE EFFECTS OF PRICE CHANGES, THE NOMINAL INDEX IS DEFLATED BY THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (A) (OCTOBER 84 - SEPTEMBER 85 = 100) TO GIVE THE REAL INDEX OF PAYROLL PER PERSON ENGAGED. THESE TWO INDICES FOR JUNE 1990 AND JUNE 1991 ARE GIVEN IN THE TABLES BELOW :

SELECTED MAJOR SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY	NOMINAL INDEX OF PAYROLL PER PERSON ENGAGED (MARCH 1991 = 100)		% CHANGE
	JUN 90	JUN 91	JUN 91 OVER JUN 90
MANUFACTURING	94.6	104.9	+10.9
WHOLESALE, RETAIL** AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS	91.9	103.2	+12.3
FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES	92.5	101.4	+9.6

SELECTED MAJOR SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY	REAL INDEX OF PAYROLL PER PERSON ENGAGED (MARCH 1991 = 100)		% CHANGE
	JUN 90	JUN 91	JUN 91 OVER JUN 90
MANUFACTURING	104.0	102.6	-1.3
WHOLESALE, RETAIL** AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS	101.0	101.0	0

/FINANCING

FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES	101.6	99.2	-2.4
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** EXCLUDING HAWKERS, STREET VENDORS AND RETAIL PITCHES
(OTHER THAN MARKET STALLS)

BETWEEN JUNE 1990 AND JUNE 1991, AVERAGE EARNINGS IN ALL SECTORS, AS MEASURED BY PAYROLL PER PERSON ENGAGED, RECORDED FURTHER INCREASES IN MONEY TERMS. AN INCREASE OF 10.9 PER CENT WAS REGISTERED IN THE NOMINAL INDEX OF PAYROLL PER PERSON ENGAGED IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR.

FOR THE WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS SECTOR, THE INCREASE WAS 12.3 PER CENT AND FOR THE FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR, THE INCREASE WAS 9.6 PER CENT.

AFTER ALLOWING FOR THE INCREASE IN CONSUMER PRICES BETWEEN JUNE 1990 AND JUNE 1991, THE REAL INDEX OF PAYROLL PER PERSON ENGAGED IN JUNE 1991, AS COMPARED WITH THAT IN JUNE 1990, DECREASED BY 1.3 PER CENT FOR THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR, BUT REMAINED UNCHANGED FOR THE WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS SECTOR.

FOR THE FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR, THE REAL INDEX DECREASED BY 2.4 PER CENT.

WHILE THESE DECLINES IN REAL EARNINGS WERE IN LINE WITH THE EARLIER EASING IN LABOUR MARKET CONDITIONS, A RELATIVELY HIGH BASE OF COMPARISON IN JUNE 1990 AND THE LEVEL OF INFLATION IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1991 ALSO CONTRIBUTED.

DETAILED BREAKDOWNS OF THE ABOVE STATISTICS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE QUARTERLY REPORT OF EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL STATISTICS, JUNE 1991 AND THE QUARTERLY REPORT OF EMPLOYMENT AND VACANCIES AT CONSTRUCTION SITES, JUNE 1991.

THEY ARE NOW AVAILABLE AT \$13.50 PER COPY AND \$8.50 PER COPY RESPECTIVELY AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE, GROUND FLOOR, GPO BUILDING, CONNAUGHT PLACE, CENTRAL AND AT THE SALES COUNTER OF THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT AT 19TH FLOOR, WANCHAI TOWER 1, 12 HARBOUR ROAD, WAN CHAI.

150 000 PUBLIC FLATS UNDER CONSTRUCTION
* * * * *

AT ANY ONE TIME, SOME 150 000 FLATS ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION FOR THE HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY.

WORKING AT THIS PACE, AT WHICH SOME 50 000 FLATS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED IN EACH OF THE PAST FEW YEARS, THE AUTHORITY AIMS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROVIDING HOMES FOR ALL THE PEOPLE IN NEED BY THE TURN OF THE CENTURY.

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING IN MARCH 1991, THE AUTHORITY SPENT \$6.5 BILLION ON NEW CONSTRUCTION WORK, AND NEARLY \$1 BILLION ON MAINTENANCE JOBS.

