DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 1991

CONTENTS — PAGE NO.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING:

PUBLIC OPINION ON DEATH PENALTY NOT IN DOUBT: S FOR S 1

POLICE WEAPONS ARE ADEQUATE 2

GRADUALIST APPROACH NECESSARY FOR POLITICAL FUND-RAISING 3

CONTROL OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION BY CUTTING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES SUCCESSFUL 5

NO DEFICIENCY IN MARINE TRAFFIC SAFETY RULES 6

TREASURY PURCHASES NO FOREIGN CURRENCIES FORWARD 7

1,579 NEW VACANT UNITS IN URBAN THA'S 7

GOVT PROPOSES TO INCLUDE PERIPHERAL POLY-NEUROPATHY AS OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE 8

RTHK PROGRAMMES NOT FOR PROMOTING COMMERCIAL INTERESTS 9

MEASURES TAKEN TO OVERCOME SHORTAGE OF COURT REPORTERS 9

NO INTENTION TO REVIEW MAXIMUM PERIODS FOR MARRIAGE INJUNCTIONS 10

CHARGED PERSON HAS A RIGHT TO APPLY FOR BAIL 12

SUFFICIENT SAFEGUARDS IN EXISTING PROCEDURE IN CONSIDERING PROPOSALS FOR ALTERATION OF VALUATION LIST 13

VTC OFFERS MORE THAN 69,000 TRAINING PLACES FOR NEEDED 14

DUTIABLE COMMODITIES BILL INTRODUCED 15

AMENDMENT BILLS INTRODUCED ON CNTA TRUST FUNDS 15

AMENDMENT TO LEGAL PRACTITIONERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 16

STAMP DUTY BILL INTRODUCED 16

BILLS TO PUT HA EMPLOYEES ON PAR WITH CIVIL SERVICE COUNTERPARTS INTRODUCED 17

FIVE-HOUR DEBATE ON DEATH PENALTY 17

NO COUNTDOWN TO NEW AIRPORT PROJECT CONSTRUCTION 19

HONG KONG FULLY SUPPORTS INTERNATIONAL FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS 19

HK'S TRADE PERFORMANCE STILL 'ENCOURAGING' 21

GOVT STUDYING WAYS TO ENCOURAGE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN INDUSTRY .. 23

GOVT SOURCES ITS SUPPLIES WORLDWIDE 24

JUNE 1991 SURVEY OF EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL STARTED 25

/FARMERS URGED .....

FARMERS URGED TO EXPRESS VIEWS THROUGH CONSULTATION 26
TWO-DAY JLG EXPERTS TALKS 27
MANAGEMENT CONTRACT FOR ABERDEEN TUNNEL AWARDED 27
NEW SIU LAM EXTENSION OPENS 28
TWO MEMBERS RE-APPOINTED TO CIVIL SERVICE PAY GROUP 28
UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS IN NORTH POINT TO BE CLOSED 29
FC MEETING ON FRIDAY 29
HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS 29

PUBLIC OPINION ON DEATH PENALTY NOT IN DOUBT: S FOR S

* * * * * *

THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT IN THE EVENT THAT A MAJORITY OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS WERE TO VOTE IN FAVOUR OF ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY, THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD CONSIDER BRINGING FORWARD LEGISLATION TO ACHIEVE THIS.

SPEAKING ON THE AMENDMENT MOTION IN THE DEBATE ON THE DEATH PENALTY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR ASPREY SAID HE BELIEVED THAT PUBLIC OPINION ON THIS SUBJECT WAS NOT IN DOUBT.

HE POINTED OUT THAT AS THE CHIEF SECRETARY HAD SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FROM THE HON JIMMY MCGREGOR TWO YEARS AGO, THE ADMINISTRATION WAS AWARE, THROUGH EXTENSIVE COMMUNITY LIAISON NETWORK, OF THE WISH OF THE MAJORITY OF THE COMMUNITY TO RETAIN THE DEATH SENTENCE AS THE PENALTY FOR MURDER.

"THIS HAS BEEN CONFIRMED BY MORE RECENT SURVEYS OF PUBLIC OPINION," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY SAID NEVERTHELESS, IT WAS APPROPRIATE THAT THE COUNCIL SHOULD DEBATE THIS IMPORTANT SUBJECT.

"MEMBERS HAVE CLEARLY SHOWN THEIR WISH TO EXERCISE LEADERSHIP ON THIS ISSUE, AND WE HAVE HEARD REASONED AND COGENT ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF ABOLITION.

"THESE ARGUMENTS MUST BE BALANCED AGAINST THE INSTINCTIVE REACTION OF THE COMMUNITY, PARTICULARLY IN RESPONSE TO RECENT SERIOUS CRIMES OF VIOLENCE WHICH HAVE SHOCKED US ALL, THAT THE DEATH PENALTY SHOULD BE IMPOSED," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY ALSO SAID HONG KONG HAD AN EXCELLENT POLICE FORCE, WHOSE DEDICATION AND PROFESSIONALISM HAD MADE THE CITY A VERY SAFE ONE.

"DESPITE A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN A FEW SPECIFIC TYPES OF VIOLENT CRIME IN RECENT YEARS, OUR OVERALL CRIME RATE, AND THE INCIDENCE OF SERIOUS AND VIOLENT CRIME, ARE STILL LOW BY ALMOST ANY STANDARD," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY CONCEDED THAT THERE HAD UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN A SERIOUS PROBLEM WITH THE RISING INCIDENCE OF CRIMES, PARTICULARLY ROBBERIES, INVOLVING THE USE OF FIREARMS.

HE REITERATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS DETERMINED TO CURB SUCH CRIMES, AND TO TAKE ALL POSSIBLE STEPS TO CURTAIL THE ILLEGAL IMPORTATION AND USE OF FIREARMS.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG WAS NOT EXPERIENCING A GENERAL AND CONTINUING DETERIORATION IN THE OVERALL LAW AND ORDER SITUATION.

/SO FAR .....

SO FAR THIS YEAR, THE OVERALL CRIME RATE WAS OVER FOUR PER CENT DOWN ON THE EQUIVALENT PERIOD LAST YEAR.

"WE MUST NOT BE COMPLACENT BUT EQUALLY WE SHOULD ALSO HAVE REGARD TO THE TRUE PICTURE," MR ASPREY SAID.

NOTING THAT THE POLICE FORCE WAS WELL EQUIPPED, WELL TRAINED AND WELL MOTIVATED, THE SECRETARY SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS COMMITTED TO MAINTAINING IT AS SUCH.

EQUIPMENT WAS REGULARLY REVIEWED TO ENSURE THAT IT WAS APPROPRIATE TO OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS, HE SAID.

MR ASPREY POINTED OUT THAT THE PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC AND OF THE POLICEMEN ON THE STREET WERE A PRIME CONSIDERATION.

"WE HAVE INVESTED SUBSTANTIALLY IN RECENT YEARS IN SOPHISTICATED, MODERN EQUIPMENT TO ENABLE THE POLICE TO DISCHARGE THEIR DUTIES MORE EFFECTIVELY.

"I CAN ASSURE MEMBERS THAT WE SHALL CONTINUE TO DO SO," HE SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

POLICE WEAPONS ARE ADEQUATE

* * * * *

THE TYPE AND CALIBRE OF ARMS AND AMMUNITION CARRIED BY POLICE OFFICERS ARE UNDER REGULAR REVIEW TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE APPROPRIATE TO OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ANDREW WONG, MR ASPREY SAID ANY PROPOSAL TO UPGRADE POLICE ARMS AND AMMUNITION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE POTENTIAL DANGER TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN THE EVENT OF AN EXCHANGE OF FIRE INVOLVING MORE POWERFUL WEAPONS.

MR ASPREY POINTED OUT THAT THE PRESENT VIEW OF THE POLICE WAS THAT THE STANDARD WEAPONS CARRIED BY OFFICERS ON PATROL WERE ADEQUATE FOR THE PURPOSE.

"IT IS NOT PROPOSED AT PRESENT TO UPGRADE THE STANDARD WEAPON PACKAGE," HE SAID.

HOWEVER, MR ASPREY ADDED THAT OTHER MORE POWERFUL WEAPONS WERE AVAILABLE TO THE POLICE WHEN INTELLIGENCE, OR THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND, INDICATED THAT THEY MIGHT BE REQUIRED.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE GOVERNMENT WAS TAKING ALL POSSIBLE STEPS TO CURTAIL THE ILLEGAL IMPORTATION AND USE OF FIREARMS, THE SECRETARY NOTED.

/"WE HAVE .....

"WE HAVE HAD SEVERAL DISCUSSIONS TO THIS END WITH THE AUTHORITIES IN GUANDONG PROVINCE, THE MOST RECENT BY THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE LATE LAST WEEK AND FURTHER DISCUSSIONS TODAY," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY STRESSED THAT ANY USE OF FIREARMS IN THE COMMISSION OF CRIME WAS A VERY SERIOUS MATTER.

THE ROBBERY WHICH TOOK PLACE IN KWUN TONG ON JUNE 9 IN WHICH AN ASSAULT RIFLE WAS USED WAS A CRIME OF PARTICULAR CONCERN, MR ASPREY SAID.

"THAT CASE IS NOW UNDER INVESTIGATION BY THE POLICE.

"EXTENSIVE ENQUIRIES, INCLUDING LIAISON WITH THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES AT A HIGH LEVEL, ARE TAKING PLACE," MR ASPREY SAID.

THE SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS DETERMINED THAT THOSE RESPONSIBLE SHOULD BE APPREHENDED SPEEDILY AND BROUGHT TO TRIAL.

THE AUTHORITY BELIEVED THAT CERTAINTY OF ARREST AND PROSECUTION WAS THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEASURE AGAINST CRIME, HE ADDED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

GRADUALIST APPROACH NECESSARY FOR POLITICAL FUND-RAISING

* * * * *

A GRADUALIST AND CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO RELAXING THE RESTRICTION ON PUBLIC DONATIONS FOR NON-CHARITABLE PURPOSES IS NEEDED AS SUCH ACTIVITIES IS A RELATIVELY NEW DEVELOPMENT IN HONG KONG, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON ALBERT LAM, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE SUMMARY OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, MR LAM STRESSED THAT THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS WERE AIMED AT THE LIBERALISATION OF A CURRENT RESTRICTION, RATHER THAN TO HINDER THE DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IN HONG KONG.

