



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1993

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
GOVERNOR MEETS MEDIA	1
GOVT'S RETIREMENT PROTECTION APPROACH THE BEST WAY FORWARD: GOVERNOR	4
THREE SITES SOLD	5
PROPERTY DEALS FIGURES FOR NOVEMBER	6
GOVERNOR SEES SHOW USD UPGRADES CIVIC SERVICES	7
CRIMINAL COURT USERS COMMITTEE MEETS	8
LANGUAGE GROUPING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS	8
NEW LICENCE FEES FOR EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES TAKE EFFECT	10
BETTER SERVICE AT TAI PO JOCKEY CLUB CLINIC	10
SHAM SHUI PO ILLEGAL STRUCTURE TO BE REMOVED	10
11 BRAVE CITIZENS AWARDED FOR SAVING LIVES	11
HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS ..	11

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1993

- 1 -

GOVERNOR MEETS MEDIA

* * * * *

THE FOLLOWING IS THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER VISITING THE VISUAL ARTS CENTRE IN HONG KONG PARK TODAY:

GOVERNOR: GOOD AFTERNOON. I AM DELIGHTED TO HAVE SEEN THIS AFTERNOON SOME OF THE FACILITIES AND SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE URBAN COUNCIL WHICH PLAY SUCH AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN HONG KONG. IT'S BEEN A GREAT PLEASURE TO SEE BOTH THE RECREATION AND CULTURAL FACILITIES AND TO SEE SOME OF THE HARD WORK THAT THE COUNCIL DOES IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE. IN MY LEGCO SPEECH A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO, I PROMISED THE COMMUNITY THAT BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR, WE WOULD SET OUT WHAT WE BELIEVED TO BE THE RIGHT WAY AHEAD FOR HELPING THOSE WHO'RE RETIRED. WE SAID WE WOULD PUT FORWARD OUR VIEWS ABOUT RETIREMENT PROTECTION. WE'VE KEPT OUR WORDS THIS AFTERNOON AND SET OUT OUR VIEWS IN A STATEMENT TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. I THINK THE APPROACH WHICH WE HAVE PUT FORWARD IS THE BEST WAY OF PROVIDING BETTER FINANCIAL CARE FOR THE ELDERLY, BOTH TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE IN A WAY WHICH IS COST-EFFECTIVE. I WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT MY VIEW IS THAT WE SHOULD DEPEND AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ON THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF PRIVATE SCHEMES. I THINK THAT IS THE HONG KONG TRADITION AND I WANT TO ENCOURAGE THAT. BUT IF THE COMMUNITY WANTS TO TAKE A MORE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO THE ISSUE, IF IT WANTS A MORE INTERVENTIONIST APPROACH, THEN I THINK THE WAY WE HAVE SUGGESTED THIS AFTERNOON IS THE RIGHT WAY FORWARD. I THINK THAT WE ARE AT THE BEGINNING OF A PERIOD OF PRETTY VIGOROUS DEBATE IN THE COMMUNITY ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE. WE'VE MADE CLEAR WHAT WE THINK SHOULD HAPPEN. IT'S AN IMPORTANT SUBJECT BOTH BECAUSE OF THE NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY TODAY AND BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT THE NUMBER OF THE ELDERLY IS INCREASING AND THE NUMBER OF THE VERY ELDERLY IS INCREASING AS WELL. SO THIS IS GOING TO BE ONE OF THE BIGGEST SOCIAL PROBLEMS, SOCIAL CHALLENGES THAT HONG KONG HAS TO FACE IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS AND I THINK WE'VE RISEN TO THAT CHALLENGE IN AN INTELLIGENT AND SENSIBLE WAY THIS AFTERNOON AND I HOPE THAT THAT WILL BE RECOGNISED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND BY THE MAJORITY OF THE COMMUNITY.

QUESTION: MR PATTEN, WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO GAZETTE THE SECOND PART OF YOUR REFORM BILL AS CHINA HAS SAID REPEATEDLY THAT THE TALKS NOW ARE LITERALLY DEAD?

/GOVERNOR

GOVERNOR: WE HAVEN'T KILLED THE TALKS. THE REASON FOR TABLING AND INTRODUCING THE PARTIAL BILL, THE INTERIM BILL IS IN ORDER TO TRY TO KEEP THE TALKS ALIVE. THE WHOLE COMMUNITY AND, I BELIEVE, CHINESE OFFICIALS KNOW PERFECTLY WELL THAT WE HAVE TO MOVE IN ORDER NOT TO MISS OUR LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DEADLINES. EVERYONE KNEW THAT EVEN WAITING UNTIL EARLY DECEMBER WAS CUTTING THINGS VERY FINE. WE WANT TO GO ON TALKING TO CHINESE OFFICIALS ABOUT THE OUTSTANDING ISSUES WHICH ARE CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES LIKE THE ELECTION COMMITTEE, THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES AND THE THROUGH TRAIN. WE ARE NOT GOING TO WALK AWAY FROM THE NEGOTIATING TABLE AND I HOPE THAT THE CHINESE SIDE AREN'T GOING TO WALK AWAY FROM THE NEGOTIATING TABLE EITHER. I THINK THAT IT WOULD BE A HELP IF INSTEAD OF USING RATHER SURPRISING LANGUAGE ABOUT WHAT WE'VE BEEN DOING IN HONG KONG, CHINESE OFFICIALS WOULD HAVE TO TELL US WHETHER OR NOT THEY THINK OUR PROPOSALS ON THE VOTING METHOD FOR THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ARE REASONABLE. AND IF THEY DON'T THINK THE "SINGLE-SEAT, SINGLE VOTE" METHOD IS REASONABLE, THEN THEY SHOULD SAY WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO DO. I THINK THEY SHOULD SAY WHERE THEY THINK WE COULD FIND EXTRA TIME IN ORDER TO PUT IN PLACE THE PROPOSALS WHICH ARE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO HAVE DECENT ELECTIONS HERE IN HONG KONG. THEY MUST RECOGNISE THE ROLE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN DEBATING THESE THINGS. AFTER ALL, A MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WHO, I THINK, USUALLY SUPPORTS PEKING, IS HIMSELF PUSHING A PRIVATE MEMBERS BILL THIS AFTERNOON AND SEEKING IN DOING THAT TO AFFECT THE WAY THE EXECUTIVE BEHAVES. SO WHEN IT SUITS THEM, SOME CHINESE OFFICIALS AND SOME ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHINESE SIDE APPEAR TO RECOGNISE THE ROLE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. I WISH THEY WOULD RECOGNISE ALL THE TIME THE ROLE WHICH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HAS TODAY UNDER OUR EXISTING CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND THE ROLE IT'LL HAVE TOMORROW UNDER THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE BASIC LAW.

QUESTION: SIR, WHAT IS THE CHINESE RESPONSE TO YOUR DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS..... BEFORE YESTERDAY?

GOVERNOR: WE CONTACTED CHINESE OFFICIALS AGAIN YESTERDAY AND ASKED THEM WITH OUR USUAL POLITENESS WHEN THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE US AN ANSWER ABOUT OUR PROPOSAL THAT THE 18TH ROUND OF TALKS SHOULD TAKE PLACE ON DECEMBER 17TH AND 18TH. AFTER ALL, IF THOSE TALKS ARE GOING TO TAKE PLACE THEN OR EVEN NEXT WEEK, WE WILL HAVE TO LET OUR OFFICIALS KNOW SO THAT THEY CAN START PACKING. WE WANT TO HAVE AN ANSWER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. WE WERE TOLD THAT OUR REQUEST WAS BEING CONSIDERED AND I HOPE WE WILL GET A REPLY VERY SOON. BUT WE'LL GO ON ASKING FOR TALKS JUST AS WE ASKED FOR TALKS IN THE FIRST PLACE. YOU REMEMBER THAT THE IDEA OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS CAME FROM US.

QUESTION: MR PATTEN, YOU'LL FACE THE PROSPECT TO FIND THE GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG WITHOUT ANY CO-OPERATION FROM CHINA, THAT THEY WILL IGNORE EVERYTHING YOU SAY AND DO, HOW DO YOU NOW RECONCILE IT?

GOVERNOR: WELL, IF I LOOK BACK NOT JUST ON THE LAST 18 MONTHS BUT ON A RATHER LONGER PERIOD, I AM NOT OVERWHELMED BY A FEELING THAT WE'VE BEEN WORKING IN A VERY CO-OPERATIVE ATMOSPHERE, UNFORTUNATELY. I STILL FEEL VERY STRONGLY THAT IT WOULD BE MUCH BETTER IF WE COULD CO-OPERATE OVER THAT VAST RANGE OF ISSUES ON WHICH THERE SHOULD BE NO CONTROVERSY WHATSOEVER. IT'S CERTAINLY TRUE, FOR EXAMPLE, OF THE GREAT MAJORITY OF JOINT LIAISON GROUP ISSUES, MATTERS WHICH ARE ONCE OF TECHNICAL DETAILS, MATTERS WHICH ARE ADMINISTRATIVE RATHER THAN POLITICAL. ALL MATTERS WHICH ALL THOSE INTERESTED IN THE PROSPERITY AND STABILITY OF HONG KONG SHOULD AGREE TO WORK ON TOGETHER. I REPEAT WHAT I'VE SAID BEFORE, THAT IF WE DISAGREE ON ONE OR TWO THINGS ALTHOUGH THEY ARE IMPORTANT, IT SHOULDN'T MEAN WE DISAGREE ON EVERYTHING. WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO CO-OPERATE IN THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG AND THAT'S WHAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT AND THAT'S WHAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO TRY TO DO. OVER THE LAST YEAR WHEN SOMETIMES THE NUMBER OF ADJECTIVES PER HOUR HAS BEEN PRETTY HIGH, WE'VE NEVERTHELESS MANAGED TO SECURE CONTINUING GROWTH AND PROGRESS IN HONG KONG'S ECONOMY. IT REMAINS ONE OF THE WONDERS OF THE WORLD. WE'VE SEEN INCREASE IN INVESTOR CONFIDENCE IN OUR FUTURE AND I AM SURE THAT WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE CASE AND ORDINARY FAMILIES IN HONG KONG WILL PREPARE, AS I AM SURE YOU ARE, FOR A HAPPY CHRISTMAS, UNTRoubLED BY TURMOIL, CHAOS OR ANY OF THE OTHER SLIGHTLY STRANGE DESCRIPTIONS OF LIFE IN HONG KONG WHICH WE HEAR FROM TIME TO TIME.

QUESTION: MR PATTEN,ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT THINGS PWC TO ORGANISE ITS OWN ELECTIONS WHICH WILL BE HELD THE INSTANT YOU LEAVE HONG KONG?

GOVERNOR: NO, I THINK THAT IT WOULD BE VERY BAD FOR THE CREDIBILITY OR AUTHORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG IF WE APPEAR TO PUT IN PLACE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WERE NOT FAIR AND WOULD NOT GUARANTEE TO GIVE US A CREDIBLE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OR CREDIBLE DISTRICT ORGANISATIONS IN THE YEARS AHEAD. THAT WOULD UNDERMINE OUR CREDIBILITY OR AUTHORITY. I DON'T BELIEVE FOR ONE MOMENT THAT CHINA WOULD WANT AS A FIRST ACT OF SOVEREIGNTY AFTER 1ST JULY 1997 TO TURF OUT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS WHO'VE BEEN ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG. I WOULD NOT HAVE THOUGHT THAT WAS A VERY SENSIBLE WAY TO TRY TO WIN HEARTS AND MINDS.

QUESTION: SIR, BUT WHAT YOU HAVE DONE HAD MADE CREDIBILITY AND HONORARY RETREAT OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE YOU CAN'T GUARANTEE THROUGH TRAIN FOR THE THREE TIERS ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS?

GOVERNOR: I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN BY THE THREE TIERS OF THE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS. I AM NOT QUITE SURE WHERE A THROUGH TRAIN FOR DISTRICT ORGANISATIONS FITS IN RELATION TO THE BASIC LAW. I THINK THE ANSWER IS NOWHERE BUT WE ARE VERY HAPPY TO SEE A THROUGH TRAIN. WE WON'T DO ANYTHING WHICH TEARS UP THE RAILWAY LINES AND I HOPE THE CHINESE SIDE WON'T TEAR UP THE RAILWAY LINES EITHER. I HAVE TO SAY THAT DURING 17TH ROUND OF TALKS, WE WERE, ALAS, AWARE OF QUITE A GAP BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES ON THE THROUGH TRAIN AND THAT WASN'T BECAUSE WE WERE SUGGESTING THINGS THAT WERE UNREASONABLE BUT I THINK THERE ARE QUESTIONS TO ASK THE CHINESE SIDE ABOUT WHAT THEY WANT TO DO ABOUT THE THROUGH TRAIN, AT WHICH MOMENT, AFTER THE LAST QUESTION.

QUESTION : GOVERNOR PATTEN, DO YOU HAVE A TOUGH JOB TRYING TO GET YOUR PROPOSALS THROUGH LEGCO?

GOVERNOR: I DON'T THINK THAT GOVERNING HONG KONG HAS EVER BEEN A PUSHOVER AND I DON'T THINK IT'S GOING TO BE FOR THE NEXT THREE AND A HALF YEARS. IT IS AN IMPORTANT JOB AND ALL IMPORTANT JOBS ARE NOT WITHOUT THEIR DIFFICULTIES. BUT WE'LL BE STARTING OUR DIALOGUE WITH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AS FROM THIS AFTERNOON AND I AM SURE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WILL WANT TO DO WHAT IT BELIEVES TO BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE OF THIS REMARKABLE COMMUNITY.

QUESTION: ABOUT THE RETIREMENT SCHEME. WILL YOU CONSIDER THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAKE SOME CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE RETIREMENT SCHEME THAT IT PROPOSED, NOT ONLY THE EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES?

GOVERNOR: I THINK THAT IS A QUESTION WHICH YOU WILL FIND THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER COVERED IN HIS STATEMENT THIS AFTERNOON. WHAT I DON'T THINK ANYBODY WOULD WANT IS FOR US IN HONG KONG TO FETCH UP FACING THE SAME SORT OF FINANCING PROBLEMS WITH WELFARE PROVISION WHICH HAS CREATED SOME MANY DIFFICULTIES IN SOME EUROPEAN COMMUNITY COUNTRIES AND IN NORTH AMERICA AS WELL. ANY CONTRIBUTION FROM THE GOVERNMENT, FROM THE TAXPAYER, THAT IS FROM YOU, WILL HAVE TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THAT BUT THAT IS THE SORT OF ISSUE WHICH IS BEING DISCUSSED THIS AFTERNOON IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. WE KNOW VERY WELL AT THE MOMENT THE GOVERNMENT MAKES CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PROVISION FOR THE ELDERLY AND I AM SURE THAT WILL NEED TO BE TAKEN ACCOUNT OF IN THE ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WE EVENTUALLY PUT IN PLACE BUT WE NEED TO DISCUSS THOSE ARRANGEMENTS, THOSE PROPOSALS WITH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. WE NEED TO DISCUSS THOSE PROPOSALS WIDELY IN THE COMMUNITY BECAUSE I AM SURE THAT MANY PEOPLE WILL HAVE OPINIONS AND, OF COURSE, AND I WANT TO UNDERLINE THIS, WE WILL NEED TO DISCUSS THOSE PROPOSALS WITH CHINESE OFFICIALS AS WELL BECAUSE THE SCHEME IS PRIMARILY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS AFTER 1997. THEY ARE NOT SOLELY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS AFTER 1997 AND IT IS ONLY RIGHT THAT CHINESE OFFICIALS SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THAT DISCUSSION AND I HOPE THEY WILL CONTRIBUTE IN A CONSTRUCTIVE WAY BECAUSE WE ALL KNOW THIS IS AN ISSUE WHICH IS VERY VERY HIGH ON THE AGENDA OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

- - - - 0 - - - -

GOVT'S RETIREMENT PROTECTION APPROACH THE BEST WAY FORWARD: GOVERNOR

* * * * *

THE APPROACH THE GOVERNMENT PUTS FORWARD ON RETIREMENT PROTECTION IS THE BEST WAY OF PROVIDING BETTER FINANCIAL CARE FOR THE ELDERLY, BOTH TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE, IN A WAY WHICH IS COST-EFFECTIVE, THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER VISITING URBAN COUNCIL FACILITIES, HE SAID: "I WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT MY VIEW IS THAT WE SHOULD DEPEND AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ON THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF PRIVATE SCHEMES."

"I THINK THAT IS THE HONG KONG TRADITION AND I WANT TO ENCOURAGE THAT."

ASKED ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SCHEME, HE SAID: "WE KNOW VERY WELL AT THE MOMENT THE GOVERNMENT MAKES CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PROVISION FOR THE ELDERLY AND I AM SURE THAT WILL NEED TO BE TAKEN ACCOUNT OF IN THE ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WE EVENTUALLY PUT IN PLACE."

/"BUT WE

"BUT WE NEED TO DISCUSS THOSE ARRANGEMENTS, THOSE PROPOSALS WITH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. WE NEED TO DISCUSS THOSE PROPOSALS WIDELY IN THE COMMUNITY."

ON WHEN THE SECOND PART OF THE ELECTION REFORM BILL WOULD BE GAZETTED, THE GOVERNOR SAID: "THE REASON FOR TABLING AND INTRODUCING THE PARTIAL BILL, THE INTERIM BILL, IS IN ORDER TO TRY TO KEEP THE TALKS ALIVE."

"THE WHOLE COMMUNITY AND, I BELIEVE, CHINESE OFFICIALS KNOW PERFECTLY WELL THAT WE HAVE TO MOVE IN ORDER NOT TO MISS OUR LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DEADLINES."

HE REITERATED THAT THE BRITISH SIDE WOULD NOT WALK AWAY FROM THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. HE HOPES THAT THE CHINESE SIDE WOULD ALSO NOT WALK AWAY FROM THE NEGOTIATING TABLE.

ASKED IF THE CHINESE SIDE HAD RESPONDED TO THE DIPLOMATIC CONTACT, MR PATTEN SAID: "WE CONTACTED CHINESE OFFICIALS AGAIN YESTERDAY AND ASKED THEM WITH OUR USUAL POLITENESS WHEN THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE US AN ANSWER ABOUT OUR PROPOSAL THAT THE 18TH ROUND OF TALKS SHOULD TAKE PLACE ON DECEMBER 17TH AND 18TH."

"WE WERE TOLD THAT OUR REQUEST WAS BEING CONSIDERED AND I HOPE WE WILL GET A REPLY VERY SOON. BUT WE'LL GO ON ASKING FOR TALKS JUST AS WE ASKED FOR TALKS IN THE FIRST PLACE."