WITH THE LATEST OUTPUT OF FLATS, THE AUTHORITY NOW MANAGES 143 RENTAL ESTATES, 85 OWNERSHIP ESTATES, AND 79 TEMPORARY HOUSING AND COTTAGE AREAS WHICH, IN ALL, HOUSE SOME THREE MILLION PEOPLE.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE DETAILS ABOUT PUBLIC HOUSING CONTAINED IN THE 1990-91 REPORT OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY WHICH HAS BEEN TABLED TODAY (THURSDAY) AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND WILL BE ON SALE AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE, CONNAUGHT PLACE, CENTRAL FROM OCTOBER 18 (FRIDAY), AT \$30 A COPY.

IN HIS REVIEW FOR THE YEAR, THE AUTHORITY'S CHAIRMAN, SIR DAVID AKERS-JONES POINTS OUT THAT SOME 400 000 MORE PUBLIC FLATS WILL BE BUILT UP TO THE TURN OF THE CENTURY TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE GOVERNMENT'S LONG TERM HOUSING STRATEGY. AT THE SAME TIME, THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS EXPECTED TO PROVIDE ABOUT 270 000 FLATS.

SIR DAVID POINTS OUT THAT THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S TOTAL RESPONSIBILITY EXTENDS TO ALL ASPECTS OF HOUSING IN THE CITY.

THUS IT VALUES GREATLY ITS CLOSE LINKS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AND WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ENSURE THAT THESE BONDS ARE MAINTAINED.

"THE PRIVATE SECTOR ROLE IN THE HOUSING STRATEGY IS ESSENTIAL FOR ITS SUCCESS AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE SO."

ANOTHER MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT DURING THE YEAR WAS THE COMPLETION OF A PHASE OF A REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN WHICH OVER HALF A MILLION PEOPLE WERE MOVED INTO NEW HOUSING OVER A 19-YEAR PERIOD, AT A CONSTRUCTION COST OF SOME \$11 BILLION AT TODAY'S PRICES.

THE REPORT, PRINTED IN COLOUR, IS WELL ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS, CHARTS AND STATISTICS. IT CONTAINS INFORMATION ON PUBLIC HOUSING WHICH WILL APPEAL TO BOTH THE GENERAL READER AND PROFESSIONAL.

A LIMITED NUMBER OF COMPLIMENTARY COPIES IS AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION. ORGANISATIONS WISHING TO OBTAIN THE REPORT SHOULD WRITE TO THE PUBLIC RELATIONS SECTION, HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY, FOURTH FLOOR, BLOCK 1, 33 FAT KWONG STREET, HOMANTIN, KOWLOON.

NO NEED FOR TAX INCENTIVES

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THERE IS NOT AT PRESENT ANY NEED TO INTRODUCE SPECIFIC TAX INCENTIVES FOR DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN BUSINESSES, THE COMMISSIONER OF INLAND REVENUE, MR ANTHONY AU-YEUNG, SAID TODAY (THURSDAY).

MR AU-YEUNG SAID THE PRESENT TAX REGIME OF HONG KONG DID HAVE A NUMBER OF ATTRACTIVE FEATURES AND THAT IT WAS NOT PARTICULARLY ONEROUS BY INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS SO FAR AS DETERMINING INVESTMENT DECISIONS WAS CONCERNED.

SPEAKING AT A LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ON "TAX INCENTIVES - DO WE NEED THEM?", THE COMMISSIONER SAID:

"WE DON'T HAVE A WIDE RANGE OF SPECIFIC CONCESSIONS, BUT OUR TAX RATES ARE CERTAINLY LOW."

HE POINTED OUT THAT TAX INCENTIVES MIGHT BE PROVIDED IN A WIDE VARIETY OF WAYS.

GENERALLY, HE SAID, THEY CONSISTED OF COMPLETE OR PARTIAL EXEMPTION FROM TAX, RAPID OR ACCELERATED DEPRECIATION, SPECIAL ALLOWANCES AND DEDUCTIONS, AND CONCESSIONARY RATES OF TAX.

MR AU-YEUNG SAID IT WAS UNDERSTANDABLE FOR VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS TO URGE FOR FURTHER TAX INCENTIVES TO BE INCORPORATED INTO THE INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE.

"TYPICALLY, THE CALL FOR INCENTIVES GOES ALONG THE LINES THAT 'BUSINESS TAX BREAKS' ARE NECESSARY IF HONG KONG IS TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN FOREIGN INVESTORS IN COMPETITION WITH OTHER ECONOMIES IN THE REGION," HE SAID.

HE SAID ONE OF THE MORE FREQUENT SUGGESTIONS WAS THAT REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS OPERATIONS LOCATED IN HONG KONG SHOULD EITHER BE EXEMPTED FROM TAX OR TAXED AT A REDUCED RATE IN RESPECT OF ANY PROFITS MADE FROM THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO AFFILIATES OUTSIDE HONG KONG.