"THE FACT IS THAT HITHERTO THE COLLECTION OF DONATIONS IN PUBLIC PLACES OTHER THAN FOR APPROVED CHARITIES IS NOT ALLOWED.

"THE ADMINISTRATION BELIEVES THAT THE TIME HAS COME FOR A RELAXATION OF THIS CURRENT RESTRICTION, PARTICULARLY IN THE WAKE OF ELECTIONS WHICH ARE COMING UP IN SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR," HE SAID.

A GRADUALIST AND CAUTIOUS APPROACH WAS NEEDED, HE SAID, BECAUSE IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO SAFEGUARD THE WIDER PUBLIC INTEREST, AND TO ENSURE THAT FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES DID NOT PROLIFERATE IN OUR ALREADY OVERCROWDED STREETS, WHICH COULD PROVOKE HOSTILE PUBLIC REACTION AGAINST FUND-RAISING GENERALLY.

/MR LAM .....

MR LAM NOTED THAT THERE WAS KEEN COMPETITION FOR PUBLIC DONATIONS OF ONE TYPE OR ANOTHER.

"THE OVERSUBSCRIPTIONS FOR SATURDAY FLAG DAYS IS A GOOD EXAMPLE," HE SAID.

THERE WAS THEREFORE A NEED TO GIVE PRIORITY TO PROMOTING WORTHWHILE CAUSES WHICH THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE RECOGNISED AND SUPPORTED. CHARITY, HE ADDED, WAS AN OBVIOUS PRIORITY.

FOR THESE REASONS, MR LAM BELIEVED IT WAS REASONABLE FOR POLITICAL FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES TO BE HELD IN WELL-DEFINED PUBLIC PLACES THE ACCESS TO WHICH THEN BECAME A CONSCIOUS PERSONAL CHOICE - SO THAT FUNDS COULD BE RAISED FROM PEOPLE WHO IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES WITH, AND SUPPORTED A PARTICULAR CAUSE, AND WHO MADE DONATIONS VOLUNTARILY.

THIS NEW ARRANGEMENT, HE SAID, SHOULD NOT BE SEEN IN ISOLATION.

"THERE ARE MANY OTHER OUTLETS FOR FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES SUCH AS THE USE OF PRIVATELY OWNED OR MANAGED PREMISES, FOR EXAMPLE, HOTELS OR SHOPPING CENTRES, APPEALS IN THE PRINTED MEDIA, PAID ADVERTISEMENT, DONATIONS TO SPECIFIC BANK ACCOUNTS AND SO ON.

"AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, I HOPE THAT MEMBERS WILL AGREE THAT THERE ARE GOOD PHYSICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL REASONS FOR THE DIFFERENCE IN TREATMENT FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF DONATIONS INSOFAR AS THEIR COLLECTION IN PUBLIC PLACES IS CONCERNED," MR LAM SAID.

HE DESCRIBED AS "SIMPLE MISCONCEPTION" THE SUGGESTION THAT THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSALS WHICH FALL SHORT OF ALLOWING POLITICAL GROUPS TO SOLICIT AND COLLECT DONATIONS IN STREETS MAY HAVE BREACHED A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT -- THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.

"THE AMENDMENT IS INTENDED TO REFLECT THE SOCIAL EVOLUTION IN HONG KONG AND TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL MEANS BY WHICH CERTAIN POLITICAL RIGHTS CAN BE EXERCISED WITHIN THE SOCIETY IN HONG KONG," MR LAM EXPLAINED.

INHERENT IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY WAS THE RIGHT AND OPPORTUNITY TO HOLD POLITICAL BELIEFS AND TO DISSEMINATE AND PROMOTE THOSE VIEWS AND IDEAS WITH A VIEW TO CANVASSING SUPPORT, HE SAID.

"THAT OPPORTUNITY IS AVAILABLE IN HONG KONG. THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT SUPPORTS THESE FREEDOMS AND INDEED FACILITATE THE EXPRESSION OF THESE FREEDOMS," HE ADDED.

AS FOR THE SUGGESTION THAT A DIRECT BUT MORE RESTRICTIVE REFERENCE SHOULD BE MADE IN THE LAW TO COLLECTION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT ONLY, MR LAM SAID IT WAS UNDESIRABLE TO DO SO.

"WE DO NOT WISH TO RULE OUT OTHER CAUSES WHICH, WHILE NOT CONNECTED WITH THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, ARE NONETHELESS WORTHY OF PUBLIC SUPPORT," HE SAID.

/NOTING SOME .....

NOTING SOME MEMBERS' CONCERN ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSALS THROUGH A SET OF ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES, MR LAM SAID THE SCHEME "MUST NOT BE SO RIGID AS TO LEAVE NO ROOM FOR SENSIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE DISCRETION".

"THE INCORPORATION OF THE GUIDELINES INTO THE ORDINANCE WILL NOT ACTUALLY ADDRESS THE CONCERN OF MEMBERS BECAUSE FOR A SCHEME OF THIS KIND TO SUCCEED, A CERTAIN DEGREE OF DISCRETION WILL STILL NEED TO BE VESTED WITH THE AUTHORITY," HE EXPLAINED.

"FURTHERMORE, IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SUMMARY OFFENCES ORDINANCE, I AM ADVISED THAT IT IS INAPPROPRIATE TO ISOLATE PART OF A SUB-SECTION OF THE WHOLE ORDINANCE FOR SPECIAL TREATMENT.

"AMENDMENTS TO THE ORDINANCE WILL BE REQUIRED TO INTRODUCE THE EMPOWERING PROVISION TO MAKE BY-LAWS.

"CONSIDERATIONS WOULD ALSO BE REQUIRED TO BE GIVEN TO THE SCOPE AND CONTENT OF SUCH A PROVISION."

IN CONCLUSION, MR LAM SAID IN IMPLEMENTING THE SCHEME, DUE REGARD WOULD BE GIVEN TO THE SENTIMENTS AND VIEWS EXPRESSED BY LEGCO MEMBERS AND THAT A REVIEW WOULD BE CONDUCTED IN THE LIGHT OF ACTUAL OPERATING EXPERIENCE ACCUMULATED OVER A REASONABLE PERIOD AND IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S ONGOING REVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IN HONG KONG.

HE ALSO ASSURED THE LEGISLATORS THAT APPROPRIATE PUBLICITY WOULD BE ARRANGED TO ASSIST THE PUBLIC TO GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY AS REFLECTED IN THE GUIDELINES.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WOULD ALSO BE INFORMED OF ANY SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS TO THE GUIDELINES IN FUTURE, HE ADDED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

CONTROL OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION BY CUTTING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES SUCCESSFUL

* * * * *

PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS HAVE SHOWN THAT THE IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE 1990 AND THE CHANGES IN PROSECUTION POLICY INTRODUCED IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR ARE SUCCESSFUL IN CONTROLLING THE LEVEL OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION BY CURTAILING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ELSIE TU, MR ASPREY SAID THERE HAD BEEN A REDUCTION OF 20 PER CENT THIS YEAR IN THE NUMBER OF ARRESTS OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS, WHEN COMPARED WITH THE FIRST HALF OF LAST YEAR.

/MORE, THE .....

MORE, THE NUMBER OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS ARRESTED ON CONSTRUCTION SITES HAS DROPPED FROM 1,000 IN THE FIRST HALF OF LAST YEAR TO 270 IN THE FIRST HALF OF THIS YEAR.

HE ADDED THAT THE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT PRISON POPULATION HAD ALSO DECLINED STEADILY FROM 4,600 IN OCTOBER LAST YEAR, TO 3,400 TODAY.

AS A RESULT, OVERALL PRISON OVERCROWDING HAD BEEN GREATLY REDUCED.

MORE, MR ASPREY SAID THE REVIEW OF THE CURRENT PROSECUTIONS POLICY AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ORDINANCE IN COUNTERING THE EMPLOYMENT OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT WORKERS WAS BEING CARRIED OUT. THE RESULTS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE IN ABOUT ONE MONTH.

----0----

NO DEFICIENCY IN MARINE TRAFFIC SAFETY RULES
* * * * *

THERE IS NO INDICATION SO FAR OF ANY DEFICIENCY IN THE EXISTING REGULATIONS GOVERNING MARINE TRAFFIC SAFETY IN LOCAL WATERS, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON ANSON CHAN, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PEGGY LAM, MRS CHAN SAID IF ANY SUCH DEFICIENCY WAS UNCOVERED, THE MARINE DEPARTMENT WOULD REVIEW THE POSITION AND TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION.

SHE SAID THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE CAUSES OF THE ACCIDENT AFTER THE FIREWORKS DISPLAY ON FEBRUARY 16 THIS YEAR WAS CONTINUING.

"MEANWHILE, THE DEPARTMENT IS DEVISING, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE MARINE POLICE, MEASURES TO ENSURE MORE EFFECTIVE CONTROL, AND THUS IMPROVED SAFETY, OF MARINE TRAFFIC AT FUTURE FIREWORKS DISPLAYS," SHE SAID.

AS TO WHETHER A MARINE ACCIDENT VICTIMS ASSISTANCE FUND WOULD BE SET UP, MRS CHAN SAID IT WAS NOT INTENDED TO SET UP SUCH A FUND.

"VICTIMS OF MARINE ACCIDENTS HAVE RECOURSE TO CLAIMS FOR COMMON LAW DAMAGES AND ALL OWNERS OF LOCAL LAUNCHES, FERRIES AND PLEASURE CRAFT ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE THIRD PARTY INSURANCE," SHE SAID.

RELIEF FROM IMMEDIATE HARDSHIP IS AVAILABLE FROM CHARITABLE TRUST FUNDS MANAGED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT, SHE ADDED.

----0----

/7 .....

TREASURY PURCHASES NO FOREIGN CURRENCIES FORWARD
* * * * *

THE GOVERNMENT'S PRESENT POLICY IS THAT THE TREASURY DOES NOT PURCHASE FOREIGN CURRENCIES FORWARD, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MARTIN BARROW, SIR PIERS SAID EXCHANGE RISK FOR THE GOVERNMENT AS A WHOLE WAS MANAGED BY THE OFFICE OF THE EXCHANGE FUND, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE GOVERNMENT'S REQUIREMENTS FOR FOREIGN CURRENCY PAYMENTS.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY AGREED THAT IT WAS TIMELY THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE A FRESH LOOK AT THE WHOLE QUESTION OF HOW BEST TO PROTECT THE GENERAL REVENUE, AS DISTINCT FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S TOTAL RESERVES INCLUDING THE EXCHANGE FUND, AGAINST FOREIGN EXCHANGE EXPOSURE.