- - - - 0 - - - -

THREE SITES SOLD

* * * * *

THREE LOTS OF GOVERNMENT LAND WERE SOLD FOR \$4,054 MILLION AT THE PUBLIC LAND AUCTION HELD BY THE LANDS DEPARTMENT THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON.

THE FIRST LOT, LOCATED OFF LUNG PING ROAD, KOWLOON WAS BOUGHT BY VICTORY WORLD LTD AT \$3,940 MILLION. BIDDING OPENED AT \$1,800 MILLION.

WITH AN AREA OF ABOUT 43,520 SQUARE METRES, IT IS INTENDED FOR PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL USE.

THE DEVELOPER HAS TO COMPLETE A GROSS FLOOR AREA OF NOT LESS THAN 49,140 SQUARE METRES ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 1997.

THE SECOND LOT AT THE JUNCTION OF LO PENG STREET AND PO PENG STREET, PENG CHAU, NEW TERRITORIES, WITH AN AREA OF ABOUT 1,945 SQUARE METRES WAS SOLD TO ACTIVE BENEFIT LTD AT \$82 MILLION, WITH BIDDING OPENED AT \$68 MILLION.

IT IS DESIGNATED FOR NON-INDUSTRIAL (EXCLUDING GODOWNS, HOTELS AND OFFICES) USE.

THE DEVELOPER HAS TO COMPLETE A GROSS FLOOR AREA OF NOT LESS THAN 4,900 SQUARE METRES ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 1996.

/THE REMAINING

THE REMAINING LOT, LOCATED IN TUI MIN HOI, SAI KUNG, NEW TERRITORIES, WITH AN AREA OF ABOUT 1,681 SQUARE METRES, WAS SOLD TO HUNG KING DEVELOPMENT LTD AT \$32 MILLION, WITH BIDDING OPENED AT \$10 MILLION.

IT IS INTENDED FOR INDUSTRIAL OR GODOWN USE.

THE DEVELOPER HAS TO COMPLETE A GROSS FLOOR AREA OF NOT LESS THAN 3,026 SQUARE METRES ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 1996.

THE AUCTION WAS HELD IN THE CONCERT HALL OF HONG KONG CULTURAL CENTRE, TSIM SHA TSUI, AND CONDUCTED BY GOVERNMENT LAND AGENT, MR NG HANG-KWONG.

----- 0 -----

PROPERTY DEALS FIGURES FOR NOVEMBER

* * * * *

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF SALE AND PURCHASE AGREEMENTS OF BUILDING UNITS, MAINLY FLATS, RECEIVED BY THE LAND REGISTRY LAST MONTH INCREASED BY 35 PER CENT COMPARED WITH THE PREVIOUS MONTH, AND BY 34.3 PER CENT COMPARED WITH NOVEMBER LAST YEAR.

THE INCREASE WAS MAINLY DUE TO THE AGREEMENTS LODGED FOR REGISTRATION IN RESPECT OF A LARGE DEVELOPMENT IN TUEN MUN IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

IN ALL, 9,629 SALE AND PURCHASE AGREEMENTS WERE RECEIVED FOR REGISTRATION LAST MONTH. THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF THE CONSIDERATIONS INVOLVED WAS \$23.2 BILLION.

THE FIGURES ARE INCLUDED IN THE MONTHLY STATISTICS RELEASED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE LAND REGISTRAR ON PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS RECEIVED FOR REGISTRATION IN THE URBAN AND NEW TERRITORIES LAND REGISTRIES.

A TABLE SHOWING THE RELEVANT STATISTICS FOR OCTOBER THIS YEAR AND FOR NOVEMBER LAST YEAR WAS ALSO RELEASED.

THERE WERE 10 BUILDING MORTGAGES AND 11,711 OTHER MORTGAGES RECEIVED FOR REGISTRATION LAST MONTH, COMPARED WITH FIVE AND 9,797 RESPECTIVELY IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR.

THE TOTAL AMOUNT SECURED UNDER NEW BUILDING MORTGAGES IN THE MONTH WAS \$0.33 BILLION COMPARED WITH \$0.8 BILLION IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR.

THE TOTAL AMOUNT SECURED UNDER NEW MORTGAGES OTHER THAN BUILDING MORTGAGES ROSE BY 24.9 PER CENT, FROM \$5.15 BILLION IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR TO \$6.43 BILLION IN NOVEMBER THIS YEAR.

REPAYMENTS UNDER MORTGAGES OF ALL KINDS, AS EVIDENCED BY DISCHARGES AND MORTGAGEE'S RECEIPTS, DECREASED BY 23 PER CENT, FROM \$3 BILLION IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR TO \$2.31 BILLION IN NOVEMBER THIS YEAR.

----- 0 -----

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1993

- 7 -

GOVERNOR SEES HOW USD UPGRADES CIVIC SERVICES

* * * * *

THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON SAW FOR HIMSELF ASPECTS OF HOW THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT CONTINUALLY UPGRADES MUNICIPAL SERVICES FOR MORE THAN THREE MILLION URBAN DWELLERS.

ACCOMPANIED BY THE DIRECTOR OF URBAN SERVICES, MR ALBERT LAM CHI-CHIU, THE GOVERNOR VISITED THE URBAN COUNCIL JAVA ROAD COMPLEX IN NORTH POINT, WHERE HE WAS GREETED BY URBAN COUNCIL CHAIRMAN DR RONALD LEUNG DING-BONG AND OTHER COUNCILLORS.

THE PARTY THEN INSPECTED THE MAIN FACILITIES OF THE COMPLEX, INCLUDING THE COOKED FOOD CENTRE, THE MARKET AND THE REFUSE COLLECTION POINT.

MR LAM POINTED OUT TO THE GOVERNOR HOW THE OPENING OF THE COMPLEX LAST YEAR, AND THE NEARBY ELECTRIC ROAD MARKET, HAD ENABLED THE DEPARTMENT TO CARRY OUT A LARGE HAWKER RE-SITING EXERCISE THAT HAD GREATLY LESSENED THE ONCE NOTORIOUS CONGESTION IN NEARBY CHUN YEUNG STREET AND MARBLE ROAD.

THE GOVERNOR WAS INTERESTED TO FIND THAT OPERATORS OF THE 15 STALLS IN THE COOKED FOOD CENTRE PAID AN AVERAGE MONTHLY RENT OF ABOUT \$7,000 AND HAD A DAILY TURNOVER RANGING BETWEEN \$10,000 AND \$20,000.

AT THE REFUSE COLLECTION POINT, MR PATTEN ALSO OBSERVED HOW HI-TECH INSTALLATIONS SUCH AS A CARBON-FILTRATION SYSTEM AND AIR CURTAINS ARE USED TO ELIMINATE OFFENSIVE SMELLS.

HE TOOK KEEN INTEREST IN THE LATEST MODEL REFUSE-COLLECTION VEHICLE, WHICH IS CURRENTLY ON TEST WITH THE DEPARTMENT.

FROM NORTH POINT, THE PARTY TRAVELLED TO HONG KONG PARK, WHERE THE GOVERNOR WAS SHOWN HOW THE HISTORIC BARRACKS AREA HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO A SUPERBLY LANDSCAPED AREA COMBINING RECREATIONAL, LEISURE AND EDUCATION FACILITIES.

AT THE CONSERVATORY, HE TOOK GREAT INTEREST IN THE MANY PLANTS, AND LATER, IN THE WALK THROUGH AVIARY, WAS PLEASED TO SEE HOW THE 600 BIRDS FROM THE MALESIAN FOREST HAVE TAKEN SO READILY TO THEIR SIMULATED TROPICAL RAIN FOREST ENVIRONMENT.

SUBSEQUENTLY, AT THE VISUAL ARTS CENTRE, THE GOVERNOR MET ARTISTS AND SAW HOW THE URBAN COUNCIL IS HELPING TO STIMULATE THE CREATIVE TALENTS OF HONG KONG PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY THE YOUNG.

THE GOVERNOR'S VISIT BEGAN WITH AN IN-DEPTH BRIEFING AT THE DEPARTMENT'S HEADQUARTERS BY MR LAM AND DEPUTY DIRECTORS, MESSRS RANDOLPH O'HARA (CULTURE), MARTIN WHITE (ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE), PETER NG KWOK-TAI (LEISURE SERVICES) AND H T LUI (ADMINISTRATION), AND AN INSPECTION OF THE PUBLIC INFORMATION UNIT, HEADED BY CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER, MR THOMAS HAHN.

- - - - 0 - - - -

CRIMINAL COURT USERS COMMITTEE MEETS

* * * * *

THE CRIMINAL COURT USERS COMMITTEE - ONE OF THE THREE COURT USERS COMMITTEES RECENTLY LAUNCHED BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE, SIR TI LIANG YANG, TO PROMOTE JUDICIAL EFFICIENCY BY REACTING PROMPTLY TO SUGGESTIONS FROM THOSE WHO USE THE COURTS - HELD ITS FIRST MEETING EARLY THIS (WEDNESDAY) EVENING.

SPEAKING AFTER THE MEETING, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE, MR JUSTICE POWER, WHO IS A VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF APPEAL, SAID MEMBERS HAD A USEFUL PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ON THE LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMITTEE.

"OUR TASK IS TO IDENTIFY ISSUES IN WHICH THE JUDICIARY CAN, BY BECOMING MORE EFFICIENT, BETTER SERVE THE PUBLIC.

"THE TWO ISSUES TO WHICH WE WILL GIVE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION ARE DELAY BEFORE HEARING AND MORE EFFICIENT USE OF JUDGES' TIME," HE SAID.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE COMPRISE JUDGE LONGLEY OF THE DISTRICT COURT; MISS BETTY KWAN KA-CHING, A PRINCIPAL MAGISTRATE; MR GRENVILLE CROSS, QC, DEPUTY CROWN PROSECUTOR; MRS DOROTHY PRITCHARD, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AID; MR CHING Y WONG, A BARRISTER RECOMMENDED BY THE BAR ASSOCIATION; MR LOUIS FUNG, A SOLICITOR RECOMMENDED BY THE LAW SOCIETY; MISS GRACE WONG, ADMINISTRATOR OF THE DUTY LAWYER SERVICE; AND MR CHAU CHAM-SON, A LAY MEMBER.

THE OTHER TWO COURT USERS COMMITTEES ARE THE CIVIL COURT USERS COMMITTEE AND TRIBUNAL USERS COMMITTEE.

BOTH HAVE HAD THEIR FIRST MEETING RECENTLY.

- - - - 0 - - - -

LANGUAGE GROUPING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

* * * * *

LANGUAGE GROUPING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS WILL ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO LEARN THROUGH A LANGUAGE IN WHICH THEY CAN LEARN TO THE BEST OF THEIR ABILITY, THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR DOMINIC S W WONG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

FOR A LARGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS, THIS WOULD MEAN THAT CHINESE WOULD BE AN EFFECTIVE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION, MR WONG SAID, ADDING THAT SUBSIDIARY MEASURES WOULD CONTINUE TO BE TAKEN TO MAINTAIN THE LEVEL OF ENGLISH IN THESE SCHOOLS.

HE SAID THIS AT THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION CONFERENCE 1993 (ILEC 93) ORGANISED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION, THE DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM STUDIES OF UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG, AND THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS.

HE ALSO SAID BECAUSE OF CHANGING PATTERNS OF HONG KONG'S ECONOMY FROM MANUFACTURING TO SERVICE INDUSTRIES, THE DEMAND FOR EMPLOYEES WITH GOOD ENGLISH SKILLS NOW FAR EXCEEDED THE SUPPLY FROM SCHOOLS.

/"SIMILARLY, THE

"SIMILARLY, THE DEMAND FROM OUR TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS FOR A GREATER NUMBER OF SCHOOL LEAVERS ABLE TO LEARN EFFECTIVELY THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF ENGLISH IS NOT BEING ADEQUATELY MET," HE SAID.

BUT, MR WONG ADDED, MANY PEOPLE ALSO FELT THAT LEARNING AND WRITING SKILLS IN CHINESE WERE NOT AS GOOD AS THEY SHOULD BE.

"WE NEED THEREFORE TO DO MORE IN SCHOOLS, IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS AND IN THE WORK PLACE," HE SAID.

HE SAID HONG KONG'S LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION POLICY WAS CLEAR AND THAT IT COMPRISED FOUR MAJOR PARTS, THE FIRST BEING LANGUAGE GROUPING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

HONG KONG WAS DEVELOPING A TARGET-ORIENTED CURRICULUM BASED ON TASK-CENTRED LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT AND EMBRACING CHINESE AND ENGLISH AS MEDIUMS OF INSTRUCTION AND AS CORE SUBJECTS, MR WONG SAID.

"THE EMPHASIS WILL BE ON THE USE OF LANGUAGE FOR CONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE, FOR LOGICAL THINKING, FOR EXPRESSING THOUGHT AND FOR SOLVING PROBLEMS," HE SAID.

MR WONG POINTED OUT THAT NOT ONLY WOULD THE TEACHING AND LEARNING EMPHASISE THE USE OF LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM, BUT SCHOOL ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATIONS WOULD REQUIRE THIS TOO.

ALSO DEVELOPED WAS A VOCATIONAL ENGLISH PROGRAMME AT SEVERAL LEVELS FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS AND EMPLOYEES IN THE WORK PLACE, CERTIFICATED BY THE LONDON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY.

"WE HOPE TO DEVELOP A PARALLEL PROGRAMME TO MEET THE DEMAND FOR GOOD WRITTEN CHINESE SKILLS AMONG EMPLOYEES IN THE WORK PLACE," HE ADDED.

MR WONG SAID HONG KONG WAS ALSO DETERMINED TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TEACHER EDUCATION AND OF TEACHING IN SCHOOLS.

APART FROM ENSURING TEACHERS COULD MAKE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE LANGUAGE IN WHICH THEY TAUGHT, "WE HAVE ANNOUNCED THE INTENTION TO MOVE GRADUALLY TOWARDS AN ALL-GRADUATE TEACHING PROFESSION," HE SAID.

THERE WAS ALREADY A POLICY FOR 70 PER CENT GRADUATE TEACHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

"THUS OUR INITIAL TARGET IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IS TO HAVE 35 PER CENT GRADUATE TEACHERS BY THE YEAR 2007," HE SAID.

MR WONG ADDED: "IN THIS RESPECT, THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF OUR TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION TO BE ESTABLISHED NEXT YEAR, WILL BE CRUCIAL IN PROVIDING IN-SERVICE PART-TIME BACHELOR OF EDUCATION PROGRAMMES."

"YOU WILL THEREFORE SEE THAT A SERIES OF MEASURES ARE IN PLACE TO IMPROVE LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN HONG KONG. THE RESULTS TAKE TIME TO EMERGE."

MR WONG SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD ANNOUNCED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A \$300 MILLION LANGUAGE FUND TO LAUNCH NEW INITIATIVES.

- 10 -

NEW LICENCE FEES FOR EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES TAKE EFFECT
* * * * *

THE REVISED FEES FOR THE ISSUE OR RENEWAL OF LICENCE FOR AN EMPLOYMENT AGENCY UNDER THE EMPLOYMENT AGENCY REGULATION WILL TAKE EFFECT TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

"THE NEW LICENCE FEE FOR AN EMPLOYMENT AGENCY AND THE FEE FOR THE DUPLICATE LICENCE FOR EACH OF THE BRANCH OFFICES OF THE EMPLOYMENT AGENCY ARE \$1,000 AND \$200 RESPECTIVELY," A LABOUR DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

UNDER THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE, ANY PERSON WISHING TO OPERATE AN EMPLOYMENT AGENCY MUST APPLY TO THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR FOR A LICENCE.

AN EMPLOYMENT AGENCY THAT OPERATES AT MORE THAN ONE LOCATION IS REQUIRED TO APPLY FOR A DUPLICATE LICENCE FOR EACH BRANCH LOCATION.

THE FEES WERE LAST REVISED IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR.

ENQUIRIES CAN BE MADE OF THE EMPLOYMENT AGENCY ADMINISTRATION OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT ON 852 3511 OR 852 3535.

- - - - 0 - - - -

BETTER SERVICE AT TAI PO JOCKEY CLUB CLINIC
* * * * *

THE X-RAY UNIT IN TAI PO JOCKEY CLUB CLINIC WILL START OPERATION THIS FRIDAY (DECEMBER 17) TO SUPPORT THE ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY SERVICE AND GENERAL OUT-PATIENT SERVICE RUN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID THE UNIT WOULD HELP TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED THERE.

THE X-RAY SERVICE FOR ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY CASES WILL BE IN OPERATION BETWEEN 9 AM TO 5 PM DAILY.

THE SERVICE WILL BE EXTENDED TO 24 HOURS DAILY FROM JANUARY 1 NEXT YEAR.

- - - - 0 - - - -

SHAM SHUI PO ILLEGAL STRUCTURE TO BE REMOVED
* * * * *

THE BUILDING AUTHORITY IS TAKING ACTION TO STOP IMMEDIATELY CONSTRUCTION OF AN UNAUTHORISED STRUCTURE ON THE ROOF OF A BUILDING AT 184 YU CHAU STREET, SHAM SHUI PO.

THE AUTHORITY WILL APPLY FOR A PRIORITY DEMOLITION ORDER FROM THE DISTRICT COURT ON DECEMBER 23 IN RESPECT OF THE STRUCTURE ON SUSPICION THAT IT WOULD BE SOLD OR LET UPON COMPLETION.

DEMOLITION WORKS WILL BEGIN ONCE THE ORDER IS GRANTED AND WILL BE COMPLETED WITHIN 40 DAYS.

- - - - 0 - - - -

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1993

- 11 -

11 BRAVE CITIZENS AWARDED FOR SAVING LIVES

* * * * *

THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE, MR ALLAN PYRKE, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PRESENTED HIS COMMENDATIONS TO 11 PERSONS FOR THEIR BRAVERY IN SAVING PEOPLE FROM THE SEA.

THE RECIPIENTS ARE FIVE SAILORS, ONE ASSISTANT COXSWAIN AND FIVE POLICEMEN.

SPEAKING AT A PRESENTATION CEREMONY, MR PYRKE SAID IT WAS SOMETIMES SAID THAT HONG KONG WAS A CITY OF SELFISH PEOPLE, ONLY INTERESTED IN THEMSELVES AND THEIR IMMEDIATE FAMILIES.

"THE PRESENCE OF THESE BRAVE PEOPLE HERE TODAY IS A HEARTENING REMINDER THAT THIS IS UNTRUE. EACH ONE HAS RISKED HIS OWN LIFE TO SAVE A COMPLETE STRANGER FROM THE SEA," HE SAID.