"SO THE COMMON THEME UNDERLYING THE LOBBYING IS REGIONAL COMPETITION - THE DANGER THAT MINIMAL SPECIFIC INCENTIVES IN HONG KONG WILL LEAD TO BUSINESSES BY-PASSING THE TERRITORY IN FAVOUR OF OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION," HE SAID.

MR AU-YEUNG SAID THE CASE FOR INCENTIVES WAS BASED ON THE PREMISE THAT THEY INDUCED INVESTORS TO BEHAVE IN A MANNER DESIRED BY GOVERNMENT AND THAT IN THEIR ABSENCE SUCH BEHAVIOUR WOULD NOT BE FORTHCOMING.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE OTHER MAIN ARGUMENT PUT FORWARD FOR TAX INCENTIVES WAS THAT THEY REPRESENTED THE SIMPLEST MEANS OF ENCOURAGING GOVERNMENT OBJECTIVES.

"IN MY OPINION THESE ARGUMENTS ARE OF DUBIOUS MERIT," THE COMMISSIONER SAID.

THE FIRST, HE ARGUED, ASSUMED THAT TAXATION WAS OF PARAMOUNT CONCERN TO A FIRM WHEN IT WAS DECIDING WHERE TO INVEST.

"BUT I WOULD SUGGEST THAT ONLY RARELY WILL AN INVESTMENT DECISION BE DETERMINED BY THE POTENTIAL SIZE OF A TAX BILL WHERE THE RULING RATES OF TAX ARE LOW," HE SAID.

MR AU-YEUNG SAID OTHER FACTORS SUCH AS THE NATURE OF POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT, EXISTENCE OF A WELL-DEVELOPED INFRASTRUCTURE, AVAILABILITY OF A SKILLED WORKFORCE, SECURITY OF RAW MATERIAL SUPPLIES, AND PROXIMITY TO THE PROPOSED MARKET MIGHT WELL HAVE EQUAL OR GREATER WEIGHT WHEN COMPARED TO THE TAXATION FACTOR.

"EVEN IF IT IS ASSUMED THAT TAX INCENTIVES DO ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT, IT DOES NOT FOLLOW THAT THEY REPRESENT THE BEST MEANS OF ENCOURAGEMENT," HE SAID.

HE CAUTIONED THAT SUCH INCENTIVES MIGHT REPRESENT A COST TO THE REVENUE WHICH WAS NOT COMPENSATED FOR BY ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT.

"OF COURSE, TO MAKE SURE THAT TAX INCENTIVES GO TO THE RIGHT RECIPIENTS THEY CAN BE OFFERED ON CONDITIONS THAT ARE JUST AS COMPLICATED AND DISCRETIONARY AS SUBSIDIES OR GRANTS," HE SAID.

MR AU-YEUNG SAID ANOTHER MAJOR DISADVANTAGE OF TAX INCENTIVES, AT LEAST FROM THE TAX ADMINISTRATOR'S POINT OF VIEW, WAS THAT THEY COMPLICATED LEGISLATION AND PROVIDED AVENUES FOR AVOIDANCE ARRANGEMENTS.

ON THE SUBJECT OF TAX INCENTIVES BEING EXPLOITED, HE SAID THERE WERE RECENTLY DIFFICULTIES IN HONG KONG.

FOR THIS REASON, HE SAID, LEGISLATION WOULD SHORTLY BE INTRODUCED TO TIGHTEN UP THE TERMS OF SECTION 16E OF THE INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE.

"WE WANT TO MORE CLEARLY SPELL OUT - IT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN OVERLOOKED BY SOME - THAT THE SECTION WAS INTENDED TO PROMOTE THE UPGRADING OF TECHNOLOGY IN LOCAL INDUSTRY," HE EXPLAINED.

FROM THE TAXPAYERS' POINT OF VIEW, TAX INCENTIVES HAD A NUMBER OF NEGATIVE ASPECTS.

MR AU-YEUNG SAID TAX INCENTIVES ALSO OFFENDED THE PRINCIPLE THAT TAX SHOULD BE LEVIED EQUITABLY.

OTHER INEQUITIES MIGHT ALSO BE DIFFICULT TO AVOID.