SIR PIERS SAID HE HAD ASKED THE FINANCE BRANCH TO UNDERTAKE A REVIEW, THE OUTCOME OF WHICH WOULD BE MADE KNOWN TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN DUE COURSE.

- - - - 0 - - - -

1,579 NEW VACANT UNITS IN URBAN THA'S
* * * * * *

AS AT JUNE 15 THIS YEAR, THERE WERE 1,579 NEW VACANT UNITS IN THE URBAN TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS (THA'S), REPRESENTING EIGHT PER CENT OF A STOCK OF NEARLY 19,500, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON ALBERT LAM, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG, MR LAM SAID ON AVERAGE, THESE UNITS HAD BEEN VACANT FOR ABOUT 27 MONTHS.

IN ADDITION, THERE WERE 658 LETTABLE CASUAL VACANCIES, HE SAID.

MR LAM POINTED OUT THAT MOST OF THE VACANT THA UNITS WERE FOR REHOUSING FAMILIES AFFECTED BY CLEARANCES WHO WERE UNABLE TO MEET THE SEVEN-YEAR RESIDENCE CRITERION FOR REHOUSING IN PUBLIC RENTAL HOUSING, AND THE REMAINDER WERE FOR THE RELIEF OF OVERCROWDING IN THA'S.

"VACANCIES IN NEW THA'S ARISE MAINLY BECAUSE AN INCREASING NUMBER OF CLEAREES AND EXISTING THA TENANTS ARE NOW ABLE TO MEET THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR PUBLIC RENTAL HOUSING FOLLOWING THE RELAXATION OF RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS IN 1990," HE SAID.

"TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF VACANT UNITS, THE HOUSING AUTHORITY WILL USE MORE OF THESE VACANCIES TO RELIEVE OVERCROWDING.

"FOR OPERATIONAL REASONS, THE AUTHORITY WILL NEED TO HOLD IN RESERVE A NUMBER OF VACANT UNITS TO ACCOMMODATE VICTIMS OF NATURAL DISASTERS, AND EVACUEES FROM UNSAFE BUILDINGS," MR LAM ADDED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/8 .....

GOVT PROPOSES TO INCLUDE PERIPHERAL POLY-NEUROPATHY
AS OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE

* * * * *

IN ORDER TO PROVIDE BETTER PROTECTION TO WORKERS, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR HAS PROPOSED TO INCLUDE PERIPHERAL POLY-NEUROPATHY AS AN OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE UNDER THE EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION ORDINANCE.

THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON JOHN CHAN, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG.

MR CHAN SAID THIS WOULD ENSURE THAT WORKERS SUFFERING FROM THE DISEASE WERE ENTITLED TO COMPENSATION, EVEN IF THEY HAD LEFT THE RELEVANT EMPLOYMENT.

HE ADDED THAT THE COMMISSIONER WAS CONSULTING THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD ON THIS PROPOSAL.

THE SECRETARY EXPLAINED THAT WHETHER OR NOT PERIPHERAL POLY-NEUROPATHY OR ANY OTHER OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE WAS LISTED UNDER THE EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION ORDINANCE DID NOT AFFECT AN EMPLOYEE'S ENTITLEMENT TO COMPENSATION IF PERSONAL INJURY AROSE OUT OF AND IN THE COURSE OF EMPLOYMENT.

HOWEVER, IF A DISEASE WAS DISCOVERED AFTER A WORKER HAD LEFT THE EMPLOYMENT WHICH GAVE RISE TO THAT DISEASE, THERE MIGHT BE DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING COMPENSATION DUE TO ARGUMENTS AS TO WHETHER THE INJURY HAD OCCURRED IN THE COURSE OF EMPLOYMENT, HE SAID.

MR CHAN SAID SO FAR THERE HAD BEEN 11 CONFIRMED CASES OF PERIPHERAL POLY-NEUROPATHY IN HONG KONG.

IN ADDITION, 41 CASES OF SUSPECTED PERIPHERAL POLY-NEUROPATHY HAD BEEN REPORTED TO THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT, HE SAID.

"THE 11 WORKERS IN THE CONFIRMED CASES HAVE ALL BEEN DISCHARGED AFTER HOSPITALISATION OR TREATMENT AND ARE CAPABLE OF RETURNING TO WORK," THE SECRETARY NOTED.

HE SAID IN ALL THE CONFIRMED CASES, THE DISEASE WAS CAUSED BY N-HEXANE WHICH WAS A NEUROTOXIN CONTAINED IN A COMMON SOLVENT KNOWN AS "PETROLEUM SPIRIT".

ON THE CONTROL OF CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES IN THE AIR, MR CHAN SAID THERE WERE NO INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED STANDARDS RELATING TO THEIR SAFE THRESHOLD LIMITS.

"THERE ARE, HOWEVER, NATIONAL STANDARDS IN SOME COUNTRIES.

"IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, FOR EXAMPLE, THE HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE HAS PUBLISHED A GUIDANCE NOTE ON SUCH STANDARDS WHICH ARE REVISED FROM TIME TO TIME IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LATEST RESEARCH FINDINGS," HE SAID.

/MR CHAN .....

MR CHAN SAID THESE STANDARDS WERE NOT LAID DOWN IN THE LAW BECAUSE IT WAS MUCH EASIER TO UPDATE THEM IF THEY WERE NOT ON THE STATUTE BOOKS.

HONG KONG FOLLOWED CLOSELY THE PRACTICE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM BY PROVIDING ADVICE ON SUCH STANDARDS WITH REFERENCE TO THE UK GUIDANCE NOTE, HE ADDED.

----0----

RTHK PROGRAMMES NOT FOR PROMOTING COMMERCIAL INTERESTS
* * * * * *

IT IS NEITHER THE POLICY NOR THE PRACTICE OF RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG TO PRODUCE PROGRAMMES INTENDED TO PROMOTE, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, OUTSIDE COMMERCIAL INTERESTS.

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON ALBERT LAM, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON SZETO WAH, MR LAM SAID RTHK HAD CLEAR GUIDELINES TO THEIR PRODUCERS ON THIS.

----0----

MEASURES TAKEN TO OVERCOME SHORTAGE OF COURT REPORTERS
* * * * *

THE JUDICIARY IS TAKING THREE MEASURES TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEM OF SHORTAGE OF COURT REPORTERS IN ORDER TO RELIEVE HIGH COURT JUDGES OF THE NEED TO MAKE NOTES IN LONG HAND WHILE HEARING CASES.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, SAID THIS IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PETER WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID THE SHORTAGE OF COURT REPORTERS WAS CAUSED BY THE LACK OF SUPPLY OF CANDIDATES WHO POSSESSED THE NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS.

TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM, MR MATHEWS SAID, FIRSTLY, EFFORTS WERE BEING MADE TO RECRUIT COURT REPORTERS FROM OVERSEAS.

"SIX COURT REPORTERS HAVE BEEN RECRUITED FROM AUSTRALIA SINCE 1990," HE NOTED.

SECONDLY, ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE FOR THE LESS URGENT PROCEEDINGS, SUCH AS CIVIL CASES IN THE HIGH COURT, TO BE RECORDED.

"THE RECORDED PROCEEDINGS CAN BE TRANSCRIBED BY TEMPORARY STAFF, SO THAT THE COURT REPORTERS CAN BE DEPLOYED TO CASES WHICH REQUIRE IMMEDIATE TRANSCRIPTION," MR MATHEWS EXPLAINED.

/THIRDLY, MR .....

THIRDLY, MR MATHEWS SAID COURT REPORTERS WERE BEING TRAINED TO USE THE COMPUTER ASSISTED TRANSCRIPTION SYSTEM (CAT SYSTEM), WHICH HELPED IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY AND REDUCE TRANSCRIPTION TIME BY UP TO 40 PER CENT.

"NINE COURT REPORTERS ARE NOW PROFICIENT IN THE CAT SYSTEM AND MORE ARE BEING TRAINED.

"IN ADDITION, FIVE SELECTED OFFICERS FROM OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS HAVE BEEN SECONDED TO THE JUDICIARY TO UNDERGO THE CAT TRAINING.

"ON COMPLETION OF THEIR TRAINING, THEY WILL BE ABLE TO PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS OF COURT REPORTERS," HE SAID.

MR MATHEWS NOTED THAT AS A LONG-TERM MEASURE TO PROVIDE A STEADY SUPPLY OF SPECIALLY TRAINED STAFF, A NEW RANK OF CAT SYSTEM TRAINEE WAS BEING CREATED TO ENCOURAGE SCHOOL LEAVERS TO TAKE UP POSITIONS AS COURT REPORTERS SKILLED IN THE CAT SYSTEM.

- - - - 0 - - - -

NO INTENTION TO REVIEW MAXIMUM PERIODS FOR MARRIAGE INJUNCTIONS
* * * * * *

THERE IS NO INTENTION BY THE ADMINISTRATION AT THIS TIME TO REVIEW THE MAXIMUM PERIODS FOR INJUNCTIONS GRANTED TO EITHER PARTY TO A MARRIAGE AGAINST THE OTHER PARTY, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON ELIZABETH WONG, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PANG CHUN-HOI, MRS WONG SAID THE REGISTRAR, SUPREME COURT WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY NOTICEABLE DIFFICULTY IN CASES WHERE AN INJUNCTION HAD BEEN GRANTED IN DEALING WITH ANY PROBLEM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WITHIN SIX MONTHS.

IN CIVIL PROCEEDINGS IT WAS ADMITTEDLY POSSIBLE FOR EITHER PARTY TO DELAY MATTERS BUT ONCE THE MATTER WAS BEFORE THE COURT, THE RISK OF CONTINUING VIOLENCE WAS LESS LIKELY.

MRS WONG SAID THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORDINANCE (CAP 189) WAS TO PROTECT BOTH PARTIES TO A MARRIAGE AND THEIR CHILDREN FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

UPON THE APPLICATION BY EITHER PARTY TO A MARRIAGE, THE DISTRICT COURT MAY GRANT AN INJUNCTION AGAINST THE OTHER PARTY TO THE MARRIAGE.

THE INJUNCTION MAY CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

* RESTRAINING THE OTHER PARTY FROM MOLESTING THE APPLICANT;

* RESTRAINING THE OTHER PARTY FROM MOLESTING ANY CHILD LIVING WITH THE APPLICANT;

/* EXCLUDING THE .....