FIVE OF THE RECIPIENTS ARE STAFF MEMBERS OF THE HONG KONG FERRY (HOLDINGS) COMPANY LIMITED. THEY ARE MR HO CHU, MR MAK KAM-HAI, MR CHENG CHE-SHING, MR LEUNG KWONG AND MR CHOW YAU-HAI. ANOTHER SAILOR, MR LAW CHI-FAI, IS FROM THE STAR FERRY COMPANY LIMITED.

THE FIVE POLICE OFFICERS ARE SENIOR CONSTABLE LOK WAI-MING, CONSTABLES TONG YEUK-DING, AU YEUNG WAI-KUEN, KWAN YUNG AND YUNG WAI-MING.

- - - - 0 - - - -

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

* * * * *

	\$ MILLION

OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	4,880
REVERSAL OF LAF	-880
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	4,000
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	+15
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	4,015
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER TWI 113.8 *+0.1* 15.12.93	

/HONG KONG

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1993

- 12 -

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS		EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS				
TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	2.94 PCT	14 MONTHS	2502	4.75	101.29	3.64
1 MONTH	3.04 PCT	17 MONTHS	2505	3.75	99.81	3.92
3 MONTHS	3.03 PCT	20 MONTHS	2508	4.625	100.85	4.13
6 MONTHS	3.19 PCT	23 MONTHS	2511	4.15	99.74	4.34
12 MONTHS	3.49 PCT	34 MONTHS	3610	4.20	98.58	4.79

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 7,208 MN

CLOSED 15 DECEMBER 1993

- - - - 0 - - - -



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

SUPPLEMENT

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1993

CONTENTS

PAGE NO.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL:

GOVT OPTS FOR COMPULSORY OLD AGE PENSION SCHEME	1
ELECTION BILL INTRODUCED	3
GOVT DISAPPOINTED AT PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL	4
TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY TO MEET CHALLENGES OF NEXT CENTURY	6
STI ON CONSUMER PROTECTION	7
SES ON AIRCRAFT NOISE	13
TWO BILLS TO BEAT DRUG MONEY LAUNDERING	16
IMPROVEMENTS TO SEVERANCE, LONG SERVICE PAYMENTS PROPOSED ...	16
THREE MORE AGENCIES GRANTED EXEMPTION	17
INCREASE IN FIXED PENALTY APPROVED	18
WITNESSES' ALLOWANCES RAISED	18
MOTION TO EXTEND STAMP DUTY REQUIREMENT TO CURB SPECULATION PASSED	19
INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992	20
GOVT STILL WAITING FOR RESPONSE FOR NEXT ROUND OF TALKS	21
ANXIETIES OVER CHANGE OF SOVEREIGNTY NOTED	22
MEASURES TO ENSURE SAFETY IN NEW YEAR EVENTS	22

/FULL-COST APPROACH

CONTENTS

PAGE NO.

FULL-COST APPROACH IN CALCULATING MEDICAL COSTS	24
PUBLIC URGED TO REPORT OBSCENE AND INDECENT ARTICLES	25
UPDATED TRIAD REPORT IN PROCESS	26
MAJORITY OF LAND EXCHANGE ENTITLEMENTS TO BE REDEEMED	26
GOVT TAKES FRESH LOOK AT SEAT BELT LAW	27
NO INTERFERENCE IN PRIVATE LAND MATTERS	28
LEGAL CONTROL OF UNSAFE CONDOMS	29
DRUG TRAFFICKING IN VIET DETENTION CENTRES MINIMAL	29
JUDICIARY TO COMPUTERISE CASE RECORD SYSTEM: SHA	30
LATE BNO APPLICATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED	31
GROWTH IN USE OF AUTO-TOLL	31
BANKNOTES ISSUE FULLY BACKED BY EXCHANGE FUND	32
NEW MRF FORMAT FOR UPCOMING BUDGET	32
RETIREMENT SCHEMES FIGURES	33
ICAC TO FORM NEW UNIT ON CIVIL SERVICE RECORDS	34
NEW SURVEY OF SERVICE INDUSTRIES LAUNCHED	35
MOTION TO BOOST CONSUMER PROTECTION PASSED	35

GOVT OPTS FOR COMPULSORY OLD AGE PENSION SCHEME

* * * * *

THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT HAVING ANALYSED THE FULL RANGE OF OPTIONS ON RETIREMENT PROTECTION, IT HAS COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE PRESENT APPROACH OF ENCOURAGING VOLUNTARY SCHEMES SHOULD BE MAINTAINED.

AT THE SAME TIME, TO PROVIDE FOR THE FINANCIAL SECURITY OF TODAY'S AND TOMORROW'S ELDERLY, THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO PURSUE THE OPTION OF A COMPULSORY CONTRIBUTORY OLD AGE PENSION SCHEME (OPS).

IN A STATEMENT DELIVERED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR W K LAM, SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S CONCLUSION WAS BASED ON GOOD GROUNDS.

"WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE FIRMLY THAT NO ONE, CERTAINLY NOT THE GOVERNMENT, CAN BE A BETTER JUDGE THAN INDIVIDUALS ON THE MOST APPROPRIATE FORM OF SAVINGS COMPATIBLE WITH THEIR OWN CAREER PLANS AND RETIREMENT NEEDS," HE SAID.

"ADVOCATES OF COMPULSORY SAVINGS OFTEN IGNORE ONE IMPORTANT FACT: IT IS NOT THE WAY OF HONG KONG PEOPLE TO BE DIRECTED ON HOW, WHEN, WHERE OR HOW MUCH TO SAVE AND INVEST.

"THE FREEDOM TO MANAGE ONE'S OWN FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IS A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF HONG KONG'S WAY OF LIFE. WE MUST NOT VIOLATE THIS KEY PRINCIPLE," HE STATED.

ON THE PROPOSED COMPULSORY CONTRIBUTORY OPS, MR LAM SAID IT WAS THE ONLY OPTION THAT COULD TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF FINANCIAL PROVISION FOR OLD AGE WITHIN A REASONABLY SHORT TIME.

"BUT WE HAVE TO GET IT RIGHT," HE SAID. "WE HAVE TO PROCEED WITH GREAT CARE AND SATISFY OURSELVES ON SEVERAL MAJOR ISSUES."

THESE INCLUDE:

- * FIRST, SUCH A SCHEME WOULD HAVE TO PROVIDE MEANINGFUL BENEFITS FINANCED FULLY BY THE CONTRIBUTIONS. TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION, THE GOVERNMENT SHALL EMPLOY EXPERT CONSULTANTS TO ADVISE ON FINANCING AND ADMINISTRATION.
- * SECOND, THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE GENERAL PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE FOR A COMPULSORY OPS. THE GOVERNMENT SHALL RELY HEAVILY ON THE ADVICE OF MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN THIS REGARD, AS WELL AS THAT OF THE WIDER COMMUNITY.
- * THIRD, AS THIS IS AN ISSUE WHICH GOES WELL BEYOND 1997, THE GOVERNMENT SHALL HAVE TO CONSULT THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT BEFORE REACHING A DECISION.

"THE GOVERNMENT IS CONVINCED, AFTER EXTENSIVE STUDY, THAT CONTINUATION WITH OUR VOLUNTARY APPROACH TO RETIREMENT PROTECTION, TOGETHER WITH THE AFFIRMATION THAT WE INTEND TO PURSUE THE OPTION OF A CONTRIBUTORY OPS, SUBJECT TO THE ABOVE ISSUES BEING SATISFIED, IS THE RIGHT WAY FORWARD," SAID MR LAM.

"WE HAVE REACHED THIS CONCLUSION ONLY AFTER PROLONGED DELIBERATION. THE DECISIONS THAT WE TAKE ON THIS ISSUE WILL AFFECT THE WELL-BEING NOT ONLY OF TODAY'S WORKFORCE BUT THAT OF EMPLOYEES WELL INTO NEXT CENTURY.

"TO ENSURE THAT WE PUT IN PLACE THE SYSTEM WHICH TRULY MEETS THE NEEDS OF THIS COMMUNITY, WE SHALL CONTINUE TO KEEP BOTH THIS COUNCIL AND THE PUBLIC AT LARGE CLOSELY INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR PROPOSALS," HE ADDED.

MR LAM ALSO EXPLAINED TO COUNCIL MEMBERS WHY THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT FAVOUR THE TWO OTHER COMPULSORY SAVINGS PLANS, I.E. A DECENTRALISED, EMPLOYMENT-RELATED MANDATORY RETIREMENT PROTECTION SYSTEM (RPS) AND A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND (CPF).

HE NOTED THAT BASED ON INTERNAL REVIEW, TOGETHER WITH THE TECHNICAL ADVICE FROM EXPERT CONSULTANTS, THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONVINCED THAT AN RPS HAD INDEED MORE SEVERE PROBLEMS THAN WAS ORIGINALLY BELIEVED.

FOR EXAMPLE, GIVEN THE FORESEEABLE MARKET CONDITIONS IN HONG KONG, AN RPS WOULD HAVE TO BE INVESTED IN STOCKS AND SHARES TO YIELD MEANINGFUL RETURNS.

HOWEVER, SUCH INVESTMENTS INVOLVE THE RISK OF LOSSES, FOR WHICH THERE IS NO VIABLE INSURANCE COVER OTHER THAN A GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE. BUT IT WOULD BE UNFAIR TO ASK TAXPAYERS TO UNDERWRITE SUCH LOSSES.

AN RPS WOULD IMPOSE A HEAVY ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN ON EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES, WITHOUT THE GUARANTEE OF COMMENSURATE BENEFITS.

FURTHERMORE, IT WOULD REQUIRE HUGE BUREAUCRACIES TO AUTHORISE, VET, REGULATE, AND TO SETTLE DISPUTES ARISING FROM THE LARGE NUMBER OF PRIVATE SCHEMES.

A CPF IS ALSO NOT THE RIGHT WAY FORWARD FOR HONG KONG. IT SIMPLY WOULD NOT MEET THE COMMUNITY'S REQUIREMENT BECAUSE:

- * INVESTMENT RETURNS ARE TYPICALLY FAR FROM SATISFACTORY DUE TO THE FACTS THAT CENTRAL FUND MANAGERS INEVITABLY CHOOSE TO PLAY SAFE AND LOW RETURNS TEND TO PUSH UP CONTRIBUTION RATES ELSEWHERE;
- * A CPF NEEDS DECADES TO MATURE AND ITS FINAL YIELD IS HIGHLY SENSITIVE TO EVEN VERY MINOR VARIATIONS IN AVERAGE RETURNS;
- * IF A CPF LOSES MONEY, TAXPAYERS WOULD BE EXPOSED TO DIRECT PRESSURE TO MAKE UP THE LOSSES;
- * AS WITH AN RPS, A CPF IMPOSES DAUNTING ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS ON THE COMMUNITY BUT DOES NOT OFFER A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF FINANCIAL PROVISION FOR OLD AGE; AND
- * WORST OF ALL, CONTRIBUTORS WOULD NOT HAVE ADEQUATE RETIREMENT PROTECTION FOR AT LEAST 30 TO 40 YEARS.

COMPARED WITH AN RPS AND A CPF, MR LAM SAID AN OPS OFFERED A BETTER WAY FORWARD BECAUSE:

- * IT WOULD PROTECT THE BULK OF THE POPULATION INCLUDING LOW-INCOME EARNERS, RETIREES, HOUSEWIVES, AND THOSE OUTSIDE THE WORKFORCE;
- * PROVIDE IMMEDIATE BENEFITS ONCE IT IS IMPLEMENTED, WITHOUT HAVING TO WAIT 30 TO 40 YEARS;
- * GUARANTEE A MINIMUM FINANCIAL PROVISION WHICH COULD BE PEGGED TO INFLATION OR TO THE AVERAGE WAGE; AND
- * THE RATES OF CONTRIBUTION FOR BOTH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES ARE LIKELY TO BE LOWER THAN THE CONTRIBUTIONS REQUIRED FOR A RPS OR CPF.

"DESPITE THE OBVIOUS ADVANTAGES OF AN OPS, THERE ARE POTENTIAL PROBLEMS, AND WE MUST LEARN FROM EXPERIENCES OF OTHERS," MR LAM CAUTIONED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

ELECTION BILL INTRODUCED

* * * * *

A BILL TO INITIATE THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS TO PUT IN PLACE THE MORE STRAIGHTFORWARD AND URGENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE THREE TIERS OF REPRESENTATIVE BODIES WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF ELECTORAL PROVISIONS (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) (NO.2) BILL 1993, THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SZE, SAID THE PROPOSALS IN THE BILL WERE PART OF THE EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH AN OPEN AND FAIR ELECTORAL SYSTEM WHICH WAS ACCEPTABLE TO THE HONG KONG PEOPLE.

MR SZE URGED LEGCO MEMBERS TO GIVE THEIR EARLY SUPPORT TO THE BILL SO THAT THESE URGENT ELECTION ARRANGEMENTS MIGHT BE PUT IN PLACE ON TIME FOR THE 1994 ELECTIONS TO THE DISTRICT BOARDS, AND THE 1995 ELECTIONS TO THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND THE LEGCO.

THE BILL PROVIDES:

- * FOR THE USE OF THE "SINGLE SEAT, SINGLE VOTE" METHOD OF VOTING FOR ALL THREE TIERS OF GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCY ELECTIONS;
- * FOR THE LOWERING OF THE VOTING AGE FOR ALL ELECTIONS FROM 21 TO 18 YEARS STARTING FROM THE 1994 DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS;
- * FOR THE ABOLITION OF APPOINTED SEATS IN BOTH THE DISTRICT BOARDS AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AS FROM THE NEXT ROUND OF ELECTIONS;
- * FOR THE NUMBER OF DIRECTLY ELECTED SEATS IN THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS TO BE INCREASED FROM 1995, CONSEQUENTIAL TO THE ABOLITION OF THE APPOINTED SEATS AND TO FURTHER ENHANCE THE REPRESENTATIVENESS OF THESE BODIES; AND

* THAT HONG KONG RESIDENTS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF CHINA'S PEOPLE'S CONGRESSES AT VARIOUS LEVELS, PROVIDED THAT THEY MEET ALL OTHER QUALIFICATIONS, MAY BE ELECTED TO AND SERVE ON THE LEGCO, THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND THE DISTRICT BOARDS.

MR SZE SAID EVERY EFFORT WOULD BE MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT TO ENCOURAGE POTENTIAL VOTERS TO REGISTER THEMSELVES ON THE GENERAL ELECTORAL ROLL.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSED THE CONSTITUENCIES FOR THE 1995 MUNICIPAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS SHOULD BE DRAWN ON A RATIO OF 100,000 PEOPLE PER SEAT. HENCE, THE URBAN COUNCIL WOULD HAVE 32 DIRECTLY ELECTED SEATS WHILE THE REGIONAL COUNCIL WOULD HAVE 27.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

GOVT DISAPPOINTED AT PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL

* * * * *

THE GOVERNMENT IS VERY DISAPPOINTED THAT THE PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL HAS BEEN PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TONIGHT (WEDNESDAY), DESPITE ALL THE COGENT ARGUMENTS TO THE CONTRARY, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

IN LATE JULY THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED A TWO-STAGE APPROACH TO REVIEWING ITS APPOINTMENTS POLICY, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"FOR THE LONG TERM, IT PROPOSED BRINGING IN STANDARDISED CONDITIONS OF SERVICE, AND DEFINING FOR THE FIRST TIME WHO SHOULD BE REGARDED AS 'LOCAL' AND THESE MATTERS ARE THE SUBJECT OF AN ONGOING AND WIDE-RANGING CONSULTATION EXERCISE," HE SAID.

IN THE MEANTIME, AS AN INTERIM ARRANGEMENT, CIVIL SERVANTS ON OVERSEAS CONDITIONS WHO ARE PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS DEFINED UNDER THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE COULD APPLY FOR ONE CONTRACT ONLY ON LOCAL CONDITIONS, HE ADDED.

THE SPOKESMAN STRESSED THAT ANYONE TRANSFERRING TO LOCAL CONDITIONS UNDER THE INTERIM ARRANGEMENT WAS NOT NECESSARILY "LOCAL".

"THERE IS NO DEFINITION OF THE TERM 'LOCAL' AT PRESENT AND WHETHER SUCH PEOPLE WOULD BE REGARDED AS 'LOCAL' IN FUTURE WOULD DEPEND ENTIRELY ON THE OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION," HE SAID.

HOWEVER, THE PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL NOW PROHIBITS ANY TRANSFER BY PERMANENT RESIDENTS FROM OVERSEAS TO LOCAL CONDITIONS OF SERVICE UNTIL APRIL 20, NEXT YEAR.

AS A RESULT, THE GOVERNMENT HAS LITTLE OPTION BUT TO EXTEND THE CONTRACTS OF THOSE OVERSEAS CIVIL SERVANTS WHO ARE PERMANENT RESIDENTS OR WHO HAVE A REASONABLE CLAIM TO PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS, AND WHO ARE LIKELY TO MEET THE OTHER CONDITIONS FOR TRANSFER, ON OVERSEAS CONDITIONS UNTIL THE BILL LAPSES, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"THIS IS A VERY UNDESIRABLE STATE OF AFFAIRS AS IT CREATES A POLICY VACUUM FOR THE DURATION OF THE BILLS," THE SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED.

"IT ALSO CREATES UNCERTAINTY FOR BOTH DEPARTMENTS AND THE INDIVIDUAL OFFICERS CONCERNED AS, NOT KNOWING WHAT WILL HAPPEN BEYOND APRIL 20, 1994, NEITHER OF THEM WILL BE ABLE TO PLAN THEIR ACTIVITIES PROPERLY," HE SAID, ADDING THAT THIS CLIMATE OF UNCERTAINTY IS ALSO UNSATISFACTORY FOR LOCAL STAFF.

THE BILL ALSO SETS AN UNDESIRABLE PRECEDENT BY LEGISLATING ON CIVIL SERVICE APPOINTMENTS POLICY, WHICH SHOULD PROPERLY BE LEFT TO THE GOVERNMENT.

THE SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT CIVIL SERVICE APPOINTMENTS POLICY WAS A PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE AREA.

"THERE IS A DANGER THAT THE MANAGEMENT'S FLEXIBILITY WILL BE ERODED AND THAT IN THE LONG RUN CIVIL SERVICE APPOINTMENTS WILL BECOME POLITICISED," HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN ALSO EMPHASISED THAT THE BILL WAS UNNECESSARY.

"WE ARE ALREADY CONSULTING WIDELY ON THE LONG-TERM ARRANGEMENTS," HE SAID.

THE INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS DO NOT COMMIT ANYONE FOR THE LONG TERM BUT SIMPLY ALLOW A REALISTIC TIMEFRAME FOR THE LONG-TERM ARRANGEMENTS TO BE DISCUSSED AND AGREED, HE SAID.