"BUSINESSES MAKING LOSSES WILL GENERALLY NOT RECEIVE ANY IMMEDIATE BENEFIT IN RESPECT OF TAX EXEMPTIONS EVEN THOUGH THEIR NEED WILL OFTEN BE GREATER THAN THAT OF PROFITABLE CONCERNS," HE SAID.

HE SAID TAX INCENTIVES MIGHT ALSO BE CRITICISED ON THE GROUND THAT THEY COULD INFLUENCE INVESTMENT PRIORITIES TOWARDS ASSETS YIELDING HIGHER TAX BENEFITS, BUT LOWER REAL PRODUCTIVITY.

"THIS CAN HAVE THE CONSEQUENCE THAT THE INCENTIVES ADVERSELY AFFECT RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE ECONOMY," HE SAID.

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ONE FINAL NEGATIVE ASPECT, HE SAID, WAS THE POSSIBILITY THAT A TAXATION EXEMPTION OR REDUCTION GRANTED TO A FOREIGN INVESTOR MIGHT END UP ONLY BEING OF BENEFIT TO THE INVESTOR'S HOME COUNTRY.

HE SAID THIS SITUATION COULD ARISE WHERE THE TAX SAVING PROVIDED BY AN INCENTIVE WAS SIMPLY MATCHED BY A REDUCTION IN THE TAX CREDIT ALLOWED BY THE HOME COUNTRY IN RESPECT OF THE FOREIGN INCOME.

THE PROBLEM COULD BE OVERCOME BY A TAX SPARING CLAUSE IN AN APPLICABLE DOUBLE TREATY - IF ONE HAD BEEN NEGOTIATED.

"YOU WILL APPRECIATE, HOWEVER, THAT THIS POSSIBILITY IS HARDLY RELEVANT IN HONG KONG TODAY - WE HAVE NO SUCH TREATIES," THE COMMISSIONER SAID.

HE ALSO SPELLED OUT A NUMBER OF ATTRACTIVE FEATURES OF HONG KONG'S TAX REGIME WHICH WOULD ATTRACT INVESTMENTS.

THEY WERE: SIMPLICITY AND NEUTRALITY OF TAX LAW, CONSISTENCY IN TAXATION POLICIES, LOW RATES OF TAXATION, INCOME TAXED ON A TERRITORIAL SOURCE BASIS, NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN RESIDENTS AND NON-RESIDENTS, DIVIDENDS NOT SUBJECT TO TAXATION, NO INTEREST TAX AND RESTRICTED TAX ON FRINGE BENEFITS.

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PROHIBITION ON TRADE IN PRISON-MADE GOODS REMINDER

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A TRADE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN TODAY (THURSDAY) REMINDED HONG KONG COMPANIES THAT TRADE IN PRISON-MADE GOODS IS PROHIBITED UNDER BOTH CHINESE AND U.S. REGULATIONS AND THAT SUCH TRADE IS LIABLE TO BE DETAINED OR CONFISCATED BY THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES.

"THE U.S. CUSTOMS HAS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED ITS DECISION TO HOLD UP SHIPMENTS OF CERTAIN WRENCHES AND STEEL PIPES IMPORTED FROM CHINA SUSPECTED TO HAVE BEEN PRODUCED BY PRISON LABOUR.

"ACCORDING TO THE U.S. CUSTOMS NEWS RELEASE, IMPORTATION OF PRISON-MADE GOODS INTO THE U.S. IS IN VIOLATION OF U.S. FEDERAL LAW.

"THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO MADE KNOWN THAT IT IS NOT THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO ALLOW EXPORT OF PRISON-MADE GOODS AND THAT VIOLATION MAY BE PENALISED ACCORDINGLY," HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT THE TRADE DEPARTMENT WOULD ISSUE A COMMERCIAL INFORMATION CIRCULAR TO DRAW THE ABOVE TO THE ATTENTION OF THE TRADING COMMUNITY.

"HONG KONG COMPANIES MUST CONFORM TO THE LAW AND REGULATIONS OF OUR TRADING PARTNERS WHEN DOING BUSINESS WITH THEM," HE STRESSED.

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1991

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CHINESE OFFICIALS TO VISIT HK

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AT THE INVITATION OF THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT, A GROUP OF SIX OFFICIALS FROM THE CHINESE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WILL VISIT HONG KONG FROM OCTOBER 21 TO 31 FOR A 11-DAY PROGRAMME OF VISITS AND BRIEFINGS.