* EXCLUDING THE OTHER PARTY FROM THE MATRIMONIAL HOME, OR A PART OF THE HOME; AND

* REQUIRING THE OTHER PARTY TO PERMIT THE APPLICANT TO ENTER AND REMAIN IN THE MATRIMONIAL HOME, OR A PART OF THE HOME.

THERE IS NO MAXIMUM PERIOD FOR AN INJUNCTION CONTAINING THE FIRST TWO CONDITIONS.

THE COURT, AFTER CONSIDERING ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CASE, DECIDES THE APPROPRIATE PERIOD FOR THE INJUNCTION WHICH BEST ENSURES THE SAFETY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE CHILDREN.

IN RESPECT OF INJUNCTIONS CONTAINING THE LAST TWO CONDITIONS, THEY MAY BE GRANTED FOR A MAXIMUM PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS.

MRS WONG SAID OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS, THE NUMBER OF BATTERED SPOUSE CASES REPORTED TO THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT WAS 455 IN 1988-89, 272 IN 1989-90 AND 236 IN 1990-91.

"IN BOTH 1989 AND 1990, THE POLICE HANDLED 181 REPORTED CASES INVOLVING ABUSE OF A SPOUSE OR COHABITANT," SHE SAID, "THE FIGURE FOR THE FIRST QUARTER THIS YEAR IS 47."

THE NUMBER OF DIVORCE PETITIONS FILED WITH THE JUDICIARY OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS WAS 5,893 IN 1988, 6,275 IN 1989 AND 6,767 LAST YEAR.

MRS WONG SAID NO RECORD WAS MAINTAINED OF THE NUMBER OF DIVORCE PETITIONS WHERE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MIGHT HAVE BEEN A FACTOR.

"THIS IS BECAUSE OF DIFFICULTIES IN INTERPRETATION ARISING PARTLY FROM THE FACT THAT ABUSE MAY BE ONE OF SEVERAL COMPLAINTS AND PARTLY BECAUSE NOT ALL ALLEGATIONS MADE IN DIVORCE PROCEEDINGS ARE PROVED," SHE EXPLAINED.

MRS WONG SAID THERE WERE TWO RESIDENTIAL CENTRES PROVIDING EMERGENCY AND TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION TO ABUSED WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN - ONE RUN BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT (SWD) AND THE OTHER BY A SUBVENTED NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION (NGO).

ORGANISED PROGRAMMES INCLUDING COUNSELLING AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES WERE CONDUCTED IN THE CENTRES, SHE ADDED.

THE TWO CENTRES PROVIDE A TOTAL OF 80 PLACES WITH A UTILISATION RATE OF 70 PER CENT IN 1990-91 (76 PER CENT FOR THE SWD CENTRE AND, 63 PER CENT FOR THE NGO CENTRE).

- - - - 0 - - - -

/12 .....

CHARGED PERSON HAS A RIGHT TO APPLY FOR BAIL
* * * * * *

A PERSON CHARGED WITH A CRIMINAL OFFENCE HAD A RIGHT TO APPLY FOR BAIL PENDING TRIAL, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MRS RITA FAN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR MATHEWS POINTED OUT THAT THE QUESTION OF WHETHER BAIL IS TO BE GRANTED OR REFUSED IS DECIDED BY THE COURTS AND BY THE COURTS ALONE.

"USUALLY, AN APPLICATION FOR BAIL WILL BE MADE TO THE MAGISTRATE BEFORE WHOM THE ACCUSED PERSON FIRST APPEARS.

"IF HE IS NOT GRANTED BAIL BY THE MAGISTRATE, HE MAY APPLY FOR BAIL BEFORE A HIGH COURT JUDGE," HE SAID.

IN DETERMINING WHETHER BAIL SHOULD BE GRANTED, MR MATHEWS SAID COURTS RECOGNISED THE PRESUMPTION OF INNOCENCE AND THAT AN ACCUSED PERSON SHOULD BE RELEASED ON BAIL UNLESS THERE WERE GOOD REASONS WHY BAIL SHOULD NOT BE GRANTED.

"BAIL WILL NOT BE GRANTED WHERE A COURT IS SATISFIED THAT THERE IS AN UNACCEPTABLE RISK THAT THE ACCUSED PERSON, IF RELEASED ON BAIL, WOULD FAIL TO RETURN TO THE COURT TO ANSWER THE CHARGES, OR WOULD COMMIT FURTHER OFFENCES, OR WOULD INTERFERE WITH WITNESSES OR OTHERWISE OBSTRUCT THE COURSE OF JUSTICE," THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID.

HE SAID IN DECIDING WHETHER TO GRANT OR REFUSE BAIL, COURTS CONSIDERED THE REASONS ADVANCED BY THE ACCUSED PERSON FOR BAIL AND ANY GROUNDS THE PROSECUTION RELIED UPON TO OPPOSE BAIL.

"BAIL MAY BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS, SUCH AS REGULAR REPORTING TO THE POLICE OR SURRENDER OF TRAVEL DOCUMENTS.

"THESE CONDITIONS ARE DESIGNED TO SECURE THE ATTENDANCE OF ACCUSED PERSONS," HE SAID.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID WHERE A MAGISTRATE OR A DISTRICT COURT JUDGE DECIDED TO GRANT BAIL TO A DEFENDANT CHARGED WITH ANY OFFENCE, HE COULD APPLY TO THE HIGH COURT FOR A REVIEW OF THAT DECISION.

MR MATHEWS SAID IT WAS USUAL FOR THE CROWN VIGOROUSLY TO OPPOSE BAIL IN SERIOUS DRUGS CASES BECAUSE OF THE RISK THAT PERSONS CHARGED WITH SUCH SERIOUS OFFENCES MIGHT ABSCOND.

"I UNDERSTAND THAT, INDEED, IT IS UNUSUAL FOR THE COURTS TO GRANT BAIL TO ACCUSED PERSONS WHO ARE CHARGED WITH A SERIOUS DRUGS OFFENCE," HE SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/13 .....

SUFFICIENT SAFEGUARDS IN EXISTING PROCEDURE IN CONSIDERING PROPOSALS FOR ALTERATION OF VALUATION LIST

* * * * * *

THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS THAT THERE ARE SUFFICIENT SAFEGUARDS IN THE EXISTING PROCEDURE AND THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW INDEPENDENT BODY IS NOT NECESSARY, GIVEN THE INEXPENSIVE AND EASY ACCESS TO THE JUDICIAL PROCESS FOR FINAL DETERMINATION OF APPEALS CONCERNING PROPOSALS FOR THE ALTERATION OF THE VALUATION LIST.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON POON CHI-FAI.

SIR PIERS SAID UNDER THE RATING ORDINANCE, THE COMMISSIONER OF RATING AND VALUATION WAS REQUIRED TO CONSIDER ANY PROPOSAL FOR THE ALTERATION OF THE VALUATION LIST.

"ALL PROPOSALS ARE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED BY PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF THE RATING AND VALUATION DEPARTMENT AND SENIOR STAFF WILL REVIEW ALL DECISIONS BEFORE THEY ARE ISSUED TO ENSURE FAIRNESS," HE SAID.

"IF A RATEPAYER IS STILL NOT SATISFIED WITH THE DECISION OF THE COMMISSIONER, HE MAY APPEAL TO THE LANDS TRIBUNAL FOR A HEARING."

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID THE TRIBUNAL WAS AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIAL BODY, AND THE PROCESS WAS RELATIVELY INEXPENSIVE AND INFORMAL.

"RATEPAYERS MAY REPRESENT THEMSELVES BEFORE THE TRIBUNAL AND NEED NOT EMPLOY LEGAL COUNSEL," HE SAID.

AS TO WHETHER WRITTEN EXPLANATIONS WERE GIVEN, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID IT WAS THE DEPARTMENT'S STANDARD PRACTICE TO ENCLOSE WITH THE COMMISSIONER'S DECISION A LEAFLET OF EXPLANATORY NOTES TOGETHER WITH A MORE DETAILED PAMPHLET ON RATING IN HONG KONG WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE GENERAL REVALUATION.

"IT WOULD NOT BE PRACTICABLE FOR THE COMMISSIONER TO ISSUE DETAILED EXPLANATIONS ON A PROPERTY BY PROPERTY BASIS.

"IF, HOWEVER, A RATEPAYER REQUIRES FURTHER EXPLANATION, HE MAY ENQUIRE AT THE DEPARTMENT," SIR PIERS SAID.

LASTLY, SIR PIERS SAID THE NUMBER OF PROPOSALS RECEIVED IN RESPONSE TO THE 1991 GENERAL REVALUATION WAS 34,261, REPRESENTING THREE PER CENT OF THE VALUATION LIST.

IN 1988, THE NUMBER WAS 26,149, OR 2.8 PER CENT OF THE VALUATION LIST; AND IN 1984, THE NUMBER WAS 99,588, OR 13.4 PER CENT OF THE VALUATION LIST.

"THUS, IT APPEARS THAT THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PROPOSALS IN RELATION TO THE CURRENT REVALUATION," THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/14 .....

VTC OFFERS MORE THAN 69,000 TRAINING PLACES FOR NEEDED

* * * * *

THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL (VTC) HAS PROVIDED MORE THAN 69,000 PLACES DURING THE PAST THREE YEARS IN COURSES DESIGNED FOR BOTH PROSPECTIVE NEW ENTRANTS TO THE EMPLOYMENT MARKET AND FOR IN-SERVICE WORKERS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON JOHN CHAN, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PANG CHUN-HOI.

MR CHAN SAID AMONG THE 69,000 PLACES IN THE VTC'S 18 TRAINING CENTRES, ABOUT 22,000 WERE CONSIDERED TO BE PARTICULARLY SUITED TO IN-SERVICE WORKERS WHO WISHED EITHER TO UPGRADE OR UPDATE THEIR SKILLS OR BE TRAINED IN ANOTHER INDUSTRY.

THE MORE POPULAR OF THESE LATTER COURSES RELATED TO TRAINING IN THE WELDING, PLASTICS, PRINTING AND HOTEL INDUSTRIES, HE SAID.

MR CHAN MENTIONED IN THIS CONNECTION THAT PEOPLE WERE FREE TO CHOOSE THEIR OCCUPATIONS.