THE BILL ON THE OTHER HAND COMPLETELY DUCKS THE LONG-TERM ISSUES AND SIMPLY TRIES TO TURN THE CLOCK BACK FOR A LIMITED PERIOD OF TIME. IT DOES NOT ADDRESS THE REAL PROBLEM AT ALL, HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT, FOLLOWING ENACTMENT OF THE BILL, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO PROCESS APPLICATIONS FROM PERMANENT RESIDENTS FOR TRANSFER TO LOCAL CONDITIONS.

BUT INSTEAD OF OFFERING A CONTRACT ON LOCAL CONDITIONS TO POTENTIALLY SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS, EXTENSIONS ON OVERSEAS CONDITIONS WOULD BE GRANTED INSTEAD, UNTIL THE BILL LAPSES.

SHOULD THE PERIOD OF VALIDITY OF THE BILL BE EXTENDED, THESE OVERSEAS CONTRACTS WOULD ALSO BE CORRESPONDINGLY EXTENDED.

THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ALSO GIVE REASONABLE NOTICE TO THOSE WHOSE APPLICATIONS FOR TRANSFER FAILED, SO THAT THEY CAN HAVE SOME TIME TO ADAPT TO THE FACT THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE OFFERED FURTHER EMPLOYMENT.

THIS COULD ALSO INVOLVE SHORT EXTENSIONS OF CURRENT CONTRACTS.

TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY TO MEET CHALLENGES OF NEXT CENTURY

* * * * *

THE GOVERNMENT FULLY RECOGNISES THE NEED TO PROMOTE THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF HONG KONG AND IMPROVE THE LIVING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT OF THE COMMUNITY, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, TOLD THE LEGISLATION COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT IN A MOTION DEBATE ON TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (TDS) REVIEW, MR EASON SAID THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE BASIC PRINCIPLES HAD ALL ALONG BEEN FULLY RECOGNISED AND EMBODIED IN THE CURRENT TDS REVIEW.

"IT IS OUR INTENTION TO FORMULATE A TDS TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF THE NEXT CENTURY," HE SAID.

MR EASON SAID THE KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE TDS WERE WIDE-RANGING.

"OUR PRIMARY GOAL IS TO ESTABLISH A BROAD, LONG-TERM PLANNING FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH THE NECESSARY LAND AND INFRASTRUCTURE CAN BE PROVIDED, HAVING REGARD TO RESOURCE AVAILABILITY, TO ENABLE HONG KONG TO CONTINUE TO GROW AS A REGIONAL AND AN INTERNATIONAL CITY AND BECOME A BETTER PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE AND WORK.

THE TWO KEY ISSUES WHICH ARE THE SUBJECTS OF THIS MOTION DEBATE, NAMELY, HOW TO PROMOTE THE LONG-TERM PROSPERITY AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG, ARE CERTAINLY IMPORTANT AND FUNDAMENTAL AIMS OF THE CURRENT TDS REVIEW.

MR EASON SAID THE TDS HAD IDENTIFIED SEVERAL POTENTIAL NEW GROWTH AREAS, INCLUDING TSEUNG KWAN O, KOWLOON BAY, TIN SHUI WAI, KAM TIN AND TUNG CHUNG.

"IT WILL EVALUATE THESE AREAS TO ESTABLISH WHICH ARE THE MOST SUITABLE TO DEVELOP FROM BROAD LAND USE, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENTAL POINTS OF VIEW, TAKING ACCOUNT OF FINANCIAL, ECONOMIC AND OTHER RELATED FACTORS."

ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE, MR EASON SAID, THE TDS UPON COMPLETION WILL MAKE BROAD PROPOSALS WHICH DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY AFFECT THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE HONG KONG PEOPLE.

TO ENSURE A BETTER LIVING ENVIRONMENT, NEW TOWN STANDARDS WILL APPLY WHEREVER PRACTICAL IN THE PLANNING OF NEW URBAN AREAS AND MAJOR REDEVELOPMENT SCHEMES.

MR EASON SAID CONSERVATION WAS ANOTHER IMPORTANT QUALITATIVE ELEMENT OF THE STRATEGY AND AREAS OF HIGH LANDSCAPE VALUE AND ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE AREAS WOULD BE CONSERVED.

FOR EXAMPLE, A TOTAL OF ABOUT 7,000 HECTARES OF LAND HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS POSSIBLE COUNTRY PARK EXTENSION AREAS.

MR EASON SAID THE TDS CONSULTATION DIGEST HAD BEEN PASSED TO THE CHINESE SIDE FOR REFERENCE AND THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT WAS PLANNING TO VISIT AND EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH THE PLANNING AUTHORITIES IN GUANGZHOU, SHENZHEN AND ZHUHAI DURING THE CONSULTATION PERIOD.

HE SAID SINCE THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS BEGAN IN SEPTEMBER, ABOUT 12,000 COPIES OF THE CONSULTATION DIGEST HAD BEEN DISTRIBUTED TO THE PUBLIC AND SOME 70 MAIN BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND ORGANISATIONS HAVE BEEN CONSULTED.

THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION EXERCISE WILL END ON DECEMBER 31 AND THE TDS REVIEW IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED BY THE MIDDLE OF NEXT YEAR.

- - - - 0 - - - -

STI ON CONSUMER PROTECTION

* * * * *

THE FOLLOWING IS THE SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TONIGHT (WEDNESDAY):

MR PRESIDENT,

I AM GRATEFUL TO MR MAN SAI CHEONG FOR GIVING ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO RE-AFFIRM THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO CONSUMER PROTECTION. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK OTHER MEMBERS WHO HAVE SPOKEN IN THIS DEBATE TO SUPPORT THE FURTHER ENHANCEMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION.

PROTECTION OF CONSUMERS HAS ALWAYS BEEN A KEY CONSIDERATION IN THE FORMULATION OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES GOVERNING THE SUPPLY OF GOODS AND SERVICES IN BOTH THE PUBLIC AND THE PRIVATE SECTORS. WE FULLY RECOGNIZE THE NEED FOR PROPER SAFEGUARDS AGAINST ABUSE OF CONSUMERS, ESPECIALLY THE INDIVIDUAL CONSUMER WHOSE BARGAINING POWER IS CONSIDERABLY WEAKER THAN THAT OF BUSINESS CORPORATIONS.

NEW LEGISLATION

MR MAN AND SOME OTHER MEMBERS HAVE REFERRED TO THE NEED FOR COMPREHENSIVE COMPOSITE LEGISLATION ON CONSUMER PROTECTION. I WISH TO POINT OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT ATTACHES IMPORTANCE TO THE PROTECTION OF THE CONSUMER BY WAY OF LEGISLATION. A GOOD EXAMPLE IS THE CONSUMER GOODS SAFETY BILL WHICH I INTRODUCED INTO THIS COUNCIL LAST WEDNESDAY. UPON THE ENACTMENT OF THE BILL, THERE WILL BE, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HONG KONG'S HISTORY, CATCH-ALL LEGISLATION REQUIRING THE SUPPLY OF CONSUMER GOODS WHICH ARE REASONABLY SAFE, AND INTRODUCING CRIMINAL SANCTIONS AGAINST THE SUPPLY OF UNSAFE CONSUMER GOODS. THIS MEANS THAT MANUFACTURERS, IMPORTERS AND SUPPLIERS WILL NEED TO TAKE A CRITICAL LOOK AT THE SAFETY OF THEIR GOODS BEFORE THEY ARE BROUGHT ON TO THE MARKET.

THIS GENERAL SAFETY REQUIREMENT WILL NEED TO BE SUPPLEMENTED, IN SOME CASES, DEPENDING ON THE NATURE OF THE PRODUCT, BY SPECIFIC SCHEMES OF SAFETY CONTROL. WE ALREADY HAVE LEGISLATION GOVERNING SPECIFIC TYPES OF CONSUMER GOODS SUCH AS FOOD, WATER, PHARMACEUTICALS, GAS APPLIANCES AS WELL AS TOYS AND CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO INTRODUCE SPECIFIC LEGISLATION SETTING OUT THE DETAILED SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR A SPECIFIC TYPE OF CONSUMER GOODS AS AND WHEN AND IF THE NEED ARISES. FOR EXAMPLE, I KNOW THAT THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC CONCERN REGARDING THE LACK OF SPECIALLY DESIGNED LEGISLATION GOVERNING THE SAFETY OF ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS. I CAN ASSURE MEMBERS THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS WORKING HARD ON THE REQUIRED LEGISLATION, AND MY COLLEAGUE THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES WILL BE INTRODUCING REGULATIONS UNDER THE ELECTRICITY ORDINANCE TO CONTROL THE SAFETY OF PLUGS AND ADAPTORS IN 1994 AND OF DOMESTIC ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS IN GENERAL IN 1995.

APART FROM INTRODUCING LEGISLATION TO ENHANCE THE SAFETY OF CONSUMER GOODS, WE ARE ALSO WORKING ON LEGISLATION TO ENSURE THE QUALITY OF GOODS AND SERVICES SUPPLIED. THE LEGISLATION IN QUESTION IS THE PACKAGE OF THREE BILLS ON THE SALE OF GOODS, SUPPLY OF SERVICES AND UNCONSCIONABLE CONTRACTS, ON WHICH WE ARE NOW CONSULTING INTERESTED BODIES PRIOR TO THEIR INTRODUCTION INTO THIS COUNCIL. THIS REPRESENTS A MAJOR STEP FORWARD IN OUR EFFORTS TO ASSIST CONSUMERS TO SEEK CIVIL REMEDIES AGAINST UNSCRUPULOUS TRADING PRACTICES NOT JUST IN RESPECT OF THE SALE OF GOODS BUT ALSO IN RESPECT OF THE SUPPLY OF SERVICES, AN AREA WHICH I NOTE IS OF CONSIDERABLE CONCERN TO MEMBERS AND TO THE COMMUNITY.

AS REGARDS THE NEED FOR LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE CHANNELS FOR CONSUMERS TO SEEK COMPENSATION, I AM HAPPY TO INFORM MEMBERS THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WILL INVITE THE LAW REFORM COMMISSION TO CONSIDER THE EXISTING LAW GOVERNING COMPENSATION FOR INJURY AND DAMAGE CAUSED BY DEFECTIVE OR UNSAFE GOODS AND TO RECOMMEND SUCH CHANGES IN THE LAW AS MAY BE CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE.

AS OUR SOCIETY BECOMES INCREASINGLY AFFLUENT AND SOPHISTICATED, THERE IS A GROWING NEED TO ADDRESS THE LEGITIMATE CONCERNS AND ASPIRATIONS OF CONSUMERS IN A VARIETY OF SITUATIONS WHICH GO BEYOND THE REALM OF BASIC SAFETY AND QUALITY. THIS RANGES FROM THE PROTECTION OF THE PRIVACY OF THE PERSONAL INFORMATION OF CONSUMERS TO THE RIGHTS OF THE SMALL INVESTORS IN FINANCIAL MARKETS. AS EXAMPLES I WOULD LIKE TO MENTION LEGISLATION IN THE PIPELINE TO PROTECT THE PRIVACY OF PERSONAL INFORMATION; AMENDING LEGISLATION TO INCREASE THE TRANSPARENCY OF PRICE INFORMATION IN RESPECT OF MOTOR CARS; AND LEGISLATION TO PROTECT CONSUMERS OF OVERSEAS TERTIARY EDUCATION SERVICES.

I AM SURE THAT THE NEED TO PROTECT THE CONSUMER IN OTHER SITUATIONS WILL ARISE AS NEW GOODS AND SERVICES ARE INTRODUCED AND NEW MARKET PRACTICES EMERGE. HOWEVER, IN CASE THERE IS CONCERN THAT THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT END UP OVER-LEGISLATING AND OVER-REGULATING THE MARKETS, I WISH TO RE-ASSURE MEMBERS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL ONLY INTERVENE WHERE THE EVIDENCE AVAILABLE INDICATES THAT CONSUMERS ARE NOT ABLE TO PROTECT THEMSELVES, AND THAT THE PREVALENCE OF MALPRACTICES AND COMPLAINTS FROM CONSUMERS IS SUCH THAT GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IS NECESSARY.

NON-STATUTORY MEASURES

APART FROM INTRODUCING LEGISLATION WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE GOVERNMENT ALSO RELIES ON A RANGE OF ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN CONSUMER PROTECTION. WE HAVE JUST HEARD MR DICK CHI-YUEN THE IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHES TO THE PROMOTION OF COMPETITION AS A MEANS OF ENHANCING CONSUMER WELFARE. PROMOTION OF COMPETITION HAS, OF COURSE, ALWAYS BEEN A MAJOR OBJECTIVE IN THE FORMULATION OF THE GOVERNMENT POLICIES. RECOGNISING THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMPETITION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION, WE WILL SHORTLY ISSUE A DIRECTIVE TO REQUIRE ALL BRANCH SECRETARIES TO ASSESS THE IMPACT ON COMPETITION AT AN EARLY STAGE OF POLICY FORMULATION, AND TO INCLUDE SUCH AN ASSESSMENT IN THEIR SUBMISSIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. SEVERAL MEMBERS HAVE REFERRED TO THE PRESENT STATE OF COMPETITION IN CERTAIN BUSINESS SECTORS SUCH AS SUPERMARKETS AND BANKING. AS MEMBERS ARE AWARE, THE CONSUMER COUNCIL IS CONDUCTING STUDIES INTO THE STATE OF COMPETITION IN FIVE MAJOR BUSINESS SECTORS WHICH AFFECT THE DAILY LIFE OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC. WE HAVE EARMARKED AN ADDITIONAL \$3.5 MILLION FOR THE COUNCIL TO COMPLETE THESE STUDIES. ON THE BASIS OF THE FINDINGS OF THESE STUDIES, WE WILL, WHERE APPROPRIATE, REVISE OUR POLICIES AND FORMULATE NEW ONES IN ORDER TO PROMOTE COMPETITION. WE SHALL PUBLISH A DETAILED RESPONSE TO EACH STUDY WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF ITS RELEASE. THE CONSUMER COUNCIL AIMS TO COMPLETE THE STUDIES BY SEPTEMBER 1994.

SEPARATELY, WE RECOGNISE THAT THE GOVERNMENT, AS THE LARGEST SUPPLIER OF SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC, HAS A SPECIAL OBLIGATION TO HAVE REGARD TO THE CHANGING NEEDS OF ITS CLIENTS. FOR THIS REASON, THE GOVERNMENT LAST YEAR INTRODUCED A PERFORMANCE PLEDGE PROGRAMME TO IMPROVE ITS SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC; AND TO DEVELOP A CLIENT-BASED CULTURE IN THE CIVIL SERVICE. GOOD PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE AND WE WILL KEEP UNDER REVIEW OUR PROGRAMMES TO ENHANCE THE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR.

OTHER NOTABLE INITIATIVES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR INCLUDE THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY'S IMPLEMENTATION OF A PATIENTS' CHARTER.

WE ALSO ENCOURAGE BIG BUSINESSES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO INTRODUCE MEASURES TO PROTECT CONSUMER INTERESTS THROUGH INCORPORATING APPROPRIATE CONDITIONS TO THIS EFFECT IN THE RELEVANT REGULATORY REGIME. FOR INSTANCE, TELEVISION AND SOUND BROADCASTING LICENSEES ARE SUBJECT TO CONTROL AND MONITORING BY THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY. THE AUTHORITY HAS ADOPTED THE PRACTICE WHEREBY PUBLIC HEARINGS ARE HELD BEFORE BROADCASTING LICENCES ARE RENEWED. AS FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPERATORS, WE HAVE ALSO INCORPORATED A NEW CONDITION IN SOME FRANCHISES REQUIRING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PASSENGER LIAISON GROUPS TO PROVIDE A CHANNEL FOR PASSENGERS TO VOICE THEIR OPINIONS AND MAKE COMPLAINTS. THIS REQUIREMENT WILL BE INCLUDED IN OTHER FRANCHISES WHEN THEY ARE NEXT RENEWED.

/WE BELIEVE

WE BELIEVE FULLER DISCLOSURE OF FINANCIAL DATA BY PUBLIC UTILITIES AND TRANSPORT COMPANIES WILL ASSIST THE PUBLIC IN JUDGING WHETHER THE REGULATORS ARE PROPERLY PROTECTING THE CONSUMER'S INTERESTS, AS THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO DO. MY COLLEAGUE, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, HAS RECENTLY BRIEFED THE ECONOMIC SERVICES AND PUBLIC UTILITIES PANEL OF THIS COUNCIL ON THE GOVERNMENT'S OBJECTIVES. DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT COMPANIES HAVE BEGUN AND WE ARE HOPEFUL OF THEIR EARLY ACCEPTANCE OF THE NEW STANDARDS OF FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE TO THE PUBLIC.

CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVE ACTION FUND

MR MAN AND SOME MEMBERS HAVE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO SET UP A CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVE ACTION FUND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO HELP CONSUMERS TO BRING ACTION AGAINST UNSCRUPULOUS SUPPLIERS OF GOODS OR SERVICES. AS THE GOVERNOR ANNOUNCED IN HIS POLICY ADDRESS TO THIS COUNCIL IN OCTOBER THIS YEAR, THE GOVERNMENT HAS EARMARKED \$10 MILLION FOR THE PROPOSED CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVE ACTION FUND WHICH IS INTENDED TO ENABLE THE CONSUMER COUNCIL TO ASSIST GROUPS OF CONSUMERS TO INITIATE LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST A COMMON DEFENDANT. ANOTHER SUM OF \$1 MILLION HAS BEEN SET ASIDE FOR THE COUNCIL TO CONDUCT LEGAL CONSULTANCIES ON THIS PROJECT. THE CONSUMER COUNCIL HAS SET UP A WORKING GROUP, CHAIRED BY THE HON ANNA WU, TO DRAW UP PROPOSALS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE FUND.

MEMBERS HAVE EXPRESSED MIXED VIEWS ON THE PROPOSAL TO SET UP THIS FUND. SOME HAVE ASKED FOR ITS EARLY ESTABLISHMENT WHILE OTHERS HAVE EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ABOUT ITS POSSIBLE INTERFERENCE WITH THE EFFICIENT AND LEGITIMATE OPERATIONS OF OUR TRADE AND INDUSTRY. IN VIEW OF MEMBERS' COMMENTS, WE WILL CONSULT THIS COUNCIL AS WELL AS OTHER INTERESTED BODIES ON THE CONSUMER COUNCIL'S PROPOSALS AS SOON AS THEY ARE READY. I CAN ASSURE MEMBERS THAT THERE WILL BE PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS TO COMMENT AND OFFER ADVICE BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS ARE FINALISED.