THE GROUP WILL BE LED BY AMBASSADOR CUI MINGTANG, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, HONG KONG AND MACAO AFFAIRS OFFICE, THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

THE VISIT IS ONE OF A SERIES WHICH HAVE BEEN TAKING PLACE OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS TO GIVE CHINESE OFFICIALS A FIRST-HAND UNDERSTANDING OF HOW HONG KONG WORKS.

THE VISITORS WILL BE BRIEFED BY SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ON GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE, ECONOMIC, MONETARY AND FINANCIAL SYSTEMS, TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL POLICIES AND INFRA-STRUCTURAL FACILITIES.

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OPENING OF LOK MA CHAU WEST BRIDGE

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THE SECOND (WEST), TWO-LANE ROAD BRIDGE OVER THE SHENZHEN RIVER AT THE LOK MA CHAU BORDER CROSSING HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND WILL BE OPENED TO TRAFFIC TOMORROW (FRIDAY), A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED TODAY (THURSDAY).

THE EXISTING BRIDGE (EAST BRIDGE) HAS BEEN PROVIDING THE ROAD LINK SINCE THE CROSSING WAS OPENED TO TRAFFIC ON DECEMBER 29, 1989. THERE ARE ABOUT 5,700 VEHICLES CROSSING AT LOK MA CHAU DAILY.

"WITH THE ANTICIPATED INCREASE IN CROSS BORDER TRAFFIC, THE COMPLETION OF THE SECOND BRIDGE WILL ALLOW A DUAL TWO-LANE OPERATION AT THE CROSSING, THEREBY FACILITATING VEHICLE MOVEMENTS AND ENHANCING ROAD SAFETY," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

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CHAIRMAN OF PEC HK COMMITTEE APPOINTED

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THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (THURSDAY) THE APPOINTMENT OF DR RAYMOND CH' IEN, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF LAM SOON HONG KONG GROUP, AS CHAIRMAN OF THE HONG KONG COMMITTEE FOR PACIFIC ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION.

THE HONG KONG COMMITTEE, STRUCTURED ON A TRIPARTITE BASIS, IS APPOINTED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, MR HAMISH MACLEOD. IT COMPRISES LEADING REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE BUSINESS AND ACADEMIC SECTORS AND ALSO FROM WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT.

/THE HONG

THE HONG KONG COMMITTEE FOR PACIFIC ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION WAS SET UP IN MARCH 1990 TO ADVISE GOVERNMENT ON MATTERS RELATING TO HONG KONG'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PACIFIC ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION CONFERENCE (PECC) AND TO CO-ORDINATE HONG KONG'S INPUT TO THE CONFERENCE.

PECC IS A NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION SET UP IN 1980 COMPRISING 19 MEMBER COMMITTEES FROM AUSTRALIA, BRUNEI, CANADA, CHILE, CHINA, HONG KONG, INDONESIA, JAPAN, KOREA, MALAYSIA, MEXICO, PERU, NEW ZEALAND, THE PACIFIC ISLAND NATIONS, THE PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE, TAIWAN (STYLED AS CHINESE-TAIPEI), THAILAND AND THE USA. HONG KONG BECAME A MEMBER IN MAY THIS YEAR.

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DB APPOINTMENTS ANNOUNCED

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THE GOVERNMENT-TODAY (THURSDAY) ANNOUNCED THE APPOINTMENTS TO THE SEVEN VACANT DISTRICT BOARD SEATS.

THE APPOINTEES ARE:

KOWLOON CITY

DR TSE CHI-WAI, DANIEL, CBE, JP

SOUTHERN

MRS SO CHAU YIM-PING

KWUN TONG

MR LUK HING-TOO

KWAI TSING

MR CHEUNG YIU-TAK, PETER

NORTH

MR CHEUNG YAN-LUNG, CBE, JP

SHA TIN

MR WONG WANG-FAT, ANDREW, OBE, JP

/TUEN MUN

TUEN MUN

MR CHAU LIK-KAI, RICKY .

THEY WILL SERVE ON THE BOARDS FROM TOMORROW (OCTOBER 18) TO SEPTEMBER 30, 1994.

THEIR APPOINTMENTS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE GAZETTE TOMORROW.

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BILL TO GIVE PEAK TRAMWAY MORE FLEXIBILITY ENDORSED

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THE GOVERNMENT IN CONCIL HAD ENDORSED THE PEAK TRAMWAY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (THURSDAY).

THE SPOKESMAN SAID A MAJOR PROVISION OF THE BILL IS TO ENABLE THE COMPANY TO ENTER LANDS ADJOINING THE TRAMWAY FOR REPAIR OR ACCIDENT PREVENTION WORKS WITH THE RIGHT FOR COMPENSATION PROVIDED TO ANY AFFECTED PARTY.

THE BILL ALSO PROVIDES FOR A MORE GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF WORKS TO BE CONSTRUCTED AND MAINTAINED BY THE COMPANY TO AVOID OMISSIONS.

IT ALSO ENABLES THE COMPANY TO APPLY FOR RENEWAL OF ITS OPERATING RIGHT, THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

THE AMENDMENT BILL IS EXPECTED TO BE GAZETTED ON OCTOBER 25 AND INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON NOVEMBER 6.

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AIDS EDUCATION CAMP FOR YOUTH

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ABOUT 200 PEOPLE AGED BETWEEN 16 AND 30 WILL TAKE PART IN A TWO-DAY AIDS EDUCATION CAMP FOR YOUTH AT THE SAI KUNG OUTDOOR RECREATION CENTRE ON SATURDAY AND SUNDAY (OCTOBER 19 AND 20).

WITH "SHARING THE CHALLENGE" AS ITS THEME, THE CAMP IS ORGANISED BY THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY ON AIDS.

IT IS SUPPORTED BY THE CARITAS GROUP AND COMMUNITY WORK SERVICE, THE HONG KONG FEDERATION OF YOUTH GROUPS, THE HONG KONG CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES, THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S AIDS COUNSELLING AND HEALTH EDUCATION SERVICES.

/AN OPEN

AN OPEN CAMP PROGRAMME WILL START AT 10 AM ON SUNDAY. ATTENDING WILL BE THE CONVENOR OF THE WORKING GROUP ON YOUTH OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY ON AIDS, REV ALFRED J. DEIGNAN; AND THE PRINCIPAL MEDICAL AND HEALTH OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, DR P.Y. LAM.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE AIDS EDUCATION CAMP'S OPEN CAMP PROGRAMME ON SUNDAY (OCTOBER 20).

TRANSPORT HAS BEEN ARRANGED TO TAKE MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES TO THE CAMP SITE AT SAI KUNG OUTDOOR RECREATION CENTRE, AND RETURN. THE VEHICLE WILL LEAVE SUNNING PLAZA, 10 HYSAN AVENUE, CAUSEWAY BAY AT 9 AM.

THOSE WISHING TO MAKE USE OF THE FACILITY SHOULD CONTACT MISS IRIS TANG ON TEL. 890 0575/6. RESERVATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED ON A FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED BASIS.

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31 INMATES PASSED PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS
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THIRTY-ONE INMATES AT PIK UK CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION THIS (THURSDAY) AFTERNOON RECEIVED CERTIFICATES FOR PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS.

THEY OBTAINED A TOTAL OF 20 DISTINCTIONS, 11 CREDITS AND 40 PASSES IN THE HONG KONG CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION EXAMINATION, LONDON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY EXAMINATIONS AND PITMAN EXAMINATIONS.

THE HONORARY SECRETARY OF THE DUTY FREE SHOPPERS CHARITABLE TRUST COMMITTEE, MR J. ROGER THOMAS, PRESENTED CERTIFICATES TO THE INMATES AT A CERTIFICATE PRESENTATION CEREMONY HELD AT THE INSTITUTION.

SINCE 1979, 1,531 YOUNG INMATES HAD SAT FOR A TOTAL OF 2,064 PAPERS IN VARIOUS PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS. TOTALLY, THEY ACHIEVED 402 DISTINCTIONS, 210 CREDITS AND 1,114 PASSES. THE AVERAGE PASSING RATE IS 83.6 PER CENT.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
 MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS
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	DATE -----	\$ MILLION -----
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT ON	15.10.91	600
EFFECT OF FORWARDS TO BE SETTLED ON	17.10.91	+157
EFFECT OF OPERATIONS THIS MORNING		-157
EFFECT OF OPERATIONS THIS AFTERNOON		NEUTRAL
TRADE WEIGHTED INDEX 111.9 *-0.1* 17.10.91		

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

CLOSING YIELDS OF EXCHANGE FUND BILLS

	17.10.91	15.10.91
MATURING IN 1 WEEK	4.59 PCT	4.86 PCT
1 MONTH	4.49 PCT	4.72 PCT
3 MONTHS	4.55 PCT	4.88 PCT
6 MONTHS	4.84 PCT	5.03 PCT
12 MONTHS	5.68 PCT	5.81 PCT
TOTAL TURNOVER	8,330 MN	5,955 MN

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