WORKERS SOUGHT ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT FOR A WIDE VARIETY OF REASONS AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIES AND THE RELOCATION OF LABOUR-INTENSIVE PRODUCTION PROCESSES OUTSIDE HONG KONG WAS NOT THE ONLY OR NECESSARILY THE MAIN REASONS, HE NOTED.

MR CHAN ADDED THAT THE STRONG DEMAND FOR MANPOWER IN THE SERVICES SECTORS, AND THE FACT THAT EARNINGS IN THOSE SECTORS WERE GENERALLY HIGHER THAN IN MANUFACTURING, HAD ALSO PROVIDED A STIMULUS FOR MANUFACTURING WORKERS TO CHANGE JOBS.

REGARDING THE VTC'S SUBSIDY OFFERED TO WORKERS ENROLLED FOR THE TRAINING COURSES, MR CHAN SAID THE CURRENT POLICY OF THE VTC WAS TO PAY AN ALLOWANCE OF $150 A WEEK TO TRAINEES ATTENDING FULL-TIME COURSES IN ITS INDUSTRY TRAINING CENTRES.

THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF SUCH ALLOWANCES PAID DURING THE PAST THREE YEARS WAS ABOUT $30 MILLION, HE SAID.

HOWEVER, MR CHAN STRESSED THAT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO TELL WHAT PROPORTION OF THIS AMOUNT WAS PAID TO TRAINEES WHO WERE IN-SERVICE WORKERS.

THE RATE OF ALLOWANCE WAS REVIEWED FROM TIME TO TIME BY THE VTC BUT WAS NOT SPECIFICALLY LINKED TO THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX, HE ADDED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/15 .....

DUTIABLE COMMODITIES BILL INTRODUCED
* * * * *

THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 SEEKS TO REPLACE THE WORDS "LIGHT OIL" OF THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES ORDINANCE WITH "HYDROCARBON OIL".

THIS WAS STATED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, SIR PIERS JACOBS, WHEN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

SIR PIERS EXPLAINED THAT THE REPLACEMENT IN SECTION 69 OF THE ORDINANCE WAS TO EMBRACE ALL TYPES OF HYDROCARBON OIL SUITABLE AND INTENDED FOR USE AS AIRCRAFT FUEL.

HE SAID THE CHEMICAL COMPOSITION OF JET AIRCRAFT FUEL HAD CHANGED IN RECENT YEARS.

THE BULK OF AIRCRAFT SPIRIT, WHICH WAS INTENDED TO BE A DUTIABLE COMMODITY, WAS NO LONGER APPROPRIATELY CLASSIFIED UNDER THE ORDINANCE, THE SECRETARY ADDED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

AMENDMENT BILLS INTRODUCED ON CNTA TRUST FUNDS
* * * * *

AMENDMENT BILLS CONCERNING FOUR TRUST FUNDS CURRENTLY ADMINISTERED BY THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY WERE THE GRANTHAM SCHOLARSHIPS FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, THE BREWIN TRUST FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, THE SIR ROBERT BLACK TRUST FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 AND THE LI PO CHUN CHARITABLE TRUST FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991.

MOVING THE SECOND READINGS OF THE BILLS, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON ALBERT LAM, SAID THEY PROVIDED FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF PROFESSIONALS TO MANAGE THE INVESTMENTS OF THE FUNDS.

THE BILLS ALSO ENABLED THE RESPECTIVE TRUST FUND COMMITTEE TO TRANSACT SOME OF ITS BUSINESS BY CIRCULATION OF PAPERS WHEN NECESSARY, HE SAID.

DEBATES ON THE BILLS WERE ADJOURNED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/16 .....

AMENDMENT TO LEGAL PRACTITIONERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991
* * * * *

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, MOVED AN AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 5(A)(III) OF THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 DURING COMMITTEE STAGE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE EXPLAINED THAT CLAUSE 5(A)(III) PERMITTED PERSONS WHO WERE ADMITTED AS SOLICITORS IN HONG KONG AND WHO HAD PRACTISED HERE FOR AT LEAST THREE YEARS TO APPLY TO BE ADMITTED TO THE BAR.

"THIS OPPORTUNITY IS NOT AFFORDED TO PERSONS ADMITTED AS SOLICITORS IN HONG KONG AND WHO ARE LEGAL OFFICERS IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE, EVEN THOUGH THESE LEGAL OFFICERS PERFORM WORK COMPARABLE TO THAT OF SOLICITORS IN PRIVATE PRACTICE," MR MATHEWS SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT UNDER THE AMENDMENT, A LEGAL OFFICER WHO FOR AT LEAST THREE YEARS HAD BEEN ADMITTED AS A SOLICITOR IN HONG KONG AND HAD PRACTISED HERE EITHER AS A SOLICITOR OR IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE WOULD BE ABLE TO APPLY FOR ADMISSION TO THE BAR.

THE AMENDMENT HAD THE SUPPORT OF THE BAR ASSOCIATION AND LAW SOCIETY.

THE BILL WAS PASSED WITH THE ABOVE AMENDMENT.

- - - - 0 - - - -

STAMP DUTY BILL INTRODUCED
* * * * * *

THE STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1991 SEEKS TO FACILITATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TREND TOWARDS PAPERLESS TRADING IN STOCK DEALING IN HONG KONG BY ENDING THE USE OF PHYSICAL PAPER STAMPS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, WHEN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SIR PIERS SAID THE AMENDMENT WOULD ENABLE THE COLLECTOR OF STAMP DUTIES TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE STOCK EXCHANGE FOR THE CENTRAL COLLECTION OF DUTY PAYABLE.

SIR PIERS ALSO NOTED THAT UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM, AUTHORISED OFFICERS OF THE EXCHANGE WOULD BE ABLE TO ENDORSE CONTRACT NOTES TO SIGNIFY THAT DUTY HAD OR WOULD BE PAID TO THE COLLECTOR AT THE STOCK EXCHANGE.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/17 .....

BILLS TO PUT HA EMPLOYEES ON PAR WITH
CIVIL SERVICE COUNTERPARTS INTRODUCED
* * * * *

THREE BILLS SEEKING TO EXTEND TO HOSPITAL AUTHORITY EMPLOYEES THE SAME EXEMPTIONS AND CONCESSIONS IN PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION AND RELATED REQUIREMENTS AS THOSE APPLICABLE TO THEIR CIVIL SERVICE AND UNIVERSITY COUNTERPARTS WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE THREE BILLS WERE DENTISTS REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, MEDICAL REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 AND SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICAL PROFESSIONS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1991.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF DENTISTS REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON ELIZABETH WONG, SAID:

"THE AIM IS TO MAINTAIN COMPARABILITY OF TREATMENT FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS EMPLOYED IN THE GOVERNMENT, THE UNIVERSITIES AND THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY."

FOR THE SAME REASON, THE OTHER TWO BILLS WERE ALSO INTRODUCED AND GIVEN A SECOND READING TODAY.

DEBATES ON THE THREE BILLS WERE ADJOURNED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

FIVE-HOUR DEBATE ON DEATH PENALTY
* * * * * * *

THIRTY-TWO LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS, INCLUDING THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, SPOKE IN A MOTION DEBATE ON THE DEATH PENALTY, WHICH LASTED NEARLY FIVE HOURS, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT.

THE ORIGINAL MOTION MOVED BY THE HON KINGSLEY SIT WAS NOT CARRIED, WHILE AN AMENDMENT MOTION MOVED BY THE HON MARTIN LEE WAS PASSED.

MR LEE'S AMENDMENT MOTION READ: "THAT, IN VIEW OF BOTH THE NEED TO DETER AND PREVENT CRIME AND THE IMPORTANCE OF HONG KONG MAINTAINING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF A MODERN, HUMANE COMMUNITY, THIS COUNCIL URGES THE GOVERNMENT TO STRENGTHEN THE CAPABILITY OF THE POLICE FORCE TO FIGHT CRIME AND CALLS FOR LEGISLATIVE MEASURES TO BE INTRODUCED INTO THIS COUNCIL WHICH WOULD ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY AND REPLACE IT WITH LIFE IMPRISONMENT".

/MEANWHILE, 10 .....

MEANWHILE, 10 BILLS WERE PASSED BY THE COUNCIL. THE SECURITIES AND FUTURES COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, SECURITIES (DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, SECURITIES (INSIDER DEALING) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 AND LEGAL PRACTITIONERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 WERE PASSED WITH AMENDMENT WHILE THE IMPORT AND EXPORT (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1991, OZONE LAYER PROTECTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1991, POLICE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION TRUST (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, POLICE EDUCATION AND WELFARE TRUST (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 AND SUMMARY OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 WERE PASSED WITHOUT AMENDMENT.

NINE OTHER BILLS WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS, AND DEBATES ON THEM WERE ADJOURNED.

THEY WERE THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1991, GRANTHAM SCHOLARSHIPS FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, BREWIN TRUST FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, SIR ROBERT BLACK TRUST FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, LI PO CHUN CHARITABLE TRUST FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, DENTISTS REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, MEDICAL REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 AND SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICAL PROFESSIONS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1991.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/19 .....

NO COUNTDOWN TO NEW AIRPORT PROJECT CONSTRUCTION
* * * * *

THE DEPUTY TO THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID FORD, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) EMPHASISED THAT THERE IS NO COUNTDOWN TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW AIRPORT PROJECT.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER OFFICIATING AT AN ANTI-DRUGS CAMPAIGN IN SHA TIN NEW TOWN PLAZA, SIR DAVID SAID: "IF WE CANNOT FIND AGREEMENT THEN OBVIOUSLY THERE WILL BE SOME SLIPPAGE IN THE PROJECTS. BUT I'D LIKE TO EMPHASISE THAT WE HAVE NOT TAKEN A DECISION TO POSTPONE THE TENDERS FOR THE AIRPORT PLATFORM AND FOR THE TSING MA BRIDGE, NOR ARE WE ON A COUNTDOWN TO THE 30TH OF JUNE.

"IN A PROJECT SUCH AS THIS, A FEW DAYS HERE OR THERE, WHEN A PROJECT LASTING SIX-AND-A-HALF YEARS, IS NOT SIGNIFICANT. SO, WE ARE NOT ON A COUNTDOWN TO THE 30TH OF JUNE," HE ADDED.

"WE WILL MAKE THE DECISION ON THOSE TENDERS AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME. IN THE MEANTIME, WE SHALL AWAIT THE OUTCOME OF THE CONTACTS WHICH ARE STILL CONTINUING AND WE HOPE THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO GO AHEAD. IT'S TOO EARLY TO SAY YET WHETHER THOSE WILL BE SUCCESSFUL OR NOT," HE SAID.