CONSUMER EDUCATION

TURNING TO CONSUMER EDUCATION, WE SHARE MEMBERS' VIEW THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE SURE THAT CONSUMERS ARE ARMED WITH ADEQUATE INFORMATION ON THE BASIS OF WHICH THEY CAN MAKE SENSIBLE DECISIONS. CONSUMER EDUCATION IS MORE EFFECTIVE AS A PREVENTIVE TOOL THAN MOST LEGISLATIVE MEASURES WHICH TEND TO BE REMEDIAL IN NATURE.

THE CONSUMER COUNCIL HAS BEEN PLAYING A LEADING ROLE IN ORGANIZING CONSUMER EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS. IN ADDITION TO THE RECURRENT SUBVENTION TO THE COUNCIL FOR ITS REGULAR ON-GOING PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS, WE INTEND TO MAKE A FURTHER \$1.5 MILLION CAPITAL GRANT TO THE COUNCIL FOR THE PURPOSE OF ORGANISING SPECIAL CONSUMER EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS ON FAIR TRADING AND OTHER CONSUMER-RELATED MATTERS IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS.

THE INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT HAS ORGANISED A SERIES OF PUBLICITY PROGRAMMES TO ENHANCE CONSUMER AWARENESS OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND LEGISLATION WHICH AFFECT CONSUMERS' INTERESTS. SUCH PROGRAMMES ARE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF ENCOURAGING COMPLIANCE WITH NEW CONSUMER PROTECTION LEGISLATION SUCH AS THE TOYS AND CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS SAFETY ORDINANCE AND THE TRAVEL AGENTS (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE, AND COMPLAINTS AGAINST BREACHES OF SUCH LEGISLATION. WE PLAN TO CONTINUE THE EFFORT NEXT YEAR BY ALLOCATING ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR THIS SPECIFIC PURPOSE.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CONSUMER COUNCIL

WE ARE IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE CONSUMER COUNCIL ON THE NEED TO EXPAND ITS TERMS OF REFERENCE. WE ARE AT PRESENT ACTIVELY REVIEWING THE JUSTIFICATION FOR RETAINING THE SCHEDULE TO THE CONSUMER COUNCIL ORDINANCE. THIS SCHEDULE SETS OUT A LIST OF COMPANIES AND ORGANISATIONS WHICH ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE PURVIEW OF THE CONSUMER COUNCIL. THE EXEMPTED BODIES OF THIS SCHEDULE INCLUDES VIRTUALLY ALL THE PUBLIC UTILITY AND TRANSPORT COMPANIES, TELEVISION AND SOUND BROADCASTERS, THE HOUSING AUTHORITY AND THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY.

THAT SCHEDULE WAS INTRODUCED IN 1977 WHEN THE ORDINANCE WAS FIRST ENACTED. THE JUSTIFICATION THEN WAS THAT AS THESE BODIES WERE ALREADY SUBJECT TO SOME SPECIAL SCHEME OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL OR PUBLIC MONITORING, THEY SHOULD BE EXEMPTED FROM THE PURVIEW OF THE CONSUMER COUNCIL IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY DUPLICATION OF WORK.

OVER THE YEARS, THERE HAVE BEEN REPEATED REQUESTS FROM CONSUMER CONSCIOUS GROUPS, INCLUDING THE CONSUMER COUNCIL ITSELF, FOR THE DELETION OF THIS SCHEDULE. THE CONSUMER COUNCIL FEELS INCREASINGLY INHIBITED FROM HANDLING CONSUMER COMPLAINTS AND CONDUCTING RESEARCH PROJECTS INVOLVING SOME OF THESE BODIES WHICH ARE OF GENERAL PUBLIC CONCERN.

AFTER CONSULTATION WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT, WE CONSIDER THAT THERE IS A NEED TO REVIEW THE ORIGINAL JUSTIFICATION FOR THE SCHEDULE WITH A VIEW TO ENHANCING CONSUMER PROTECTION. IN CONDUCTING THIS REVIEW, WE WILL OF COURSE BE MINDFUL OF THE NEED TO MINIMIZE ANY DUPLICATION OF EFFORTS BETWEEN THE CONSUMER COUNCIL AND THE RELEVANT REGULATORS. WE SHALL SHORTLY SEEK THE VIEWS OF THE BODIES LISTED IN THE SCHEDULE AND OTHER CONCERNED PARTIES.

AS TO THE QUESTION OF "NON PRODUCT-RELATED SERVICES INDUSTRIES" REFERRED TO IN MR MAN'S MOTION, THE CONSUMER COUNCIL ORDINANCE ALREADY ENABLES THE CONSUMER COUNCIL TO PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF CONSUMERS OF SERVICES. IN PARTICULAR, THE ORDINANCE WAS AMENDED IN EARLY 1992 TO EMPOWER THE COUNCIL TO DEAL WITH CONSUMER COMPLAINTS RELATING TO IMMOVABLE PROPERTY. THE COUNCIL IS REPRESENTED ON THE WORKING GROUP ON THE REGULATION OF REAL ESTATE AGENTS WHICH WAS RECENTLY ESTABLISHED TO STUDY THE OPERATION OF REAL ESTATE AGENTS AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK. THE GROUP AIMS TO PRODUCE ITS RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE SUMMER OF 1994.

- 12 -

IN RELATION TO SO-CALLED "SHRUNKEN" PROPERTY, THE LAW REFORM COMMISSION SUB-COMMITTEE ON DESCRIPTION OF FLATS ON SALE WILL ISSUE A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT IN EARLY 1994 AND THEN SUBMIT A FINAL REPORT TO THE LAW REFORM COMMISSION FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION EXERCISE. THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONSIDER THE WAY FORWARD IN THE LIGHT OF THE LAW REFORM COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS. IN RESPONSE TO THE HON FUNG CHI-WOOD'S POINTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, I WOULD LIKE TO POINT THAT THERE ARE JOINT EFFORTS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND CONSUMER CONSCIOUS GROUPS IN PROMOTING CONSUMER RIGHTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AS THE TWO SUBJECTS ARE BECOMING INCREASING RELATED. FOR INSTANCE, THE CONSUMER COUNCIL IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT AND THE RETAIL SECTOR ON WAYS TO REDUCE THE USE OF PLASTIC BAGS. ON MR MICHAEL HO'S POINT ON THE DISCLOSURE OF MORE INFORMATION TO PATIENTS BY THE MEDICAL PROFESSION, I NOTE THAT THE CONSUMER COUNCIL IS WORKING WITH THE MEDICAL COUNCIL ON THE INTRODUCTION OF MEASURES IN THIS REGARD. MR FUNG KIN-KEE HAS POINTED OUT A POSSIBLE CONFLICT OF ROLES BETWEEN MY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HONG KONG'S TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND MY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION. LET ME ASSURE MR FUNG AND THIS COUNCIL THAT I HAVE HAD NO DIFFICULTIES AT ALL IN RECONCILING THE APPARENT CONFLICT BETWEEN MY TWO ROLES AND THAT I PERFORM BOTH WITH EQUAL ZEAL AND PASSION.

CONCLUSION

MR PRESIDENT, AS I MENTIONED EARLIER, THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON CONSUMER PROTECTION IS SUCH THAT WE SHOULD INITIATE LEGISLATIVE OR ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES TO PROTECT CONSUMERS ONLY WHERE THEY ARE NOT ABLE TO PROTECT THEMSELVES. THE DOCTRINE OF CAVEAT EMPTOR, I.E. LET THE BUYER BEWARE, SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE, ALTHOUGH OF COURSE IT SHOULD NOT ALWAYS BE RELIED ON ENTIRELY, ESPECIALLY IN THIS DAY AND AGE WHEN CONSUMERISM IS EVER RISING AND SO IS THE UNFAIR EXPLOITATION OF CONSUMERISM. WE SHALL KEEP UNDER REVIEW OUR CONSUMER PROTECTION MEASURES SO AS TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE ABLE TO KEEP PACE WITH THE LATEST MARKET ENVIRONMENT AND TRADE PRACTICES. WE SHALL KEEP AN OPEN MIND ON WHAT ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE OR LEGISLATIVE MEASURES MAY NEED TO BE INTRODUCED. BEFORE NEW MEASURES OR CONTROLS ARE INTRODUCED, WE SHALL MAKE SURE THAT THERE IS ADEQUATE CONSULTATION WITH CONCERNED PARTIES AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC, SO THAT WE MAY STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN, ON THE ONE, AFFORDING REASONABLE PROTECTION TO CONSUMERS AND, ON THE OTHER HAND, ALLOWING HONG KONG'S TRADE AND INDUSTRY TO CONTINUE TO FLOURISH. ABOVE ALL, WE WILL ALWAYS BEAR IN MIND THE IMPORTANCE OF AVOIDING THE UNJUSTIFIABLE CREATION OF REGULATORY BUREAUCRACY AND OF AVOIDING EXCESSIVE OR UNNECESSARY INTERFERENCE WITH MARKET FORCES. THANK YOU.

----- 0 -----

SES ON AIRCRAFT NOISE

* * * * *

THE FOLLOWING IS THE SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MR GORDON SIU AT THE DEBATE ON THE CIVIL AVIATION (AIRCRAFT NOISE) (AMENDMENT) NOTICE 1993 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

MR PRESIDENT,

MAY I START BY SAYING THE ADMINISTRATION SHARES FULLY MR TO'S CONCERN THAT DISTURBANCE TO RESIDENTS OF KOWLOON AND HONG KONG ISLAND ARISING FROM THE MOVEMENT OF AIRCRAFT AFTER 9 PM SHOULD BE REDUCED TO THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM.

WHAT WE CANNOT SUPPORT IS THE PROPOSAL TO PLACE IN THE CIVIL AVIATION (AIRCRAFT NOISE) (AMENDMENT) NOTICE 1993 A SPECIFIC LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF LANDINGS WHICH MAY TAKE PLACE OVER KOWLOON AFTER 9 PM.

ON 26 NOVEMBER I WROTE TO MR TO IN HIS CAPACITY AS CHAIRMAN OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE WHICH STUDIED THE NOTICE. IN THAT LETTER I LISTED THE REASONS FOR OUR OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSAL TO PUT A LIMIT ON LANDINGS. AS SOME MEMBERS PRESENT TODAY MAY NOT BE MEMBERS OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE, I SHALL EXPLAIN WHY THE ADMINISTRATION IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF MR TO'S AMENDMENT. FIRST, AS MEMBERS WILL APPRECIATE IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO ENSURE THAT, ON ANY PARTICULAR EVENING, THE NUMBER OF FLIGHTS SCHEDULED FOR ARRIVAL WITHIN A CERTAIN TIME PERIOD AND THE NUMBER OF FLIGHTS WHICH ACTUALLY TOUCH DOWN AT KAI TAK DURING THAT PERIOD ARE ONE AND THE SAME. THE TIME OF ARRIVAL OF AN INCOMING AIRCRAFT IS AFFECTED BY A WIDE RANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES - EG, DELAY OF THE AIRCRAFT LEAVING THE PORT OF DEPARTURE, BAD WEATHER EN ROUTE, CONGESTION IN THE AIR OR ON THE GROUND AT KAI TAK, AND SO ON. I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT MR TO'S PROPOSED AMENDMENT PROVIDES THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION WITH DISCRETIONARY POWERS TO DEAL WITH SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT I DO NOT BELIEVE MR TO HAS GIVEN SUFFICIENT CONSIDERATION TO THE PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF MAKING IT A LEGAL REQUIREMENT THAT CERTAIN CONDITIONS BE SATISFIED BEFORE THE SPECIFIED LIMIT OF 22 FLIGHTS DURING A 3-HOUR PERIOD MAY BE EXCEEDED.

/LET US

- 14 -

LET US ASSUME THAT MR TO'S PROPOSED AMENDMENT IS PASSED INTO LAW TODAY THEN I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE MEMBERS NOW TO THE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER AT KAI TAK AND LET US ALSO IMAGINE, IF YOU WILL, A SITUATION IN WHICH AN AIRCRAFT WHICH IS NOT PROGRAMMED TO LAND AFTER 9 PM SEEKS, FOR VALID REASONS, PERMISSION TO LAND BETWEEN 9 PM AND MIDNIGHT. THE FIRST TASK FACED BY THE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER AT KAI TAK HANDLING THAT FLIGHT WOULD BE TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER PERMISSION GIVEN WOULD LEAD TO THE LEGAL LIMIT OF 22 BEING EXCEEDED. IF THE LIMIT WILL BE EXCEEDED THE CONTROLLER WILL BE OBLIGED TO GO TO HIS SUPERVISOR AND GIVE THE REASONS WHY THE UNPROGRAMMED LANDING WOULD FALL INTO ONE OR ANOTHER OF THE CATEGORIES WHERE DISCRETION MAY BE EXERCISED. NOT DIFFICULT, SOME MAY SAY. WELL, THAT DEPENDS. FIRST, THE SITUATION MAY NOT BE CLEAR CUT. EVEN IF IT IS, THE PROCESS OF ASCERTAINING THE NECESSARY INFORMATION FROM THE PILOT AND SEEKING PERMISSION FROM THE SUPERVISOR WILL TAKE TIME. IT WILL ALSO ADD TO THE WORKLOAD ON THE CONTROLLER AND THE SUPERVISOR. MORE IMPORTANTLY IT WILL DIVERT THE CONTROLLER'S ATTENTION AWAY FROM THE MORE IMPORTANT TASKS OF DIRECTING THAT AIRCRAFT AS WELL AS OTHER AIRCRAFT WITHIN HIS AREA OF CONTROL. IT IS THIS SORT OF ADDITIONAL PRESSURE AND WORKLOAD WHICH WE DO NOT WANT TO BRING ON THE ALREADY HARD-PRESSED STAFF FOR WHOM THE MAINTENANCE OF CONCENTRATION IS VITAL. SOME MEMBERS MAY SAY THAT AN AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER HAS TO EXERCISE DISCRETION TO ALLOW THE OCCASIONAL AIRCRAFT TO LAND AFTER MIDNIGHT AS PROVIDED FOR UNDER THE LAW. I WOULD JUST LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT BECAUSE THERE ARE NO SCHEDULED FLIGHTS AFTER MIDNIGHT, THE CONTROLLER WOULD NOT BE UNDER THE SAME CONDITION OF WORK PRESSURE AS HE WOULD BETWEEN 9 PM AND MIDNIGHT. AND IT IS THIS PRESSURE ON THE STAFF THAT I AM CONCERNED ABOUT, FOR PRESSURE MAY AFFECT PERFORMANCE AND JUDGEMENT.

SECONDLY THE ADMINISTRATION IS CONCERNED THAT THE PROPOSAL TO SPECIFY A MAXIMUM LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF LANDINGS OVER KOWLOON SETS AN UNFORTUNATE PRECEDENT FOR INTERVENTION TO AIRCRAFT MOVEMENTS AT KAI TAK. THIS POINT HAS BEEN REFERRED TO BY MS LOH JUST NOW. IT IS NOT ONLY THE RESIDENTS OF SHAM SHUI PO WHO ARE ADVERSELY AFFECTED, IN TERMS OF NOISE NUISANCE. RESIDENTS OF WONG TAI SIN, KOWLOON CITY, KWUN TONG AND HONG KONG ISLAND EAST ARE ALSO AFFECTED BY EVENING AIRCRAFT MOVEMENTS. WHEN AN AIRCRAFT TAKES OFF TOWARDS LEI YUE MUN, THE RESIDENTS OF KWUN TONG AND HONG KONG ISLAND EAST ARE EXPOSED TO SERIOUS NOISE DISTURBANCE. ANY MOVE ON BEHALF OF, SAY, HONG KONG ISLAND EAST'S RESIDENTS TO PLACE ANOTHER STATUTORY LIMIT ON TAKE-OFFS WOULD HAVE AT LEAST THE SAME DEGREE OF LOGIC AS THAT OF MR TO'S. IF THE ADMINISTRATION AGREES TODAY TO MR TO'S AMENDMENT, ON WHAT GROUND CAN IT REFUSE AN AMENDMENT PROPOSED IN THE INTEREST OF ANOTHER DISTRICT?

FOR THESE REASONS, MR PRESIDENT, THE ADMINISTRATION CANNOT SUPPORT MR TO'S PROPOSED AMENDMENT. I KNOW THAT MR TO HAS ATTEMPTED TO AMEND HIS MOTION TO TRY AND GIVE THE DIRECTOR AS MUCH DISCRETION AS POSSIBLE. UNFORTUNATELY, THE AMENDED VERSION STILL FALLS SHORT ON BOTH LOGIC AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS, AND I CANNOT RECOMMEND TO MEMBERS THAT THE AMENDED MOTION BE PASSED.

/NEVERTHELESS, THE

- 15 -

NEVERTHELESS, THE ADMINISTRATION RECOGNISES THE NEED TO DO ALL WE CAN TO REDUCE TO THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM THE ADDITIONAL DISTURBANCE WHICH MAY BE CAUSED AS A RESULT OF CANCELLATION OF THE "OPPOSITE RUNWAY" MODE. WE HAVE BEEN WORKING ENERGETICALLY TO THAT END. AN INTER-GOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE HAS BEEN SET UP TO CONSIDER AND IMPLEMENT MEASURES TO REDUCE THE LEVEL OF NOISE TO THOSE LIVING UNDER OR ADJACENT TO THE FLIGHT-PATH. A NUMBER OF MITIGATING MEASURES ARE BEING EXPLORED AND CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE. WE HAVE, FOR EXAMPLE, AS A RESULT OF EFFORTS BETWEEN THE TASK FORCE AND AIRLINES, SECURED ARRANGEMENTS TO BRING FORWARD THE LANDING TIMES FOR 42 LATE EVENING FLIGHTS PER WEEK. OF THESE, THE SCHEDULES FOR 32 FLIGHTS HAVE ALREADY OR WILL SOON BE ADJUSTED SO AS TO ARRIVE BEFORE RATHER THAN AFTER 10.30 PM.

WORK WILL CONTINUE TO TRY AND BRING FORWARD LANDINGS STILL FURTHER FOR THE 1994 SUMMER OPERATING SEASON. I HAVE TO ADVISE MEMBERS, HOWEVER, THAT I DO NOT ENVISAGE THAT IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO RE-INSTATE THE "OPPOSITE RUNWAY" MODE IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, CERTAINLY NOT UNTIL WE CAN BE ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT THIS MODE WILL POSE NO RISK WHATSOEVER TO AIRCRAFT SAFETY.

ON THE ISSUE OF REDUCING THE NOISE LEVEL FROM AIRCRAFT, IT IS THE ADMINISTRATION'S INTENTION TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION THIS SESSION WHICH WILL PROGRESSIVELY TIGHTEN CONTROLS ON THE EMISSION OF NOISE BY REQUIRING AIRCRAFT USING KAI TAK TO COMPLY WITH MORE STRINGENT STANDARDS.