"WE ARE STILL CONTINUING TO TRY TO FIND A SOLUTION. BOTH SIDES CLEARLY WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO GO AHEAD WITH THE AIRPORT.

"IT'S VERY MUCH IN THE INTEREST OF HONG KONG PEOPLE THAT WE HAVE A NEW AIRPORT, AND IT'S VERY CLEAR THAT THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT AND THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, AND THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO GO AHEAD. AND DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS ARE CONTINUING WITH A VIEW TO TRYING TO FIND A WAY FORWARD," SIR DAVID SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

HONG KONG FULLY SUPPORTS INTERNATIONAL FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS
* * * * *

HONG KONG FULLY SUPPORTS THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING AND INTENDS TO EXPAND FURTHER THE NETWORK OF INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION TO PROVIDE MUTUAL ASSISTANCE IN THE INVESTIGATION AND CONFISCATION OF THE PROCEEDS OF DRUG TRAFFICKING.

THE DEPUTY TO THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID FORD, SAID THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN SPEAKING AT THE CEREMONY TO MARK THE BEGINNING OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND THE ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING AT THE 'HONG KONG FIGHTS DRUGS' EXHIBITION ORGANISED BY THE ACTION COMMITTEE AGAINST NARCOTICS (ACAN).

/SIR DAVID .....

SIR DAVID SAID: "WE COMPLY WITH A FULL RANGE OF REQUIREMENTS OF INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS ON DRUG CONTROL AND WE ARE AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE FINANCIAL ACTION TASK FORCE ON MONEY LAUNDERING RECENTLY ESTABLISHED AND WHICH INVOLVES OVER 20 COUNTRIES.

"WE ENACTED THE DRUG TRAFFICKING (RECOVERY OF PROCEEDS) ORDINANCE IN 1989 AND TO DATE HAVE FROZEN $200 MILLION WORTH OF ASSETS UNDER THIS LEGISLATION."

THE DEPUTY TO THE GOVERNOR POINTED OUT THAT AT THE HEART OF THE EVIL OF DRUG TRAFFICKING WAS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR CRIMINALS TO MAKE HUGE PROFITS.

"THE POLICE AND CUSTOMS HAVE ESTABLISHED CLOSE LIAISON WITH THEIR OVERSEAS COUNTERPARTS IN THEIR ANTI-DRUG OPERATIONS AGAINST INTERNATIONAL SYNDICATES.

"NO LESS THAN 494 OFFICERS FROM BOTH SERVICES ARE INVOLVED IN THE SPECIALIST ANTI-NARCOTICS BUREAUX, AN INCREASE OF 86 PER CENT OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS.

"THE TWO SPECIALIST BUREAUX ARE, OF COURSE, SUPPORTED BY OTHER CUSTOMS AND POLICE OFFICERS IN THE BATTLE AGAINST DRUGS.

"WE HAVE RECENTLY FORMALISED SUCH INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION BY ENTERING INTO BILATERAL AGREEMENTS WITH NINE OVERSEAS JURISDICTIONS," HE ADDED.

TURNING TO THE LOCAL SCENE, SIR DAVID SAID DRUG ABUSE WAS A MULTI-FACETED PROBLEM AND THE PROGRESS HONG KONG HAD MADE IN CONTAINING THIS PROBLEM COMPARED FAVOURABLY WITH ANY INTERNATIONAL CITY.

HE SAID: "WE ARE FULLY COMMITTED TO PROVIDING ALL POSSIBLE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT OUR ANTI-DRUG EFFORTS.

"AS PART OF THAT EFFORT WE WILL CONTINUE TO INFORM THE PUBLIC, IN PARTICULAR THE YOUNG PEOPLE, OF THE DANGERS OF DRUG ABUSE.

"CLEARLY, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN OUR PUBLIC EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS IS A KEY FACTOR IN ITS SUCCESS."

EARLIER, THE ACAN CHAIRMAN, DR GERALD CHOA, SAID IN HIS WELCOME SPEECH THAT THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY HELD A SPECIAL SESSION IN NEW YORK EARLY LAST YEAR, DEVOTED TO CONSIDERATION OF THE GLOBAL PROBLEMS OF DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING, AND WAYS TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THESE.

"THAT MEETING RESULTED IN A POLITICAL DECLARATION, WHICH REAFFIRMED THE DETERMINATION OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY TO COMBAT THE SCOURGE OF DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFICKING, AND IN THE ADOPTION OF A GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION AIMED AT ERADICATION OF THE PROBLEMS OVER THE NEXT DECADE.

"THIS IS AN EXPRESSION OF POLITICAL WILL AT THE VERY HIGHEST LEVEL AND REAFFIRMS THE WORLD'S COMMITMENT TO VIGOROUS AND SUSTAINED ACTION AGAINST THIS MANIFOLD PROBLEM," DR CHOA ADDED.

/ATTENDED BY .....

ATTENDED BY MEMBERS OF ACAN AND ITS SUB-COMMITTEES, TODAY'S COMMEMORATIVE FUNCTION INCLUDED A BUS PARADE WHICH WAS KICKED OFF BY SIR DAVID AND THE ACAN CHAIRMAN.

FOUR DOUBLE-DECKERS JOINED THE PARADE AND WENT TO ABOUT 20 LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY WITH MORE THAN 50 VOLUNTEERS DISTRIBUTING PUBLICITY MATERIALS TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

AMONG THE VOLUNTEERS WERE LOCAL POP SINGERS ALEX TO AND WANG HANG, ARTISTES OF THE RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.

TO SUPPORT THE TWO U.N. EVENTS, ACAN HAS PRODUCED 200,000 COPIES OF A SOUVENIR POSTAL COVER FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION TO THE PUBLIC THROUGH VARIOUS CHANNELS OVER THE PAST THREE WEEKS.

LIMITED COPIES OF THE COVER ARE STILL AVAILABLE AT THE "HONG KONG FIGHTS DRUGS" EXHIBITION HELD AT THE NEW TOWN PLAZA, SHA TIN, UNTIL 6 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

- - - - 0 - - - -

HK'S TRADE PERFORMANCE STILL 'ENCOURAGING'

* * * * * *

HONG KONG CAN STILL MAINTAIN "MORE THAN RESPECTABLE, AS WELL AS ENCOURAGING" TRADE PERFORMANCE DESPITE CERTAIN RATHER DISTURBING DEVELOPMENTS RECENTLY, THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR T. H. CHAU, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A SPEECH TO THE HONG KONG EXPORTERS' ASSOCIATION, MR CHAU SAID THE LATEST AVAILABLE FIGURES SHOWED THAT IN APRIL THIS YEAR, DOMESTIC EXPORTS GREW BY 10.9 PER CENT IN VALUE TERMS COMPARED WITH APRIL LAST YEAR. RE-EXPORTS GREW BY NO LESS THAN 34.5 PER CENT, AND IMPORTS BY 30 PER CENT.

"IT IS PARTICULARLY WORTH NOTING THAT RETAINED IMPORTS OF RAW MATERIALS AND SEMI-MANUFACTURES HAVE CONTINUED TO GROW SIGNIFICANTLY.

"THIS SHOULD BE TRANSLATED INTO A FURTHER INCREASE IN OUR EXPORTS IN DUE COURSE," HE SAID.

MR CHAU SAID THE TRADE FIGURES MIGHT NOT BE RECORD-BREAKING BY HONG KONG'S OWN EXTREMELY HIGH STANDARDS.

"BUT IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES THEY ARE CERTAINLY MORE THAN RESPECTABLE, AS WELL AS ENCOURAGING," HE SAID.

IN SHORT, MR CHAU SAID, HONG KONG'S REACTION TO ALL THE RECENT UNCERTAINTY IN THE WORLD HAD BEEN TO HANG UP A BIG SIGN, WHICH SAID: "BUSINESS AS USUAL -- ONLY MORE OF IT".

MR CHAU SAID ONE MAJOR ISSUE CONCERNING HONG KONG'S TRADE AT THE MOMENT WAS THE UNITED STATES' RENEWAL OF CHINA'S MOST-FAVOURED-NATION TRADING STATUS.

/HE SAID .....

HE SAID IF CHINA'S MFN STATUS WAS NOT RENEWED, HONG KONG FIRMS WITH MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS IN CHINA WOULD BE DEALT A SEVERE BLOW.

"OUR TRADERS, SHIPPING AND TRANSPORTATION COMPANIES, AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS COMMITTED TO INVESTMENTS AND CONTRACTS IN CHINA WOULD ALSO BE AFFECTED.

"OUR ESTIMATE IS THAT RE-EXPORTS THROUGH HONG KONG OF CHINESE PRODUCTS TO THE U.S. WOULD DROP BY 33 PER CENT TO 44 PER CENT.

"WE COULD LOSE SEVEN TO 10 BILLION HONG KONG DOLLARS IN INCOME, 32,000 TO 43,000 JOBS AND 1.3 TO 1.8 PERCENTAGE POINTS OF GROWTH IN GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT," HE SAID.

MR CHAU SAID LAST MONTH TWO DELEGATIONS REPRESENTING THE HONG KONG GENERAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WENT TO WASHINGTON TO ENLIST CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR UNCONDITIONAL RENEWAL OF CHINA'S MFN STATUS.

SOME MEMBERS OF THE HONG KONG/U.S. ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE, INCLUDING BARONESS DUNN, MR ALLEN LEE, MR JOHN CHAN AND HIMSELF, ALSO CALLED ON LEADERS OF THE CONGRESS AND THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON EARLIER THIS MONTH TO ENLIST THEIR SUPPORT, MR CHAU SAID.

HE SAID HE BELIEVED THESE MISSIONS WERE SUCCESSFUL IN ENSURING THAT HONG KONG'S CASE WAS HEARD IN WASHINGTON, ESPECIALLY ON CAPITOL HILL.

HOWEVER, HE SAID THE THREAT REMAINED A REAL ONE AND THE GOVERNMENT WAS TAKING IT VERY SERIOUSLY.

"IN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS OR SO, MY COLLEAGUES IN WASHINGTON WILL CONTINUE TO PUT THE HONG KONG CASE TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.