MR PRESIDENT, BOTH THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION AND I HAVE GIVEN TWO PUBLIC UNDERTAKINGS. FIRST, THE CANCELLATION OF THE "OPPOSITE RUNWAY" MODE OF OPERATION WILL NOT BE A MEANS OF INCREASING, SURREPTITIOUSLY, THE NUMBER OF LANDINGS AND TAKE-OFFS AT KAI TAK BETWEEN 9 PM AND MIDNIGHT. SECONDLY, BEFORE ANY CONSIDERATION IS GIVEN TO INCREASING THE NUMBER OF SCHEDULED FLIGHTS AFTER 9 PM THERE WILL BE FULL PUBLIC CONSULTATION INCLUDING CONSULTATION WITH MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL. WE STAND BY BOTH UNDERTAKINGS.

TODAY, I DO HAVE A SIMPLE REQUEST TO PUT TO MEMBERS. IN THE FEW REMAINING YEARS WHEN OUR AIRPORT WILL STILL BE AT KAI TAK, DO NOT PLEASE PUT MORE PRESSURE ON THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION AND HIS TEAM OF HARD-WORKING AND CONSCIENTIOUS AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS. RATHER, LET US WORK TOGETHER CONSTRUCTIVELY TO KEEP TO THE MINIMUM THE DISTURBANCE TO HONG KONG RESIDENTS WHICH SADLY WILL REMAIN A FACT OF LIFE UNTIL THE OPENING OF OUR NEW AIRPORT AT CHEK LAP KOK.

THANK YOU MR PRESIDENT.

- - - - 0 - - - -

TWO BILLS TO BEAT DRUG MONEY LAUNDERING

* * * * *

RULES TO COMBAT DRUG MONEY LAUNDERING WILL BE EFFECTIVELY ENFORCED UNDER TWO BILLS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE SECURITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993 AND THE COMMODITIES TRADING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993 WERE MOVED FOR SECOND READING BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES, MR TAM WING-PONG.

THE BILLS SEEK TO ENSURE THAT THE SECURITIES AND FUTURES COMMISSION CAN TAKE DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST A PERSON REGISTERED UNDER THE SECURITIES ORDINANCE OR THE COMMODITIES TRADING ORDINANCE WHO HAD BREACHED RULES MADE BY THE COMMISSION.

MR TAM SAID THE COMMISSION WOULD PROMULGATE RULES REGARDING THE PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY INTERMEDIARIES IN THE SECURITIES MARKET IN COUNTERING AND REPORTING SUSPECTED MONEY LAUNDERING TRANSACTIONS.

UNDER THE EXISTING FRAMEWORK, IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER A BREACH OF SUCH RULES CONSTITUTES "MISCONDUCT" FOR WHICH ACTIONS CAN BE TAKEN.

"IT IS NECESSARY TO REMOVE ANY POTENTIAL AMBIGUITIES IN THIS REGARD IF WE ARE TO EFFECTIVELY ENFORCE THOSE RULES TO BE MADE," HE SAID.

THE AMENDMENT EXPRESSLY STIPULATES THAT "MISCONDUCT" INCLUDES ANY FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH RULES MADE BY THE COMMISSION.

THE COMMODITIES TRADING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993 ALSO RECTIFIES A DISPARITY BETWEEN THE SECURITIES ORDINANCE AND THE COMMODITIES TRADING ORDINANCE.

WHILE THE FORMER CONTAINS AN EXPLICIT PROVISION FOR THE SECURITIES AND FUTURES COMMISSION TO PROMULGATE RULES IN RESPECT OF THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS OF INTERMEDIARIES, THIS IS ABSENT IN THE LATTER.

DEBATES ON THE TWO BILLS WERE ADJOURNED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

IMPROVEMENTS TO SEVERANCE, LONG SERVICE PAYMENTS PROPOSED

* * * * *

A BILL THAT SEEKS TO IMPROVE THE AMOUNT OF SEVERANCE PAYMENT AND LONG SERVICE PAYMENT FOR LONG-SERVING WORKERS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT)(NO. 2) BILL 1993, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR W K LAM, SAID AN EMPLOYEES' ENTITLEMENT TO SEVERANCE PAYMENT AND LONG SERVICE PAYMENT WAS CALCULATED AT THE RATE OF TWO-THIRDS OF A MONTH'S WAGES FOR EACH YEAR OF SERVICE, BUT SUBJECT TO A MAXIMUM LIMIT OF 12 MONTHS' WAGES OR \$180,000, WHICHEVER WAS THE LESS.

- 17 -

THIS ARRANGEMENT HAS THE EFFECT OF LIMITING THE RECKONABLE SERVICE OF AN EMPLOYEE TO 18 YEARS.

"TO ALLEVIATE THE GRIEVANCES OF LONG-SERVING WORKERS, WE PROPOSE TO REMOVE THE CEILING OF 12 MONTHS' AGGREGATE WAGES, BUT THE MAXIMUM PAYMENT OF \$180,000 WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED," SAID MR LAM.

THE MAXIMUM PAYMENT OF \$180,000 WOULD BE REVIEWED PERIODICALLY, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT INFLATION AND GENERAL WAGE MOVEMENT.

THE BILL ALSO SEEKS TO SPECIFY THAT THE 26-WEEK EMPLOYMENT PERIOD RELATING TO THE ENTITLEMENT OF MATERNITY LEAVE SHOULD BE COUNTED BACKWARD FROM THE EXPECTED DATE OF COMMENCEMENT OF MATERNITY LEAVE.

TO IMPROVE PROTECTION TO PREGNANT EMPLOYEES, IT IS PROPOSED TO MAKE LATE PAYMENT OF MATERNITY LEAVE PAY AS AN OFFENCE LIABLE TO A MAXIMUM FINE OF \$10,000.

UNDER THE BILL, THE MEDICAL CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY A REGISTERED DENTIST WOULD BE REGARDED AS A VALID DOCUMENT FOR THE PURPOSE OF CLAIMING SICKNESS ALLOWANCE.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

THREE MORE AGENCIES GRANTED EXEMPTION

* * * * *

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HAS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) EXEMPTED HONG KONG DOLLAR DENOMINATED DEBT INSTRUMENTS ISSUED BY THREE MORE MULTILATERAL AGENCIES FROM PROFITS TAX AND STAMP DUTY.

THE AGENCIES ARE THE EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT, THE INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK AND THE NORDIC INVESTMENT BANK.

LIKE THE FOUR INSTITUTIONS ALREADY EXEMPTED, THE THREE AGENCIES ARE MULTILATERAL BODIES WITH TOP CREDIT RATINGS.

MOVING A MOTION UNDER THE INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE (CAP.112) TO EFFECT THE EXEMPTION, THE SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR DONALD TSANG SAID THESE AGENCIES HAD INDICATED INTEREST IN ISSUING HONG KONG DOLLAR-DENOMINATED DEBT INSTRUMENTS IN LOCAL MARKET.

"THIS WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE EXPANSION OF THE HONG KONG DOLLAR AND CAPITAL MARKETS AND FURTHER PROMOTE HONG KONG'S DEVELOPMENT AS AN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL CENTRE," MR TSANG SAID.

THE FOUR WHICH HAD ALREADY GIVEN EXEMPTION IN APRIL LAST YEAR WERE THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, THE INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT, THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORPORATION AND THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK.

- - - - 0 - - - -

INCREASE IN FIXED PENALTY APPROVED

* * * * *

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED A RESOLUTION UNDER THE FIXED PENALTY (CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS) ORDINANCE TO RAISE THE FIXED PENALTY FOR DRIVING OR USING AN OVERLOADED GOODS VEHICLE FROM \$450 TO \$1,000.

MOVING THE RESOLUTION, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR HAIDER BARMA, SAID OVERLOADED GOODS VEHICLES POSED A REAL ROAD SAFETY HAZARD AND CAUSED SERIOUS DAMAGE TO ROAD SURFACES.

HE SAID THE EXISTING FIXED PENALTY, WHICH WAS SET IN JULY 1989, NO LONGER HAD A DETERRENT EFFECT SINCE IT WAS MUCH CHEAPER TO PAY THE FINE THAN TO MEET THE EXTRA COST ARISING FROM ADDITIONAL TRIPS AND FREIGHT CHARGES THAT WOULD HAVE OTHERWISE BECOME NECESSARY.

"INDEED, SOME DRIVERS AND HAULAGE OPERATORS NOW REGARD THE FIXED PENALTY AS A MERE AND MINOR OPERATIONAL EXPENSE," HE SAID.

MR BARMA SAID THE AMENDED PENALTY WAS PART OF A TWO-PRONGED APPROACH IN TACKLING THE PROBLEM.

THE ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO. 4) BILL 1992 INCLUDED A PROVISION TO MAKE OWNERS OF GOODS VEHICLES STRICTLY LIABLE FOR THE OVERLOADING OF THEIR VEHICLES, HE ADDED.

THIS WAS ALSO TO BE CONSIDERED BY MEMBERS AT TODAY'S SITTING.

- - - - 0 - - - -

WITNESSES' ALLOWANCES RAISED

* * * * *

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, MOVED TWO RESOLUTIONS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TO BRING INTO EFFECT NEW RATES OF WITNESSES' ALLOWANCES IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS AND CORONERS' COURTS.

MOVING THE RESOLUTION ON THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (WITNESSES' ALLOWANCES) (AMENDMENT) RULES 1993, MR JEREMY SAID THE EXISTING RATES, WHICH WERE \$90 AND \$200 FOR EACH DAY AND \$45 AND \$100 FOR PART OF A DAY FOR AN ORDINARY WITNESS AND A PROFESSIONAL OR AN EXPERT WITNESS RESPECTIVELY, WERE LAST REVIEWED IN 1983 AND WERE NOW OUTDATED.

DURING THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING ON OCTOBER 15 THIS YEAR, MEMBERS APPROVED THE PROPOSAL THAT THE MAXIMUM ALLOWANCE PAYABLE TO AN ORDINARY WITNESS BE INCREASED TO \$240 FOR EACH DAY, OR \$120 FOR PART OF A DAY, AND THAT THE MAXIMUM ALLOWANCE PAYABLE TO A PROFESSIONAL OR TO AN EXPERT WITNESS BE INCREASED TO \$1,400 FOR EACH DAY, OR \$700 FOR PART OF A DAY.

/"THE INCREASES

"THE INCREASES ARE DESIGNED TO ENSURE THAT PAYMENTS ARE MADE AT A REALISTIC LEVEL," HE SAID.

IN A SEPARATE RESOLUTION, MR MATHEWS ALSO MOVED THE CORONERS (WITNESSES' ALLOWANCES) (AMENDMENT) RULES 1993 TO BRING SIMILAR INCREASES TO THE ALLOWANCES PAYABLE TO ORDINARY, PROFESSIONAL AND EXPERT WITNESSES ATTENDING A CORONER'S INQUIRY.

BOTH RESOLUTIONS WERE PASSED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

MOTION TO EXTEND STAMP DUTY REQUIREMENT TO CURB SPECULATION PASSED
* * * * *

THE EXTENT OF SPECULATION ON RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY HAD TO A CERTAIN EXTENT BEEN CONTAINED LAST YEAR, WHILE THE PROPERTY MARKET HAD REMAINED BUOYANT.

THE SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR DONALD TSANG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE SAID THIS WAS THE COMBINED RESULT OF THE TIGHTER MORTGAGE LENDING POLICY OF THE BANKS AS WELL AS THE INCREASED COST OF SPECULATION AS A RESULT OF THE STAMP DUTY PROVISIONS.

IN JANUARY LAST YEAR, THE LEGCO APPROVED AMENDMENTS TO THE STAMP DUTY ORDINANCE WHICH REQUIRED, AMONG OTHER THINGS, STAMP DUTY TO BE PAID ON ALL AGREEMENTS FOR SALE OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY.

THE SECRETARY SAID THESE AMENDMENTS HAD SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED COST OF SPECULATION ON RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY THROUGH THE USE OF LONG CHAINS OF SALE AND PURCHASE AGREEMENTS BEFORE ACTUAL ASSIGNMENT.

THIS IS A DISINCENTIVE TO THOSE WHO SPECULATE ON PROPERTY IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE CONCLUSION OF A SALE AGREEMENT AND ASSIGNMENT, THUS PUSHING UP PRICES FOR GENUINE HOME-BUYERS.

MR TSANG SAID IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO ASCERTAIN WITH PRECISION WHAT THE EXACT CONTRIBUTION OF THE STAMP DUTY REQUIREMENT HAD BEEN TOWARDS CONTAINING PROPERTY SPECULATION.

BUT A DECISION NOT TO EXTEND SUCH REQUIREMENT WOULD SEND COMPLETELY THE WRONG SIGNAL TO THE MARKET, HE ADDED.

"THERE WOULD BE A CONSIDERABLE RISK THAT SPECULATION WOULD BECOME RIFE AGAIN TO THE DETRIMENT OF GENUINE HOME-BUYERS."

THEREFORE, A MOTION THAT SOUGHT THE EXTENSION OF THIS MEASURE, WHICH THE GENERAL PUBLIC HAS WELCOMED, BY A FURTHER PERIOD OF TWO YEARS BEYOND DECEMBER 31 THIS YEAR WAS PASSED IN THE LEGCO TODAY.

"THERE HAS BEEN CONTINUOUS CONCERN ABOUT GENUINE HOME-BUYERS NOT BEING ABLE TO AFFORD THE RISING COSTS OF PROPERTY.

/"THIS MOTION

"THIS MOTION WILL REAFFIRM THIS COUNCIL'S RESOLVE IN ADOPTING THE NECESSARY MEASURES TO REDUCE SPECULATION IN RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY," HE SAID.

THE MOTION WAS MOVED UNDER STAMP DUTY ORDINANCE (CHAPTER 117) WITH AMENDMENT MADE TO ITS SECTION 291(1).

- - - - 0 - - - -

INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992

* * * * *

COMMITTEE STAGE AMENDMENTS TO RESOLVE POTENTIAL PROCEDURAL PROBLEMS THAT MIGHT DEPRIVE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF HAVING ADEQUATE TIME TO SCRUTINISE SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE SECOND READING OF THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, EXPLAINED THAT THE EXISTING ORDINANCE GAVE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 28 DAYS TO AMEND SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION LAID ON THE TABLE.

WHERE A SESSION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ENDS BEFORE THAT 28-DAY PERIOD, THE PERIOD IS EXTENDED SO THAT IT EXPIRES ON THE DAY AFTER THE SECOND SITTING OF THE FOLLOWING SESSION.

HE SAID: "IT IS POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT THE FORMAL END OF A SESSION WILL OCCUR MORE THAN 28 DAYS AFTER THE FINAL SITTING.

"IN THAT CASE, THE SPECIAL PROVISION FOR EXTENDING THE TIME LIMIT WOULD NOT COME INTO EFFECT AND THIS COUNCIL WOULD BE DENIED THE OPPORTUNITY OF AMENDING SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION TABLED DURING THE LAST SITTING."

POINTING OUT ANOTHER PROBLEM, MR MATHEWS SAID WHILE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS PERMITTED TO EXTEND THE NORMAL PERIOD OF 28 DAYS FOR THE SCRUTINY OF SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION BY UP TO 21 DAYS, SUCH EXTENSION, HOWEVER, MIGHT NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO ENABLE THE NEXT SITTING TO BE REACHED WHERE, FOR EXAMPLE, THE CHRISTMAS RECESS INTERVENED.

THE THIRD PROBLEM, MR MATHEWS SAID, AROSE IN THE MEANING OF "SITTING" AS THERE WERE SPECIAL SITTINGS IN THE COUNCIL WHERE ORDINARY BUSINESS WAS NOT DISCUSSED AND QUESTIONS CONCERNING SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION COULD NOT BE RAISED.

PROPOSING A NEW CLAUSE TO THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 TO DEAL WITH THESE PROBLEMS, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID: "FIRSTLY, THERE WILL BE AN AUTOMATIC EXTENSION OF THE 28-DAY PERIOD WHENEVER SUCH TIME LIMIT WOULD EXPIRE AFTER THE LAST SITTING OF A SESSION.

"THE DATE OF THE FORMAL END OF THE SESSION WILL NO LONGER BE MATERIAL.

"SECONDLY, THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WILL BE PERMITTED TO EXTEND THE 28-DAY PERIOD TO THE NEXT SITTING, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHEN THAT SITTING TAKES PLACE.

"FINALLY, THE WORD 'SITTING' IS DEFINED TO MEAN THOSE OCCASIONS WHERE THE DISCUSSION OF SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION IS ON THE ORDER PAPER."

AMENDMENTS TO THE BILL ALSO INCLUDE A CLAUSE THAT CONCERN CRIMINAL PENALTIES AND CLARIFIES AN APPARENT INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN A SECTION OF THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES ORDINANCE AND ARTICLE 12 OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS ORDINANCE.

UNDER SECTION 92, WHERE A CRIMINAL PENALTY IS VARIED BETWEEN THE TIME OF COMMISSION OF AN OFFENCE AND THE TIME OF CONVICTION, THE OFFENDER IS LIABLE TO THE PENALTY PREVAILING AT THE TIME OF COMMISSION.

"THE SECTION, HOWEVER, MUST BE READ SUBJECT TO ARTICLE 12 OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS ORDINANCE. THIS STATES THAT WHERE A PENALTY IS VARIED BETWEEN THE TIME OF COMMISSION AND CONVICTION, THE OFFENDER IS ONLY LIABLE TO THE LESSER PENALTY.

"ALTHOUGH THE LEGAL POSITION IS CLEAR, IT IS DESIRABLE THAT THE OPPORTUNITY BE TAKEN TO REMOVE THIS APPARENT INCONSISTENCY."

- - - - 0 - - - -

GOVT STILL WAITING FOR RESPONSE FOR NEXT ROUND OF TALKS
* * * * *

IN ORDER TO GIVE THE 1994/95 ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS TALKS THE MAXIMUM CHANCE TO SUCCEED, IT IS AGREED THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD TAKE PLACE IN CONFIDENCE, THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SZE, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ERIC LI IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR SZE SAID IT WAS STILL THEIR POSITION.

"IN THIS CIRCUMSTANCES IT WOULD NOT BE RIGHT TO GIVE A PUBLIC ACCOUNT AT THIS STAGE OF ALL THE DISCUSSIONS," MR SZE SAID.

WHEN THE TALKS STARTED IN APRIL, THE GOVERNMENT EXPLAINED IN PUBLIC THE BASIS FOR THE TALKS, MR SZE ADDED.

THE GOVERNMENT REMAIN READY TO CONTINUE WITH THE TALKS ON THE AGREED BASIS, IN AN ATTEMPT TO SEEK AGREEMENT ON THE REMAINING, MORE COMPLEX ISSUES NOT COVERED IN THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) (NO. 2) BILL 1993.