"THEY WILL DO SO IN CONCERT WITH OUR NATURAL ALLIES IN THE U.S. -- THE IMPORTERS, RETAILERS AND LARGE BUSINESS CORPORATIONS WHICH HAVE A STAKE IN CHINA," HE SAID.

ON TEXTILES, MR CHAU SAID THE MULTIFIBRE ARRANGEMENT (MFA), WHICH PROVIDED THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR ALL OUR BILATERAL TEXTILES AGREEMENTS, WOULD EXPIRE IN 35 DAYS' TIME.

HE SAID WHILE OUR TEXTILE EXPORTS AFTER JULY 1991 WOULD CONTINUE UNDER THE EXISTING BILATERAL AGREEMENTS, THESE AGREEMENTS WOULD EXPIRE AT THE END OF THIS YEAR.

"WE WILL HAVE TO DISCUSS WITH OUR TRADING PARTNERS THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEXT YEAR. AMONG OTHER THINGS, OUR AIM IS TO SECURE ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WILL PROVIDE CERTAINTY AND CONTINUITY FOR OUR EXPORTS," HE SAID.

MR CHAU SAID HE WAS PLEASED TO SAY THAT HONG KONG HAD RECENTLY REACHED A TWO-YEAR AGREEMENT WITH FINLAND ON IMPROVED TERMS.

"WE HOPE THIS WILL SET A GOOD PRECEDENT FOR THE RENEGOTIATION OF OUR OTHER BILATERAL AGREEMENTS, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND CANADA LATER THIS YEAR," HE SAID.

/AS REGARDS .....

AS REGARDS THE BILATERAL AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S., MR CHAU SAID AFTER INITIAL CONTACTS IN HONG KONG LAST WEEK, HONG KONG HAD AGREED WITH THE U.S. TO START NEGOTIATIONS NEXT WEEK IN WASHINGTON FOR A NEW OR EXTENDED TEXTILES AGREEMENT.

"OUR AIM IS TO PRESERVE WHAT WE HAVE GOT AND TO BUILD ON IT. IT WILL NOT BE EASY. BUT WE WILL BE TOUGH AND WE WILL DO OUR BEST FOR HONG KONG," HE SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

GOVT STUDYING WAYS TO ENCOURAGE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN INDUSTRY

* * * * * *

THE DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRY, MR T. H. BARMA, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) CALLED ON LOCAL INDUSTRIALISTS TO DEVELOP A FAR GREATER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CAPABILITY IF HONG KONG MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES ARE TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE IN THE WORLD MARKET.

SPEAKING AT A CEREMONY MARKING THE DONATION OF A DIRECT INJECTION MOULDING MACHINE BY CHEN HSONG HOLDINGS LIMITED TO THE CITY POLYTECHNIC OF HONG KONG, MR BARMA SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS ACTIVELY STUDYING WAYS TO ENCOURAGE MORE LOCAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

"BUT MUCH STILL DEPENDS ON BOTH MANUFACTURERS AND TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS RECOGNISING THE ADVANTAGES OF WORKING WITH ONE ANOTHER," MR BARMA SAID.

HE NOTED THAT CONTACTS BETWEEN ACADEMICS AND INDUSTRIALISTS HAD BEEN STEADILY INCREASING IN RECENT YEARS IN HONG KONG, ADDING THAT CO-OPERATION BETWEEN INDUSTRY AND THE TERTIARY SECTOR WAS IN THE INTERESTS OF BOTH INDUSTRIALISTS AND ACADEMICS.

"ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS RECEIVE PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF RESEARCH FUNDING OR THE DONATION OF EQUIPMENT FROM MANUFACTURERS.

"THEY ALSO HAVE THE SATISFACTION OF ENGAGING IN PRACTICAL RESEARCH, NORMALLY DIRECTED AT SOLVING AN IMMEDIATE PROBLEM FACED BY A MANUFACTURER, THE RESULTS OF WHICH ARE LIKELY TO BE QUICKLY INCORPORATED INTO HIS MANUFACTURING PROCESS OR THE PRODUCT HE MAKES.

"MANUFACTURERS, FOR THEIR PART, ENJOY BOTH FLEXIBILITY AND THE COST SAVINGS OF BEING ABLE TO CONTRACT OUT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT INSTEAD OF CONDUCTING IT THEMSELVES," MR BARMA SAID.

MR BARMA CITED THE PLASTICS INDUSTRY AS ONE AREA WHICH DESERVED A HIGH PRIORITY FOR CO-OPERATIVE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

"WHILE THE INDUSTRY PRODUCES EXCELLENT PRODUCTS, PARTICULARLY IN THE TOY SECTOR, OUR COMPETITORS ARE CATCHING UP.

"AT THE SAME TIME, PLASTICS TECHNOLOGY IS DEVELOPING RAPIDLY, AND OUR PLASTICS MANUFACTURERS MUST BE CONSTANTLY READY TO RESPOND TO THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE," HE ADDED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/24 .....

GOVT SOURCES ITS SUPPLIES WORLDWIDE
* * * * *

THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT SOURCES ITS SUPPLIES FROM OVER 35 COUNTRIES AND 4,000 REGISTERED SUPPLIERS WITH THE TOTAL AVERAGE ANNUAL PURCHASE FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS AMOUNTED TO ABOUT 2,477 MILLION.

THIS WAS SPELLED OUT BY THE DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES, MR BILLY LAM, WHEN ADDRESSING THE EUROPE/ASIA CONFERENCE 1991 IN VIENNA ON "SELLING TO THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT: THE REQUIREMENTS".

MR LAM SAID THE GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT (GSD), AS THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT'S CENTRAL PURCHASING AND SUPPLIES AGENT, HAD BEEN OPERATING A TRANSPARENT AND NON-DISCRIMINATIVE SYSTEM AND SOURCED ITS SUPPLIES ALL OVER THE WORLD.

HE POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG WAS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO OPEN MARKET AND FREE TRADE PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE AND WAS A MEMBER OF THE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE (GATT).

BESIDES, IT HAD BEEN SIGNATORY TO THE AGREEMENT ON GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT SINCE THIS AGREEMENT CAME INTO EFFECT IN 1981.

MR LAM SAID GSD IS HONG KONG'S ENTITY IN THIS AGREEMENT, ADDING THAT ALL ITS PURCHASES VALUED ABOVE SDR (SPECIAL DRAWING RIGHT) 130,000 (ABOUT $1.338 MILLION) WERE CONDUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GATT REGULATIONS.

AS A GENERAL RULE, HE SAID, CONTRACTS WERE LET BY TENDER, INCLUDING OPEN PUBLIC TENDER, SELECTIVE RESTRICTED TENDER AND SINGLE TENDER.

ALL OPEN TENDERS WERE SENT TO TRADE COMMISSIONERS OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVES IN HONG KONG.

"IN DECIDING THE APPROPRIATE TENDER METHOD, WE MUST ENSURE THAT THE RELEVANT RULES ARE ADHERED TO AND THAT, AT THE END OF THE DAY, WE GET THE BEST VALUE FOR MONEY," MR LAM SAID.

COMPARED WITH WHAT GSD BOUGHT FROM OTHER COUNTRIES, THE DIRECTOR SAID THE VALUE OF PURCHASES FROM AUSTRIA, HUNGARY AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA WAS RELATIVELY LOW - BELOW 0.689 PER CENT (FOR ALL THREE COUNTRIES) OR 0.44 PER CENT (FOR AUSTRIA ALONE) OF THE TOTAL ANNUAL PURCHASES.

"I VERY MUCH HOPE TO SEE A HIGHER, MUCH HIGHER, FIGURE FROM YOU, ESPECIALLY THOSE PRESENT HERE TODAY, PROVIDED THE PRICES ARE COMPETITIVE AND THE QUALITY IS GOOD," HE SAID.

MR LAM SAID THE DOOR OF THE DEPARTMENT WAS ALWAYS OPEN.

THE DEPARTMENT HANDLED THE PURCHASE OF ALL COMMODITIES AND EQUIPMENT USED BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT'S OWN 60 DEPARTMENTS AND SOME SUBVENTED AGENCIES PARTLY FINANCED BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT.

/THE TYPES .....

THE TYPES OF COMMODITIES BOUGHT WERE DIVERSE: FROM SIMPLE TOILET ROLLS AND STATIONERY TO SOPHISTICATED COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS AND HELICOPTERS.

THE MAJOR PURCHASES WERE COMPUTER SYSTEMS, PHARMACEUTICALS, AND EQUIPMENT FOR MEDICAL, COMMUNICATIONS AND SCIENTIFIC USES, WATER PIPES AND FITTINGS AS WELL AS FIRE FIGHTING VEHICLES AND ENGINE SPARE PARTS.

- - - - 0 - - - -

JUNE 1991 SURVEY OF EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL STARTED

* * * * * *

THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT HAS STARTED TO CONDUCT THE JUNE 1991 ROUND OF THE SURVEY OF EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL IN MAJOR SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY TO COLLECT INFORMATION ON EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL IN RESPECT OF THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1991.

THIS SURVEY IS CONDUCTED QUARTERLY AND THE SURVEY RESULTS ARE USEFUL IN PROVIDING SHORT-TERM ECONOMIC INDICATORS AS WELL AS INFORMATION ON THE STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN THE LABOUR MARKET IN HONG KONG.

THIS ROUND OF THE SURVEY COVERS ABOUT 104,000 ESTABLISHMENTS WHICH ARE DRAWN FROM VARIOUS SECTORS INCLUDING THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR (MINING AND QUARRYING; MANUFACTURING; ELECTRICITY AND GAS), THE DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES SECTOR (WHOLESALE, RETAIL, IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS) AND THE SERVICES SECTOR (TRANSPORT, STORAGE AND COMMUNICATION; FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES; COMMUNITY, SOCIAL AND PERSONAL SERVICES).

INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER OF PERSONS ENGAGED AND EXISTING VACANCIES ON JUNE 28 WILL BE SOUGHT FROM EACH SELECTED ESTABLISHMENT.

SOME 10,000 ESTABLISHMENTS ARE RANDOMLY SELECTED FROM THIS SAMPLE TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON PAYROLL IN EACH OF THE THREE MONTHS DURING THE REFERENCE PERIOD OF APRIL-JUNE 1991.

QUESTIONNAIRES ARE BEING MAILED TO INDIVIDUAL SAMPLE ESTABLISHMENTS.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS ORDER 1982, ESTABLISHMENTS RECEIVING QUESTIONNAIRES ARE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE AND RETURN THEM TO THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT WITHIN THE SPECIFIED PERIOD.