"WE ARE STILL WAITING FOR THE CHINESE SIDE'S RESPONSE TO OUR PROPOSAL FOR DATES FOR THE NEXT ROUND," THE SECRETARY SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

ANXIETIES OVER CHANGE OF SOVEREIGNTY NOTED

* * * * *

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE ANXIETIES OF THE COMMUNITY IN THESE LAST FEW YEARS BEFORE THE CHANGE OF SOVEREIGNTY, THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SZE, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR SZE SAID THEY BELIEVED STRONGLY THAT THE BEST MEANS OF ENSURING THAT HONG KONG COULD HAVE CONFIDENCE IN ITS FUTURE WAS TO ENSURE THAT THERE REMAIN IN PLACE AFTER 1997 THE INSTITUTIONS THAT WERE NECESSARY TO SAFEGUARD HONG KONG'S WAY OF LIFE.

THEY ARE:

- * A VIGOROUS AND ACCOUNTABLE EXECUTIVE;
- * A CREDIBLE AND BROADLY-BASED LEGISLATURE; AND
- * AN INDEPENDENT AND IMPARTIAL JUDICIARY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON EMILY LAU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THE SECRETARY SAID THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) (NO.2) BILL 1993 WAS THE FIRST PART OF THEIR PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME AIMED AT ACHIEVING REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS WHICH WERE CREDIBLE AND BROADLY-BASED.

"THE COMMUNITY SHOULD WORK TO BUILD THEIR FUTURE UNDER THE HISTORIC PRINCIPLE OF 'ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS', RATHER THAN SHY AWAY FROM IT," HE SAID.

NOTING THE TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY WAS ALWAYS TO BE A DIFFICULT ENTERPRISE, HE SAID:

"WE FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT WITH GOODWILL AND CO-OPERATION FROM BOTH SIDES EVEN THOUGH WE MIGHT HAVE DIFFERENCES, AND OF COURSE WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNITY, WE CAN TOGETHER OVERCOME THESE DIFFICULTIES."

- - - - 0 - - - -

MEASURES TO ENSURE SAFETY IN NEW YEAR EVENTS

* * * * *

ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE TO ENSURE THAT THERE WILL BE NO OVERCROWDING AND TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC SAFETY DURING NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION AT VICTORIA PARK.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR KEN WOODHOUSE, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON LAM KUI-CHUN.

THERE WILL BE 50,000 TICKETS ON SALE FOR THE EVENT.

/MR WOODHOUSE

MR WOODHOUSE SAID HOARDINGS WOULD BE SET UP TO CONTROL THE SIZE OF THE CROWD.

SUFFICIENT ENTRANCE AND EXIT POINTS WILL BE PROVIDED TO ENSURE THAT THE CROWD ENTERS AND DISPERSES ORDERLY AND GRADUALLY, HE ADDED.

A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND ORGANISATIONS WILL TAKE THE FOLLOWING MEASURES:

- * THE POLICE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERALL SAFETY AND CROWD CONTROL. POLICE TACTICAL UNITS, UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICERS, TRAFFIC POLICE AND CID OFFICERS WILL BE MOBILISED AND STATIONED AT THE PARK FOR CROWD CONTROL, DIRECTING TRAFFIC AND FOR DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES;
- * THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WILL CO-ORDINATE WITH PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPERATORS REGARDING THE OVERALL TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS;
- * THE AUXILIARY MEDICAL SERVICES WILL PROVIDE FIRST-AID SERVICES AND ITS HEADQUARTERS IN HO MAN TIN WILL HAVE AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE TASK FORCE, WITH TWO AMBULANCES AND A TEAM OF DOCTORS AND NURSES ON STANDBY;
- * THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY HAS A CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS AND ADEQUATE MEDICAL STAFF CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE ONCE THE CONTINGENCY PLAN IS ACTIVATED;
- * THE CIVIL AID SERVICES WILL DEPLOY 140 MEMBERS AT THE PARK AND WILL LIAISE CLOSELY WITH THE POLICE TO ENSURE CROWD SAFETY, AND
- * THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY MAY DESIGNATE SPECIAL ENTRANCES AND EXITS AT THE CAUSEWAY BAY AND TIN HAU STATIONS.

MR WOODHOUSE SAID THE ACTIVITIES AT VICTORIA PARK WERE EXPECTED TO DIVERT PEOPLE FROM LAN KWAI FONG.

"THERE WILL ALSO BE A COUNTDOWN VARIETY SHOW THAT EVENING IN SHATIN CENTRAL PARK, WHICH WILL ALSO DIVERT PEOPLE FROM LAN KWAI FONG," HE SAID.

AS FOR LAN KWAI FONG, HE SAID THE POLICE WOULD ALSO DEPLOY ADEQUATE STAFF TO ENSURE PUBLIC SAFETY, ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY ORGANISED EVENTS THERE.

FULL-COST APPROACH IN CALCULATING MEDICAL COSTS

* * * * *

IN CALCULATING MEDICAL COSTS OF PROVIDING HOSPITAL AND CLINIC SERVICES, THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY ADOPT THE STANDARD GOVERNMENT PRACTICE OF THE FULL-COST APPROACH.

THIS COMPRISES STAFF COSTS, DRUGS, CONSUMMABLES, OVERHEAD AND DEPRECIATION ON EQUIPMENT AND BUILDINGS.

THE UNIT COSTS FOR INDIVIDUAL SERVICE TYPES ARE THEN DERIVED BY DIVIDING THE TOTAL SERVICE COST WITH THE ACTIVITY LEVEL SUCH AS THE NUMBER OF BED DAYS, THE NUMBER OF ATTENDANCES AND THE NUMBER OF VISITS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, DR S H LEE, IN REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON CONRAD LAM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"OUR PRIMARY CONCERN IS TO ENSURE COST-EFFECTIVENESS IN DELIVERING MEDICAL SERVICES, THAT IS, TO ACHIEVE THE BEST QUALITY OF HEALTH CARE WITHIN AVAILABLE RESOURCES," DR LEE SAID.

"TO THIS END, THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH OPTIMISES THE USE OF RESOURCES THROUGH REGULAR REVIEW OF THE MODE OF SERVICE DELIVERY AND STREAMLINING PROCEDURES."

COST CONTAINMENT IS ENHANCED THROUGH REGULAR MONITORING OF EXPENDITURE PATTERNS, DRUG MANAGEMENT AND DRUG MONITORING COMMITTEES.

FURTHERMORE, CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES ARE ORGANISED TO PROVIDE THE RESPONSIBLE STAFF WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ON FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL, HE SAID.

"AS REGARDS THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY, IT HAS IN PLACE A RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK."

AS PART OF ITS BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS, RESOURCE INPUTS ARE LINKED WITH SERVICE OUTPUTS, TARGETS AND QUALITY STANDARD.

THE USE OF RESOURCES AT HOSPITAL LEVEL IS THEN MONITORED AND EVALUATED BY THE HEAD OFFICE THROUGH A FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REPORTING SYSTEM.

CLUSTERING OF HOSPITALS AND NETWORKING OF SERVICES HAVE ALSO BEEN INTRODUCED TO RATIONALISE THE DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICES, IMPROVE PATIENT ACCESS AND AVOID UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION OF RESOURCES, HE ADDED.

ON THE AVERAGE RATES OF INCREASE OF MEDICAL COSTS OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS OF VARIOUS FACILITIES, IT IS 16 PER CENT PER YEAR FOR GENERAL HOSPITAL BEDS AND PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL BEDS, 17 PER CENT PER YEAR FOR GENERAL OUT-PATIENT CLINICS AND 15 PER CENT PER YEAR FOR SPECIALIST OUT-PATIENT CLINICS.

PUBLIC URGED TO REPORT OBSCENE AND INDECENT ARTICLES

* * * * *

THE GOVERNMENT HAS CALLED ON THE PUBLIC TO REPORT ANY ALLEGED VIOLATION OF THE CONTROL OF OBSCENE AND INDECENT ARTICLES ORDINANCE (COIAO) EITHER TO THE POLICE OR TO THE TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING AUTHORITY (TELA) THROUGH ITS HOTLINE, 594 5836.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MRS PEGGY LAM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE SECRETARY FOR RECREATION AND CULTURE, MR JAMES SO, SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO PUBLICISE THIS NUMBER ON TELEVISION AND RADIO.

THE MOVE IS PART OF ITS PUBLICITY EFFORTS TO REMIND THE TRADE TO EXERCISE SELF-DISCIPLINE AS WELL AS TO APPEAL TO TEACHERS AND PARENTS TO GUIDE AND EDUCATE YOUNG PERSONS TO STAY AWAY FROM INDECENT COMIC BOOKS AND MAGAZINES.

OTHER MEASURES TAKEN INCLUDE THE ISSUE OF TWO CIRCULAR LETTERS TO ALL NEWSPAPER STALLS REMINDING THEM OF THE LAW AND PROVIDING THEM WITH A LIST OF COMIC BOOKS AND MAGAZINES WHICH HAVE BEEN CLASSIFIED AS INDECENT OR OBSCENE, PRODUCTION OF A TELEVISION PROGRAMME AND TV/RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT IN PUBLIC INTEREST, PRESS CONFERENCES AFTER MAJOR POLICE OPERATIONS AND PRESS INTERVIEWS FOR THE MEDIA.

IN ADDITION, A LEAFLET IS BEING PRINTED FOR DISTRIBUTION TO SCHOOLS.

MR SO ALSO INFORMED THE COUNCIL THAT IN VIEW OF THE PUBLIC CONCERN, THE POLICE AND TELA HAD CONDUCTED 17 JOINT OPERATIONS ON SUSPECTED OBSCENE ARTICLES BETWEEN OCTOBER 1 AND DECEMBER 8 THIS YEAR.

THESE HAD RESULTED IN 15,000 VIDEO TAPES, 100 LASER DISCS AND 300 COPIES OF PRINTED MATTERS BEING SEIZED AND 10 PERSONS BEING PROSECUTED FOR PUBLISHING INDECENT ARTICLES TO UNDERAGE PERSONS.

DURING THE THREE-YEAR PERIOD FROM JANUARY 1991 TO OCTOBER 1993, THE POLICE, CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT AND TELA HAD TAKEN OUT 988 PROSECUTIONS ON CONTRAVENTIONS OF THE COIAO.

A TOTAL OF 806 CONVICTIONS HAD BEEN OBTAINED AND THE PENALTIES IMPOSED RANGED FROM \$500 TO \$60,000 AND PRISON SENTENCES OF ONE TO 18 MONTHS.

UPDATED TRIAD REPORT IN PROCESS

* * * * *

THE POLICE IS PREPARING AN UPDATED REPORT ON THE TRIAD SITUATION IN HONG KONG FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING IN FEBRUARY NEXT YEAR, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR KEN WOODHOUSE, SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON JIMMY MCGREGOR IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR WOODHOUSE SAID A COPY OF THE REPORT WOULD BE PROVIDED TO THE COUNCIL.

"THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE HAS ADVISED THAT, WHILE THE TRIAD SITUATION IS CONTAINED, THE LEVEL OF SOPHISTICATION OF SOME TRIAD ACTIVITIES IS INCREASING, AS IS THE SCALE OF SOME OPERATIONS," HE SAID.

THE POLICE HAVE RECENTLY ESTABLISHED A SPECIAL TEAM TO INVESTIGATE A SERIES OF INCIDENTS OF MURDER, SERIOUS ASSAULT, INTIMIDATION AND CRIMINAL DAMAGE INVOLVING SUSPECTED TRIAD ELEMENTS.

MR WOODHOUSE SAID THE POLICE HAD A DEDICATED CRIME AND TRIAD GROUP TO CO-ORDINATE THE STRATEGY, ANALYSE INTELLIGENCE AND CONDUCT OPERATIONS AGAINST TRIADS AND ORGANISED CRIME GROUPS.

"THE POLICE HAVE ALSO DEPLOYED CONSIDERABLE RESOURCES AT REGIONAL AND DISTRICT LEVELS TO FIGHT TRIADS," HE SAID.

THESE INCLUDE THE INTELLIGENCE AND ANTI-TRIAD UNITS WHICH GATHER EVIDENCE AND MOUNT OPERATION; THE UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICERS ON THE BEAT TO AUGMENT SUCH OPERATIONS; THE POLICE PUBLIC RELATIONS BUREAU TO REINFORCE PUBLICITY; AND THE CRIME PREVENTION BUREAU TO ENCOURAGE BUSINESSES TO REPORT TRIAD ACTIVITIES.

- - - - 0 - - - -

MAJORITY OF LAND EXCHANGE ENTITLEMENTS TO BE REDEEMED

* * * * *

OUTSTANDING LAND EXCHANGE ENTITLEMENTS WILL CONTINUE TO BE REDEEMED THROUGH THE LANDS SALES PROGRAMME AND THE GREAT MAJORITY KNOWN TO BE IN THE HANDS OF DEVELOPERS SHOULD BE REDEEMED BY 1997.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHIM PUI-CHUNG, MR EASON SAID THE AMOUNT OF LAND EXCHANGE ENTITLEMENTS YET TO BE REDEEMED ON OCTOBER 1 THIS YEAR WAS 181,552 SQ FT OF BUILDING LAND AND 4,866,739 SQ FT OF AGRICULTURAL LAND.

HE SAID 2.3 MILLION SQ FT OF THIS AMOUNT WERE COMMITTED TO BE REDEEMED IN THE COURSE OF THE 1992/93 LAND SALES PROGRAMME BUT HAD YET TO BE FORMALLY SURRENDERED.

/"THIS IS

- 27 -

"THIS IS A CONSIDERABLE REDUCTION FROM THE TOTAL OF 37 MILLION SQ FT WHICH WERE OUTSTANDING IN 1984," HE SAID.

MR EASON SAID IT WAS LIKELY THAT AN UNKNOWN QUANTITY OF LAND EXCHANGE ENTITLEMENTS WOULD NOT BE OFFERED FOR REDEMPTION BECAUSE THE OWNERS HAVE DIED OR EMIGRATED OR SIMPLY DO NOT REALISE THEIR VALUE.

"THEREFORE IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE TOTAL REDEMPTION," HE SAID.

THE POLICY ON LAND EXCHANGE ENTITLEMENTS WAS LAST REVIEWED IN 1991 AND A FURTHER REVIEW IS NOW UNDERWAY.

- - - - 0 - - - -

GOVT TAKES FRESH LOOK AT SEAT BELT LAW

* * * * *

THE GOVERNMENT IS TAKING A FRESH LOOK AT WHETHER PASSENGER SEAT BELTS SHOULD BE REQUIRED FOR MIDDLE FRONT SEATS IN VEHICLES.

BOTH SAFETY AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR HAIDER BARMA, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON SIMON IP IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR BARMA SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS ALSO SEEKING TO RAISE BY MID-1994 THE FIXED PENALTY FOR DRIVING WITHOUT WEARING A SEAT BELT FROM \$200 TO \$320 AND THAT FOR A FRONT SEAT PASSENGER NOT WEARING A SEAT BELT FROM \$140 TO \$230.

HE SAID THE COMPULSORY WEARING OF SEAT BELTS HAD TO BE PHASED FOR PRACTICAL REASONS GIVEN THE LEAD TIME REQUIRED FOR INSTALLATION AND TO ALLOW MOTORISTS AND PASSENGERS TO ADJUST TO SUCH REQUIREMENTS.

"THE NEXT STEP IS TO REQUIRE THE FITTING AND WEARING OF REAR SEAT BELTS.

"TO ACHIEVE THIS, WE PLAN TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS BY THE END OF NEXT YEAR," HE SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

NO INTERFERENCE IN PRIVATE LAND MATTERS

* * * * *

THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT NORMALLY INTERVENE IN PRIVATE MATTERS BETWEEN LANDOWNERS AND OCCUPIERS, ESPECIALLY WHEN THE CASES MAY EVENTUALLY GO BEFORE THE COURTS.

HOWEVER, THE LOCAL DISTRICT LANDS OFFICES WILL ASSIST IN CLARIFYING THE STATUS OF LANDS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ZACHARY WONG WAI-YIN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR EASON SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE THAT THE OCCUPIERS OF SOME LANDS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES HAD RECEIVED NOTICES FROM THOSE CLAIMING TO BE THE OWNERS, SEEKING TO RECOVER POSSESSION OF THE LAND.

HE SAID IT APPEARED THAT THESE NOTICES WERE SENT BECAUSE OF A COURT CASE IN LATE LAST YEAR WHICH DREW THE OWNERS' ATTENTION TO THEIR LEGAL POSITION.

UNDER THE LIMITATION ORDINANCE, A PERSON WHO OCCUPIES LAND WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OR KNOWLEDGE OF THE OWNER FOR A PERIOD OF 20 YEARS MAY HAVE A CLAIM OF "ADVERSE POSSESSION" AGAINST THE OWNER.

IN OTHER WORDS, THE OWNER MAY NOT BE ABLE TO RECOVER POSSESSION OF HIS LAND.

"THESE CASES MAY HAVE ARISEN NOW BECAUSE THE MAJORITY OF NEW TERRITORIES LEASES, ORIGINALLY GRANTED FOR A STANDARD TERM OF 75 YEARS FROM 1898 WITH A RIGHT OF RENEWAL FOR 24 YEARS UP TO 1997, WERE RENEWED BY THE NEW TERRITORIES (RENEWABLE CROWN LEASES) ORDINANCE IN 1969 WITH EFFECT FROM 1973.

"THE PERIOD OF 20 YEARS FROM THE RENEWAL DATE IS NOW RUNNING OUT AND A COURT CASE IN LATE 1992 HAD DRAWN THE ATTENTION TO THE POSITION," HE SAID.

NOTING THAT THESE ARE ESSENTIALLY PRIVATE MATTERS BETWEEN THE LAND OWNERS AND THE OCCUPIERS, MR EASON SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT KNOW THERE WERE HOW MANY SUCH CASES, OR DETAILS OF THE SPECIFIC PIECES OF LAND, EXCEPT WHEN THE PEOPLE AFFECTED HAD SOUGHT ASSISTANCE.

IN A FEW CASES, THE OCCUPIERS WERE FOUND TO HAVE BEEN ISSUED CROWN LAND LICENCES WHEN THEY ARE IN FACT OCCUPYING PRIVATE LAND, MR EASON SAID.

"THIS HAS ARISEN LARGELY BECAUSE OF THE INACCURACY OF THE ORIGINAL LAND SURVEYS CONDUCTED IN THE EARLY 1900'S.

"WHENEVER SUCH CASES COME TO LIGHT, THE GOVERNMENT WILL CANCEL THE LICENCES AND REFUND ALL FEES PAID IN RESPECT OF THEM."