SHOULD RESPONDENTS FIND DIFFICULTIES IN COMPLETING THE FORMS, THEY ARE WELCOME TO CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT FOR ASSISTANCE ON TEL. 823 5076.

AS FOR THOSE ESTABLISHMENTS KNOWN TO THIS DEPARTMENT DURING APRIL-JUNE 1991, THEY WILL ALSO BE ENUMERATED IN ORDER TO MAKE THE SURVEY RESULTS COMPLETE.

/FIELD OFFICERS .....

FIELD OFFICERS OF THIS DEPARTMENT, EACH BEARING A GOVERNMENT IDENTITY CARD, WILL CALL ON THESE ESTABLISHMENTS TO SOLICIT INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER OF PERSONS ENGAGED, EXISTING VACANCIES, TYPE OF OWNERSHIP, NATURE OF BUSINESS AND DATE ON WHICH BUSINESS COMMENCED.

IN CASE OF ANY ENQUIRIES REGARDING THESE FIELD VISITS, PLEASE CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT FOR ASSISTANCE ON TEL. 823 4782.

----0----

FARMERS URGED TO EXPRESS VIEWS THROUGH CONSULTATION

* * * * *

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS BRANCH TODAY (WEDNESDAY) URGED LIVESTOCK FARMERS TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON MEASURES PROPOSED TO ABATE POLLUTION BY LIVESTOCK WASTES THROUGH EXISTING CONSULTATION CHANNELS.

SUCH VIEWS WOULD THEN BE CONSOLIDATED AND SUBMITTED TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION BEFORE ANY CHANGE TO THE LEGISLATION WAS MADE, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

FOLLOWING THE GOVERNMENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT EARLIER THIS MONTH OF THE PACKAGE OF PROPOSALS AIMED AT REDUCING THE RISK THAT OLD-FASHIONED LIVESTOCK KEEPING METHODS STILL IN USE POSED TO THE ENVIRONMENT, WIDE PUBLIC CONSULTATION IS NOW IN PROGRESS.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID: "THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY HELD A COUPLE OF MEETINGS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS FARMERS' ASSOCIATIONS IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS, AND WILL CONTINUE TO CONSULT THE FARMERS WIDELY ON THE PROPOSALS.

"THE GOVERNMENT WISHES TO BE AS FLEXIBLE AS POSSIBLE AND IS PREPARED TO CONSIDER THE VIEWS OF FARMERS SYMPATHETICALLY AS FAR AS POSSIBLE SO AS TO COME UP WITH A SYSTEM WHICH WILL BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY."

THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE WILL LAST UNTIL MID-AUGUST TO COLLECT VIEWS FROM FARMERS AND VARIOUS BODIES CONCERNED.

HE URGED THE FARMERS TO VIEW THE PROPOSALS POSITIVELY, ADDING THAT "THE NEW CONTROL SCHEME WILL NOT ONLY GIVE LIVESTOCK FARMERS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO ENSURE A FIRM FUTURE FOR THEIR INDUSTRY IN HONG KONG, BUT ALSO END THE SCOURGE OF LIVESTOCK WASTE POLLUTION OF OUR WATER COURSES".

----0----

/27 .....

TWO-DAY JLG EXPERTS TALKS
* * * * * *

A SIXTH ROUND OF TALKS BETWEEN EXPERTS OF THE BRITISH AND CHINESE SIDES OF THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP TO DISCUSS MATTERS RELATING TO HONG KONG'S FUTURE DEFENCE AND PUBLIC ORDER WILL BE HELD IN HONG KONG TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AND ON FRIDAY.

THE BRITISH TEAM WILL BE LED BY BRITISH REPRESENTATIVE MR DOUG MARTIN.

THE CHINESE TEAM WILL BE LED BY CHINESE REPRESENTATIVE MR ZHENG WEIRONG. THEY WILL BE ASSISTED BY EXPERTS FROM THE TWO SIDES.

- - - - 0 - - - -

MANAGEMENT CONTRACT FOR ABERDEEN TUNNEL AWARDED
* * * * *

THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL HAS DECIDED THAT THE CONTRACT FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE ABERDEEN TUNNEL, AND THE MAINTENANCE OF THE TUNNEL'S MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT BE AWARDED TO THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL COMPANY LIMITED.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT IS FOR THREE YEARS INITIALLY AND IS RENEWABLE. IT ALSO INCLUDES PROVISIONS SETTING OUT THE CONTRACTOR'S OBLIGATIONS, MAINTENANCE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, GOVERNMENT CONTROLS AND PROVISIONS FOR DAMAGES IN THE EVENT OF BREACH OF CONTRACT.

UPON THE HANDING OVER OF THE TUNNEL OPERATION, ALL THE STAFF WORKING AT THE TUNNEL WILL BE REDEPLOYED TO THE REMAINING GOVERNMENT TUNNELS OR OTHER DUTIES, HE SAID.

HE STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL RETAIN CONTROL OVER THE TUNNEL TOLL AND THE PERFORMANCE OF THE OPERATOR.

THE OPERATOR WILL DERIVE NO BENEFIT FROM ANY TOLL INCREASE AS HE WILL BE RECEIVING A FIXED FEE UNDER THE AGREEMENT.

ACTIVE PLANNING IS ALSO IN HAND TO PRIVATISE THE MANAGEMENT OF OTHER GOVERNMENT-OPERATED TUNNELS, THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/28 .....

NEW SIU LAM EXTENSION OPENS
* * * * * *

A NEW EXTENSION OF THE SIU LAM PSYCHIATRIC CENTRE (SLPC), WHICH HOUSES MENTALLY DISTURBED PRISONERS, WAS OFFICIALLY OPENED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ADDRESSING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE NEW EXTENSION, THE COMMISSIONER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, MR ERIC MCCOSH, SAID THE NEW EXTENSION PROVIDED SOME MUCH NEEDED ADDITIONAL FACILITIES AND ACCOMMODATION TO MEET THE GROWING DEMAND.

HE NOTED THAT WITH THE PRESSURES CREATED BY MODERN DAY HONG KONG AND THE VARIETY OF CAUSES LEADING TO CRIME, OUR PENAL SYSTEM SAW AN EVER INCREASING NUMBER OF PRISONERS WHO REQUIRED SOME FORM OF PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION OR TREATMENT.

"PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION ALSO PLAYS A VERY IMPORTANT PART IN THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE COURTS," HE SAID.

THE PRESENT SLPC HAD REACHED CAPACITY SOON AFTER ITS OPENING IN 1972 AND WAS SUFFERING FROM OVERCROWDING, NECESSITATING PLANNING FOR AN EXTENSION.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW EXTENSION, TO ACCOMMODATE A FURTHER 150 INMATES, STARTED IN AUGUST 1987 AND WAS COMPLETED IN JANUARY THIS YEAR.

THE EXTENSION ENABLES THE CENTRE TO SET UP A FEMALE UNIT AND TO RECEIVE ALL FORENSIC CASES FROM CASTLE PEAK HOSPITAL.

ALSO, THE CENTRE CAN NOW RECEIVE PRISONERS FROM OTHER PENAL INSTITUTIONS WHO ARE KNOWN TO HAVE PERSONALITY DISORDERS OR A PAST HISTORY OF MENTAL ILLNESS.

- - - - 0 - - - -

TWO MEMBERS RE-APPOINTED TO CIVIL SERVICE PAY GROUP
* * * * * *

THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE GOVERNOR HAS RE-APPOINTED MR DAVID A. MORRIS AND MR NICHOLAS S. C. CHIU AS MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMISSION ON CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE, TO TAKE EFFECT WHEN THEIR CURRENT TERMS OF SERVICE EXPIRE ON JULY 1 THIS YEAR.

THE STANDING COMMISSION ADVISES THE GOVERNMENT ON THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES GOVERNING THE PAY AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF THE NON-DIRECTORATE CIVIL SERVICE OTHER THAN THE DISCIPLINED SERVICES.

MR MORRIS HAS SERVED ON THE STANDING COMMISSION FOR FOUR YEARS AND MR CHIU TWO YEARS.

THE TERM OF APPOINTMENT FOR BOTH MEMBERS WILL BE FOR TWO YEARS WITH EFFECT FROM JULY 1 THIS YEAR.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/29 .....

UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS IN NORTH POINT TO BE CLOSED
* * * * * *

THE BUILDING AUTHORITY IS SEEKING TO CLOSE THE UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS AT TWO SERVICE LANES IN NORTH POINT, SO THAT THEY CAN BE DEMOLISHED WITHOUT DANGER TO THE OCCUPIERS AND THE PUBLIC.

THESE STRUCTURES ARE LOCATED AT THE SERVICE LANES OF 10-16 FORT STREET AND 9 KIN WAH STREET.

NOTICES OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR CLOSURE ORDERS UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE FROM THE HONG KONG DISTRICT COURT ON OCTOBER 28 WERE POSTED ON THE PREMISES TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

DEMOLITION WORK IS EXPECTED TO START ONCE THE CLOSURE ORDERS ARE ISSUED.

----0----

FC MEETING ON FRIDAY
* * * * *

THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WILL HOLD A MEETING ON FRIDAY (JUNE 28) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER. IT WILL BEGIN AT 2.30 PM.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO OBSERVE THE COMMITTEE'S PROCEEDINGS FROM THE CHAMBER'S PUBLIC GALLERIES AND THEY MAY MAKE RESERVATIONS BY TELEPHONING 844 0899.

----0----

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS
* * * * *

	DATE	$ MILLION
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT ON	25.6.91	380
EFFECT OF FORWARDS TO BE SETTLED ON	26.6.91	-31
EFFECT OF OPERATIONS THIS MORNING		+31
EFFECT OF OPERATIONS THIS AFTERNOON		NEUTRAL

TRADE WEIGHTED INDEX 114.3 *+0.1* 26.6.91

/HONG KONG .....

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

CLOSING YIELDS OF EXCHANGE FUND BILLS

		26.6.91	25.6.91
MATURING IN	1 WEEK	7.64 PCT	7.48 PCT
	1 MONTH	7.45 PCT	7.41 PCT
	3 MONTHS	7.41 PCT	7.40 PCT
	6 MONTHS	7.40 PCT	7.40 PCT
	12 MONTHS	7.46 PCT	7.42 PCT
TOTAL BILLS TRANSFERRED		2,024 MN	2,007 MN

- - - - 0 - - - -