MR EASON SAID THE LOCAL DISTRICT LANDS OFFICES WOULD ASSIST OCCUPIERS OR OWNERS IN CLARIFYING THE STATUS OF LAND AS FAR AS POSSIBLE IN THE PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES.

LEGAL CONTROL OF UNSAFE CONDOMS

* * * * *

LEGISLATIVE POWER COULD BE INVOKED TO PREVENT THE SALE OF UNSAFE CONDOMS WHICH POSE A SIGNIFICANT RISK OF CAUSING SERIOUS INJURY, THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR T H CHAU, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR CHAU, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON LEONG CHE-HUNG, SAID UNDER THE CONSUMER GOODS SAFETY BILL INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGCO ON DECEMBER 8, THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, WOULD BE EMPOWERED TO MAKE REGULATIONS TO PROHIBIT THE SUPPLY, MANUFACTURE IN HONG KONG, OR IMPORTATION INTO HONG KONG, OF SPECIFIED CONSUMER GOODS OR A CLASS OF CONSUMER GOODS.

CONDOMS FALL WITHIN THE DEFINITION OF "CONSUMER GOODS" UNDER THE BILL.

THE BILL ALSO SEEKS TO EMPOWER THE COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS AND EXCISE TO ISSUE SAFETY CONTROL NOTICES TO SUPPLIERS TO PROHIBIT THEM FROM SUPPLYING UNSAFE CONSUMER GOODS AND TO REQUIRE IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE MARKET OF UNSAFE CONSUMER GOODS WHICH ARE BELIEVED TO POSE A SIGNIFICANT RISK OF CAUSING SERIOUS INJURY.

MR CHAU SAID THERE WERE NO EXISTING LAWS WHICH EMPOWERED THE GOVERNMENT TO ASK THE SUPPLIERS CONCERNED TO RECALL FROM THE MARKET ANY CONDOM FALLING BELOW INTERNATIONAL SAFETY STANDARDS, OR PROHIBIT THE IMPORT AND SALE OF SUCH PRODUCTS.

"THE QUALITY, LABELLING AND SALE OF CONDOMS, EITHER IMPORTED OR LOCALLY MADE, ARE NOT GOVERNED BY EXISTING LAWS," HE SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

DRUG TRAFFICKING IN VIET DETENTION CENTRES MINIMAL

* * * * *

THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF DRUG TRAFFICKING AT THE NEW HORIZONS DEPARTURE CENTRE FOR VIETNAMESE REFUGEES, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR KEN WOODHOUSE, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON TANG SIU-TONG, MR WOODHOUSE SAID DRUG TRAFFICKING IN DETENTION CENTRES WAS ALSO MINIMAL.

LAST YEAR, THERE WERE ONLY FOUR CASES OF DRUG SEIZURE, RESULTING IN FOUR VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS BEING CHARGED AND CONVICTED OF SIMPLE POSSESSION OF DANGEROUS DRUGS.

THIS YEAR, THERE HAVE BEEN NO SEIZURES AND NO VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS CHARGED WITH DRUG-RELATED OFFENCES.

/IT IS

- 30 -

IT IS AN OFFENCE UNDER THE DETENTION CENTRE RULES TO INTRODUCE, SUPPLY OR POSSESS UNAUTHORISED ARTICLES, WHICH INCLUDE DRUGS.

ACCESS TO DETENTION CENTRES IS RESTRICTED AND VISITS TO CAMPS ARE CLOSELY MONITORED; ALL INCOMING ARTICLES AND INDIVIDUALS ARE SUBJECT TO CHECKING.

IN ADDITION, DORMITORY SEARCHES ARE CARRIED OUT FROM TIME TO TIME TO ENSURE THAT NO UNAUTHORISED ARTICLES ARE KEPT IN THE CAMPS.

"VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS SUSPECTED TO BE INVOLVED IN DRUG ABUSE OR TRAFFICKING WILL BE INVESTIGATED AND REFERRED TO THE POLICE IF THERE IS SUBSTANTIATED EVIDENCE."

"SUSPECTS MAY ALSO BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CAMPS FOR MANAGEMENT OBSERVATION," HE SAID.

THE VAST MAJORITY OF VIETNAMESE IN HONG KONG ARE IN DETENTION CENTRES AWAITING STATUS DETERMINATION OR REPATRIATION TO VIETNAM.

- - - - 0 - - - -

JUDICIARY TO COMPUTERISE CASE RECORD SYSTEM: SHA

* * * * *

THE JUDICIARY IS PLANNING TO INSTALL A COMPUTERISED CASE RECORD SYSTEM TO FACILITATE THE COMPILATION OF MORE DETAILED STATISTICS IN FUTURE, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE WAS GIVING A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON FREDERICK FUNG ON THE NUMBER OF BUILDING MANAGEMENT LITIGATION CASES, IN WHICH CHAIRPERSONS OF THE OWNERS' CORPORATIONS WERE INVOLVED AS PLAINTIFFS OR DEFENDANTS.

AT PRESENT THE JUDICIARY DOES NOT KEEP STATISTICS DOWN TO THIS DETAILED LEVEL.

MR SUEN SAID THE MAJORITY OF SUCH CASES PROBABLY FELL WITHIN THE "CIVIL JURISDICTION" CATEGORY OF THE DISTRICT COURTS STATISTICS AND THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL STATISTICS.

A TOTAL OF 34,927 ACTIONS AND 38,930 CASES WERE INSTITUTED RESPECTIVELY LAST YEAR, HE ADDED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

- 31 -

LATE BNO APPLICATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED

* * * * *

THE DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION WILL CONSIDER SYMPATHETICALLY AND WITH FLEXIBILITY ALL LATE APPLICATIONS FOR BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORTS (BN(O)).

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR KEN WOODHOUSE, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HENRY TANG YING-YEN, MR WOODHOUSE SAID THE NUMBER OF LATE APPLICATIONS WAS LIKELY TO BE VERY SMALL.

"WE DO NOT THINK THAT THE NUMBER OF APPEALS WILL BE TOO LARGE FOR THE BN(O) LATE REGISTRATION APPEALS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO HANDLE," HE SAID.

MR WOODHOUSE SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT HAVE A SPECIFIC TARGET FOR THE NUMBER OF APPLICANTS AS IT WAS NOT COMPULSORY FOR BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORIES CITIZENS TO APPLY FOR BN(O) PASSPORTS.

HOWEVER, TO ENSURE THAT THOSE WHO WISH TO APPLY WILL DO IT IN TIME, HE SAID THE PHASED REGISTRATION PROGRAMME WAS PUBLICISED IN VARIOUS WAYS LOCALLY AND OVERSEAS.

"WE WILL CONTINUE THE PUBLICITY PROGRAMME AND MONITOR ITS EFFECTIVENESS CLOSELY, ENHANCING ITS INTENSITY IF NECESSARY," HE SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

GROWTH IN USE OF AUTO-TOLL

* * * * *

A TOTAL OF 22,090 AUTOPASSES HAVE SO FAR BEEN ISSUED BY THE AUTOPASS COMPANY LTD FOR USE AT THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL AND THE ABERDEEN TUNNEL; THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR HAIDER BARMA, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HOWARD YOUNG, MR BARMA SAID THE AUTO-TOLL SYSTEM WAS A PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVE.

"IT IS FOR THE COMPANIES THEMSELVES TO DECIDE WHETHER TO INTRODUCE AUTO-TOLL SYSTEMS FOR THEIR TUNNELS.

"THEY THEN NEED TO SEEK THE APPROVAL OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT.

"THE VEHICLES SO EQUIPPED CAN USE THE AUTO-TOLL LANES AT BOTH THE CROSS HARBOUR AND ABERDEEN TUNNELS."

- - - - 0 - - - -

BANKNOTES ISSUE FULLY BACKED BY EXCHANGE FUND

* * * * *

THE CIRCULATION OF HONG KONG DOLLAR BANKNOTES OUTSIDE THE TERRITORY DOES NOT POSE A PROBLEM TO ITS MONETARY SYSTEM, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES, MR TAM WING-PONG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON DAVID K P LI IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR TAM SAID THE ISSUE OF BANKNOTES WAS FULLY BACKED BY U.S. DOLLARS PLACED WITH THE EXCHANGE FUND.

HE SAID EVEN IN THE HIGHLY UNLIKELY EVENT THAT A LARGE AMOUNT OF BANKNOTES WAS RETURNED TO HONG KONG, THE EXCHANGE FUND WOULD NOT HAVE ANY PROBLEM IN COMING UP WITH THE U.S. DOLLARS FOR REDEEMING THE BANKNOTES.

THERE IS ALSO A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF OFFSHORE HONG KONG DOLLAR DEPOSITS, MAINLY HELD BY MAINLAND ENTERPRISES OR INDIVIDUALS AND PLACED WITH BANKS IN CHINA.

AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR, THE BANKING SECTOR'S GROSS HONG KONG DOLLAR LIABILITIES TO BANKS IN CHINA AMOUNTED TO \$81 BILLION, BEING 60 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL HONG KONG DOLLAR LIABILITIES TO BANKS ABROAD.

THE NET AMOUNT OF HONG KONG DOLLAR LIABILITIES TO BANKS IN CHINA AMOUNTED TO \$44 BILLION AT THE END OF THE SAME MONTH.

MR TAM SAID A SUDDEN AND SUBSTANTIAL MOVEMENT OF THESE HONG KONG DOLLAR HOLDINGS COULD HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE HONG KONG DOLLAR EXCHANGE RATE AND THE LIQUIDITY POSITION OF INDIVIDUAL BANKS IN HONG KONG.

BUT THIS WAS UNLIKELY TO BE SIGNIFICANT, HE ADDED.

"THE HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY KEEPS A CLOSE WATCH ON THE CHANGE IN THESE OFFSHORE DEPOSITS, INCLUDING LIAISING WITH THE PEOPLE'S BANK OF CHINA AND CONDUCTING SURVEYS FOR THIS PURPOSE," HE SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

NEW MRF FORMAT FOR UPCOMING BUDGET

* * * * *

EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO REVIEW AND UPDATE THE BASIS ON WHICH THE MEDIUM RANGE FORECAST (MRF) IS MADE TO ENSURE THAT THE FORECAST OF BOTH REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE IS AS REALISTIC AS POSSIBLE.

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

/MR TSANG

- 33 -

MR TSANG SAID THE MRF WOULD BE PRESENTED IN A NEW FORMAT IN THE UPCOMING FORECAST, TO GIVE A CLEARER AND MORE INFORMATIVE PICTURE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S FINANCES.

THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW FINALISING THE NEW FORMAT, AFTER TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE ADVICE OF LEGCO MEMBERS ON HOW BEST THE MRF FORMAT CAN BE REVISED.

THE MRF IS A FORECAST OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE COVERING A PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS: THE CURRENT YEAR, THE FORTHCOMING ESTIMATES YEAR AND A FURTHER THREE YEARS.

MR TSANG SAID: "LIKE MOST FORECASTS, IT IS BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN PREVIOUS YEARS, CURRENT AND UP-TO-DATE DATA OF THE PRESENT POSITION AND A NUMBER OF KEY ASSUMPTIONS AS TO FUTURE EVENTS, SUCH AS ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INFLATION TRENDS."

"IN COMPILING THE MRF FOR THE UPCOMING BUDGET, THEREFORE, WE SHALL PAY FULL ATTENTION TO THE TRENDS OF KEY INDICATORS TO-DATE, THE LATEST REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE POSITION AND THE REALISM OF THE ASSUMPTIONS ON WHICH THE PROJECTIONS ARE BASED HAVING REGARD TO CURRENT AND ANTICIPATED CIRCUMSTANCES."

DESPITE THESE EFFORTS, THE FINAL OUT-TURN MIGHT STILL BE DIFFERENT FROM THE FORECAST BECAUSE OF CHANGES IN THE UNDERLYING FACTORS.

FOR EXAMPLE, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROPERTY AND STOCK MARKET ACTIVITIES MAY BE HIGHER OR LOWER THAN EXPECTED AND AFFECT THE REVENUE OUT-TURN TO A SIGNIFICANT DEGREE, HE ADDED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

RETIREMENT SCHEMES FIGURES

* * * * *

ABOUT 22,000 BUSINESSES WERE PROVIDING RETIREMENT PROTECTION, EITHER A PROVIDENT FUND OR PENSION FUND, TO THEIR EMPLOYEES, ACCORDING TO A SURVEY BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT IN 1991.

THE "WHOLESALE/RETAIL, IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS" SECTOR HAS THE LARGEST NUMBER OF RETIREMENT SCHEMES OF 10,343.

THE SECTOR ALSO HAS THE LARGEST NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES COVERED BY RETIREMENT SCHEMES.

THE "FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES" SECTOR HAS THE HIGHEST PROPORTION OF ESTABLISHMENTS PROVIDING SOME FORM OF RETIREMENT SCHEME TO THEIR EMPLOYEES.

THE FIGURES WERE REPORTED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES, MR TAM WING-PONG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TIK CHI-YUEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

/ABOUT 30

ABOUT 30 PER CENT OR 850,000 MEMBERS OF THE WORKING POPULATION, EXCLUDING THE CIVIL SERVICE, IS COVERED BY SOME FORM OF RETIREMENT SCHEME.

AS THE OCCUPATIONAL RETIREMENT SCHEMES ORDINANCE WHICH REGULATES ALL SCHEMES IN HONG KONG STARTED ONLY IN OCTOBER, A FULL RECORD OF SCHEMES IS NOT YET AVAILABLE.

"MORE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION OF RETIREMENT SCHEMES IS EXPECTED IN 1995, ON EXPIRY OF THE TWO-YEAR PERIOD, FOR REGISTRATION OF EXISTING SCHEMES," MR TAM SAID.

ACCORDING TO PRIVATE SECTOR RESEARCH, ESTIMATED RETIREMENT FUNDS IN THE MARKET ARE BETWEEN HK\$80 BILLION AND \$100 BILLION, PROJECTED TO INCREASE AT A RATE OF ABOUT HK\$20 BILLION A YEAR.

- - - - 0 - - - -

ICAC TO FORM NEW UNIT ON CIVIL SERVICE RECORDS

* * * * *

THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (ICAC) WILL SET UP A NEW UNIT TO HANDLE RECORD CHECKS AND INTERVIEWS TO VERIFY INFORMATION PROVIDED BY CIVIL SERVANTS BEING CHECKED.

THE PLAN WAS OUTLINED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR KEN WOODHOUSE, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ERIC LI KA-CHEUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR WOODHOUSE SAID THE NEW UNIT WOULD HAVE THE SAME RESPONSIBILITIES AS THE EXISTING SPECIAL BRANCH UNIT.

NEITHER HAVE INVESTIGATIVE NOR ENFORCEMENT POWERS AND IT WILL NOT CARRY OUT POLITICAL INVESTIGATIONS, HE ADDED.

THE NEW UNIT IS EXPECTED TO HAVE 10 STAFF, INCLUDING CLERICAL SUPPORT, SAME AS THE EXISTING SPECIAL BRANCH UNIT.

HE SAID THE COMMISSIONER OF ICAC WOULD ENSURE PROPER FUNDING BE SOUGHT FOR THE UNIT THROUGH THE NORMAL PROCESS OF ANNUAL GOVERNMENT ESTIMATES.

"HE WILL ALSO ENSURE THAT NORMAL BUDGETARY CONTROLS ON EXPENDITURE DO NOT ALLOW FUNDS ALLOCATED TO OTHER FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION TO BE USED FOR THE NEW UNIT," MR WOODHOUSE SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

NEW SURVEY OF SERVICE INDUSTRIES LAUNCHED

* * * * *

THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT HAS LAUNCHED A NEW QUARTERLY SURVEY OF SERVICE INDUSTRIES IN MAY THIS YEAR TO PROVIDE PROMPT INDICATORS OF THE CURRENT PERFORMANCE OF THE VARIOUS SERVICE SECTORS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES, MR TAM WING-PONG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HUANG CHEN-YA IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR TAM SAID RESULTS OF THE SURVEY WOULD BE PUBLISHED AT QUARTERLY INTERVALS STARTING FROM MID-1994, WHEN THE SERIES OF THE STATISTICS WAS SUFFICIENTLY LONG TO ALLOW INTER-PERIOD COMPARISONS AND THE COMPUTATION OF GROWTH RATES.

HE SAID THE RESPONSE RATE AND QUALITY OF THE DATA COLLECTED SO FAR HAD BEEN SATISFACTORY.

- - - - 0 - - - -

MOTION TO BOOST CONSUMER PROTECTION PASSED

* * * * *

A MOTION MOVED BY THE HON MAN SAI-CHEONG URGING THE GOVERNMENT TO EXPEDITE THE ENACTMENT OF LEGISLATION FOR BETTER PROTECTION OF CONSUMER RIGHTS WAS PASSED AFTER A TWO-HOUR DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TONIGHT (WEDNESDAY).

A TOTAL OF 15 MEMBERS SPOKE. THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR T H CHAU, REPLIED FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

ANOTHER MOTION MOVED BY THE HON EDWARD HO URGING THE GOVERNMENT TO ADOPT A STRATEGY THAT WOULD PROMOTE THE TERRITORY'S PROSPERITY AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF ITS PEOPLE UP TO AND BEYOND 1997 WAS ALSO PASSED.

SEVENTEEN MEMBERS SPOKE IN THE TWO-HOUR DEBATE AND THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT.

A MOTION ON CIVIL AVIATION (AIRCRAFT NOISE) (LIMITATION ON LANDING OR TAKING OFF OF AIRCRAFT) (AMENDMENT) NOTICE 1993 WAS DEFEATED AFTER AN HOUR'S DEBATE. THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MR GORDON SIU, REPLIED FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

THE TWO MOTIONS MOVED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, UNDER THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ORDINANCE AND THE CORONERS ORDINANCE, WERE PASSED.

/TWO OTHER

TWO OTHER MOTIONS MOVED BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR DONALD TSANG, UNDER THE INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE AND THE STAMP DUTY ORDINANCE; AND A MOTION ON FIXED PENALTY (CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS) ORDINANCE MOVED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR HAIDER BARMA, WERE ALSO PASSED.

A TOTAL OF SEVEN BILLS WERE PASSED, FOUR WITH AMENDMENTS.

THE FOUR BILLS WITH AMENDMENTS WERE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992; ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO.4) BILL 1992; ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993 AND BANKING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993.

THE OTHER BILLS WERE: FIXED PENALTY (TRAFFIC CONTRAVENTIONS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993; INDUSTRIAL TRAINING (CLOTHING INDUSTRY) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993, AND A PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL - THE PUBLIC OFFICERS (VARIATION OF CONDITIONS OF SERVICE) (TEMPORARY PROVISIONS) - MOVED BY THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG.

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR STUART HARBINSON, SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT.