



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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SHW'S ADDRESS ON SOCIAL WELFARE WHITE PAPER
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FOLLOWING IS THE STATEMENT ON THE WHITE PAPER ON SOCIAL WELFARE INTO THE 1990'S AND BEYOND BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON ELIZABETH WONG, TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

SIR, LAID ON THE TABLE TODAY IS THE WHITE PAPER ON SOCIAL WELFARE INTO THE 1990'S AND BEYOND.

THIS WHITE PAPER SETS OUT THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES. IT REPRESENTS THE CULMINATION OF A YEAR'S COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BY A WORKING PARTY COMPRISING MAINLY NON-OFFICIALS DRAWN FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN SOCIAL WELFARE AND OTHER AREAS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR. GREAT CREDIT AND GRATITUDE IS DUE TO THESE PERSONS FOR THE CREATIVITY AND HARD WORK THEY HAVE OFFERED FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOCIAL WELFARE IN HONG KONG.

THE WORKING PARTY SOUGHT PUBLIC VIEWS AT THE BEGINNING OF ITS WORK IN EARLY 1990 AND AGAIN ON ITS DRAFT REPORT IN SEPTEMBER LAST YEAR. DURING THE SECOND ROUND OF CONSULTATION, THE WORKING PARTY RECEIVED MANY HELPFUL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS THROUGH THE DISTRICT BOARDS, SEMINARS, WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS AND THE DEBATE IN THIS CHAMBER. THE USE OF THIS TRANSPARENT DRAFTING PROCESS HAS MEANT THAT THE FINAL WHITE PAPER HAS BEEN ABLE TO RESPOND, BOTH IN DIRECTION AND SUBSTANCE, TO MANY OF THE PUBLIC DESIRES AND CONCERNS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES.

THE WHITE PAPER TABLED TODAY DIFFERS, THEREFORE, IN SEVERAL RESPECTS FROM THE WORKING PARTY'S DRAFT REPORT ISSUED IN SEPTEMBER LAST YEAR. COMMENTS ABOUT THE VAGUENESS OF PROPOSED FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND THE APPARENT LACK OF COMMITMENT TO FUNDING HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED BY THE INCLUSION OF AN IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE GIVING PLANNED TARGETS AND PLANNING TARGETS TO BE ACHIEVED. THE NEED TO CLARIFY CONFUSION OVER THE POSSIBILITIES OF FEE-CHARGING HAS ALSO BEEN RECOGNIZED THROUGH THE UNDERTAKING TO FORM A WORKING PARTY OF GOVERNMENT AND SERVICE AGENCIES TO STUDY FURTHER HOW THIS CONCEPT MIGHT BE DEVELOPED.

THERE WAS A STRONG CALL FOR THE WHITE PAPER TO ADDRESS THE CONSEQUENCES OF AN AGING POPULATION ON THE PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY. THIS IS FREQUENTLY LINKED TO THE SUBJECT OF PROVIDING FOR FINANCIAL SECURITY IN OLD AGE THROUGH CONTRIBUTORY SCHEMES. RETIREMENT PROVISION FOR THE ELDERLY DID NOT FALL WITHIN THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE WORKING PARTY OR THE SCOPE OF THE WHITE PAPER. HOWEVER, THE FOREWORD TO THE WHITE PAPER DOES ACKNOWLEDGE THE VIEW THAT THE ISSUE OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE ELDERLY SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE EXAMINED BY GOVERNMENT. THIS WILL BE DONE. NOT ONLY WILL THE EXISTING SCHEMES BE KEPT UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW BUT OTHER RELATED AREAS WILL BE EXAMINED SUCH AS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME SUITABLE FOR HONG KONG.

/COMMENTS WERE

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COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED ON OTHER ISSUES FALLING OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE WHITE PAPER. ONE REQUEST CONCERNED COVERAGE OF REHABILITATION SERVICES IN THE WHITE PAPER. THIS WILL BE MET THROUGH THE COMPREHENSIVE GREEN PAPER ON REHABILITATION ANNOUNCED BY YOU SIR IN YOUR OCTOBER ADDRESS. WORK ON THE GREEN PAPER HAS ALREADY BEGUN, AND WE SHOULD BE READY FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION LATER THIS YEAR.

THE WHITE PAPER ITSELF DOES NOT ADOPT A NARROW FOCUS, AND A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES HAS BEEN CONSIDERED IN ITS FORMULATION AND BEFORE ESTABLISHING THAT THE NEEDS OF FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT RISK AND THE ELDERLY MUST ALL CARRY HIGH PRIORITY.

THE WHITE PAPER AIMS TO PROMOTE THE WELL-BEING OF THE ELDERLY THROUGH SERVICES WHICH WILL ENABLE THEM TO REMAIN ACTIVE AND VALUED MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY. COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES IN THE FORM OF HOME HELP, MULTI-SERVICE CENTRES, DAY CARE AND SOCIAL CENTRES FOR THE ELDERLY WILL BE EXPANDED. A HIGH PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO MEETING THE GROWING DEMAND FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE IN THE FORM OF SUBVENTED CARE AND ATTENTION HOMES AND HOMES FOR THE AGED. IN ADDITION, PROPERLY REGULATED PRIVATE AND NON-PROFIT MAKING HOMES WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO PLAY THEIR PART.

THE WHITE PAPER LOOKS UPON THE FAMILY AS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF OUR SOCIETY. TRADITIONALLY, IT IS THROUGH THE FAMILY THAT YOUNG AND OLD ALIKE HAVE BEEN CARED FOR AND SUPPORTED. WITH THE INCREASE IN SMALLER FAMILIES, THIS NETWORK OF FAMILY SUPPORT HAS BECOME WEAKER AT A TIME WHEN THE STRESSES AND STRAINS OF OUR RAPIDLY DEVELOPING SOCIETY HAVE INCREASED THE PRESSURES ON ALL FAMILY MEMBERS. FAMILY CASEWORK AND COUNSELLING SERVICES WILL BE STEPPED UP TO HELP AND REACH OUT TO FAMILIES EXPERIENCING PERSONAL AND FAMILY PROBLEMS. SUPPORT SERVICES SUCH AS HOME HELP AND DAY CARE FOR CHILDREN WILL BE STRENGTHENED. SPECIAL ATTENTION WILL BE PAID TO THE NEEDS OF THE GROWING NUMBER OF SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES AND TO THOSE FAMILIES WHO CANNOT PROVIDE FOR THEMSELVES THE BASIC NECESSITIES OF DAILY LIFE. IN PARTICULAR, THE WHITE PAPER PROPOSES THAT THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN IN FAMILIES RECEIVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE BE RECOGNIZED BY AN ADDITIONAL CHILD SUPPLEMENT. AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE OF THE WHITE PAPER, THIS SUPPLEMENT WILL BE INTRODUCED LATER THIS YEAR.

THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE IN HONG KONG IS NOT SOLELY A MATTER OF MORE MONEY, SERVICES AND FACILITIES. MUCH WILL ALSO DEPEND UPON HONG KONG'S ABILITY TO PROVIDE MORE SOCIAL WORKERS OF THE SAME CALIBRE AND COMMITMENT AS THOSE WHO ALREADY SERVE, SO ADMIRABLY, THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY. THE WHITE PAPER RECOGNISES DIFFICULTIES IN EXPANDING THE SUPPLY OF CERTAIN SOCIAL WORK PERSONNEL, AND THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL WORK TRAINING AND MANPOWER PLANNING AND THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE WILL CONTINUE TO EXPLORE WAYS AND MEANS TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION.

/SIR, HONG

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SIR, HONG KONG IS A PROSPEROUS AND CARING SOCIETY. THIS IS EVIDENT BY THE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN ACHIEVED IN THE AREA OF SOCIAL WELFARE IN THE PAST DECADES. THERE IS ALREADY A SOLID FOUNDATION UPON WHICH TO BUILD AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO BUILD ON THIS FIRM FOUNDATION.

THE WHITE PAPER TABLED TODAY IS A STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE IN HONG KONG. IT SETS OUT CLEAR OBJECTIVES AND PROPOSALS TO COPE WITH THE CHALLENGES, CONSTRAINTS AND DEMANDS OF MEETING THE CHANGING NEEDS AND EVOLVING ASPIRATIONS OF OUR SOCIETY. I AM CONFIDENT THAT WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNITY AND THROUGH THE DEDICATION AND EFFORTS OF GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS, WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP, THESE OBJECTIVES WILL BE ACHIEVED.

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COMPETITION IS THE KEY TO BETTER PUBLIC TRANSPORT

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THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNISED THAT THE KEY TO FRANCHISED PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMPANIES' SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT IN EFFICIENCY LAY IN HEALTHY COMPETITION RATHER THAN TIGHTER CONTROL OVER THEIR DAILY MANAGEMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ROUNDING UP THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON 'FRANCHISED PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES IN HONG KONG', MR LEUNG SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S RECENT DECISION TO GRANT OPERATING RIGHTS OVER CERTAIN BUS ROUTES THROUGH PUBLIC TENDER WAS AIMED AT STIMULATING HEALTHY COMPETITION WITHOUT UNDERMINING THE EXISTING FRANCHISING ARRANGEMENTS.

HE SAID THE FIRST TENDER FOR SUCH ROUTES WAS EXPECTED TO GO OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS YEAR.

MR LEUNG ASSURED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD AN 'OPEN MIND' ON CURRENT FRANCHISING ARRANGEMENTS AND WOULD INTRODUCE FURTHER REFINEMENTS WHERE NECESSARY WHEN CONSIDERING THE EXTENSION OF KOWLOON MOTOR BUS AND CHINA MOTOR BUS' FRANCHISES.

HOWEVER, MR LEUNG EMPHASISED THAT UNDER THE PRESENT POLICY FRAMEWORK, HONG KONG HAD BENEFITTED FROM A PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM THAT WAS WELL INTEGRATED AND OFFERED COMMUTERS A GOOD RANGE OF CHOICE AT REASONABLE FARES.

MR LEUNG SAID THE GOVERNMENT MOTIVATED EXISTING FRANCHISEES TO BE MORE RESPONSIVE TO CHANGING PASSENGER DEMAND, SUCH AS ADOPTING BETTER WORK PRACTICE AND INTRODUCING HIGHER QUALITY SERVICES.

MR LEUNG SAID THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF AIR-CONDITIONED BUS SERVICES WOULD BE CLOSELY MONITORED, HAVING REGARD TO DEMAND AND PUBLIC ACCEPTABILITY OF THE FARES CHARGED.

/"A REASONABLE

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"A REASONABLE CHOICE WILL BE MAINTAINED FOR COMMUTERS WHO PREFER TO USE NON-AIR-CONDITIONED BUSES," HE SAID.

AT PRESENT, THE SCHEME OF CONTROL AGREEMENT APPLIED ONLY TO CHINA MOTOR BUS COMPANY (CMB) AND KOWLOON MOTOR BUS COMPANY (KMB).

THERE WAS NO SUCH AGREEMENT FOR THE NEW LANTAO BUS COMPANY OR THE TWO FERRY COMPANIES, BECAUSE THEIR SCALE OF OPERATIONS WAS SUBSTANTIALLY SMALLER THAN THAT OF CMB AND KMB.

THE SCHEME LINKED THE LEVEL OF PROFITS PERMITTED IN ANY ONE YEAR TO A GIVEN PERCENTAGE OF THEIR FIXED ASSETS.

IT WAS DESIGNED TO GIVE THE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL STABILITY NEEDED TO ENCOURAGE CONTINUED INVESTMENTS. IT ALSO ENSURED THAT THEY DID NOT MAKE EXCESSIVE PROFITS.

UNDER THE SCHEME, THE PERMITTED RETURN SET A LIMIT ON THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF PROFITS WHICH KMB AND CMB MIGHT OBTAIN. ANY EXCESS WENT TO A DEVELOPMENT FUND. IT WAS NOT INTENDED TO SET A GUARANTEED RATE OF RETURN.

MR LEUNG SAID UNDER EXISTING POLICY, FARES FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES WERE NORMALLY SET AT LEVELS SUFFICIENT TO GIVE THE COMPANIES CONCERNED A REASONABLE RETURN ON THEIR INVESTMENTS, SUBJECT TO A PROPER AND EFFICIENT SERVICE BEING MAINTAINED.

A DEGREE OF STABILITY IN THE RATE OF RETURN SERVED TO ENCOURAGE CONTINUED INVESTMENTS.

HE SAID: "THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT A SHORTFALL IN PERMITTED RETURN IN ANY ONE YEAR WOULD BE A SUFFICIENT REASON FOR RAISING FARES. THERE WERE INDEED CASES IN THE PAST WHERE, EXCEPTIONALLY, A FARE INCREASE WAS APPROVED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND AGREED BY THE COMPANY CONCERNED IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE NEW FARES MIGHT NOT ENABLE THE COMPANY TO EARN ITS FULL PERMITTED RETURN.

"HOWEVER, TO REDUCE ARBITRARILY THE PERMITTED RETURN FOR ANY ONE PUBLIC UTILITY MAY AFFECT OVERALL INVESTOR CONFIDENCE IN PUBLIC UTILITIES.

"THIS COURSE OF ACTION SHOULD NOT BE PURSUED WITHOUT THE MOST CAREFUL CONSIDERATION AND CONSULTATION," MR LEUNG SAID.

ON THE CURRENT RATES OF PERMITTED RETURN FOR KMB AND CMB, MR LEUNG SAID THE TWO COMPANIES' RATE OF RETURN WAS NOT UNREASONABLE WHEN COMPARED WITH OTHER PRIVATE ENTERPRISES.

PARTICULARLY SO AS IN CALCULATING THEIR RATE OF RETURN, SOME ASPECTS WERE BASED ON THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF THEIR FIXED ASSETS.

HE CITED AS AN EXAMPLE THAT THE LAND FOR KMB'S LAI CHI KOK DEPOT APPEARED IN THE ACCOUNT BOOKS AT ITS 1959 VALUE OF \$3.28 MILLION, OR \$23.4 PER SQUARE FOOT, WHICH IS SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER THAN CURRENT DAY LAND VALUES.

/HE STRESSED

HE STRESSED THAT THE PERMITTED RETURN WAS THE GROSS RETURN TO THE TWO BUS COMPANIES, SUBJECT TO CERTAIN COMPULSORY DEDUCTIONS INCLUDING INTEREST PAYMENTS.

"IN PRACTICE, THE NET RATE OF RETURN ACHIEVED IS LESS. FOR KMB IT HAS BEEN AROUND 13.4% FROM 1979 TO 1989. FOR CMB IT HAS BEEN ABOUT 14% OVER THE SAME PERIOD," HE SAID.

ON FARE INCREASES OF THE TWO BUS COMPANIES, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT POINTED OUT THAT IN RECENT YEARS, THE COSTS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPERATIONS HAD INCREASED RAPIDLY IN REAL TERMS DUE TO A VARIETY OF FACTORS.

THE KEY FACTORS, NAMELY THE TIGHT SUPPLY OF LABOUR AND AVERAGE WAGE LEVELS, WERE BEYOND THE OPERATORS' CONTROL.

MR LEUNG SAID THE FARE FOR AN AVERAGE KMB TRIP WAS \$1.6 IN 1987. IT ROSE TO \$2.24 IN 1990. NEARLY 60% OF THE DIFFERENCE IS ACCOUNTED FOR BY INCREASES IN STAFF COSTS.

IN SPITE OF INCREASING COSTS, THE FARES OF HONG KONG'S PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES STILL COMPARED QUITE FAVOURABLY WITH MANY OTHER ASIAN CITIES, INCLUDING KUALA LUMPUR, SEOUL AND SINGAPORE.

MR LEUNG SAID TO KEEP FARES LOW, CONTINUOUS EFFORTS WERE BEING MADE TO MAINTAIN ECONOMIES IN FRANCHISED BUS AND FERRY OPERATIONS.

MR LEUNG SAID THE GOVERNMENT ALSO UNDERTOOK STUDIES INTO THE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF DIFFERENT MODES OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT, TO SEE HOW THEY SHOULD COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER, AND AVOID WASTEFUL DUPLICATION.

RECENT EXAMPLES INCLUDE A CONSULTANCY STUDY ON THE EFFICIENCY OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT NETWORK IN NORTH EAST NEW TERRITORIES, COMPLETED IN 1990.

MR LEUNG SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS STUDYING THE CROSS-HARBOUR FERRY LINKS UP TO 2001, HAVING REGARD TO PLANNED RECLAMATIONS IN THE HARBOUR AND THE PROPOSED WESTERN HARBOUR CROSSING.

THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG AND YAUMATEI FERRY COMPANY'S INNER HARBOUR SERVICES AND HOW THEY COULD BE PUT TO FULLER USE WOULD BE COVERED IN THE STUDY, HE SAID.

THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT STRESSED THAT THE FIVE FRANCHISED PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMPANIES WERE SUPERVISED BY THE GOVERNMENT THROUGH A WELL-ESTABLISHED MONITORING SYSTEM WHICH WAS SENSITIVE TO THE INTERESTS OF THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC.

THE SAFE OPERATION OF BUS AND FERRY SERVICES WAS GOVERNED BY STRINGENT PROVISIONS IN LAW.

THE GOVERNMENT WAS ALSO EMPOWERED TO CONDUCT RANDOM SAFETY CHECKS AND REGULAR INSPECTIONS OF MAINTENANCE FACILITIES.

ON SERVICE DELIVERY, MR LEUNG SAID THE LAW REQUIRED THE FRANCHISED OPERATORS TO DRAW UP A FIVE-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE GOVERNMENT APPROVAL EACH YEAR.

THE PREPARATION OF THIS FIVE-YEAR PLAN ENABLED THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) TO INFLUENCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES; AVOID UNNECESSARILY ABRUPT FARE INCREASES; AND MAKE SURE THAT SERVICES WERE ADJUSTED AND DEVELOPED ACCORDING TO ACTUAL AND FORECAST DEMAND WITHOUT UNDUE ASSET EXPANSION.

HE SAID THE CURRENT SYSTEM ALSO ALLOWED ACTIVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION. THE ROUTE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES OF INDIVIDUAL OPERATORS WERE NOT FINALISED UNTIL THE RELEVANT DISTRICT BOARDS HAD BEEN CONSULTED AND THEIR VIEWS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

ONCE A PROGRAMME WAS APPROVED, THE PUBLIC COULD MONITOR THE DAILY PERFORMANCE OF AN OPERATOR AGAINST CERTAIN YARDSTICKS, SUCH AS SERVICE FREQUENCY AND OPERATING HOURS.

THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ALSO MONITORED TRANSPORT SERVICES THROUGH FIELD SURVEYS; THE ANALYSIS OF ACCIDENT RECORDS, PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AND STATISTICAL RETURNS FROM THE OPERATORS.

FURTHERMORE, TWO SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SAT ON THE BOARDS OF FRANCHISED TRANSPORT COMPANIES. THEY PROVIDED AN EFFECTIVE LINK BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COMPANIES FOR HANDLING MATTERS OF CONCERN TO THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC.

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ALSO MET THE OMELCO TRANSPORT PANEL REGULARLY TO DISCUSS VARIOUS TRANSPORT ISSUES.

ON FARE ADJUSTMENTS, MR LEUNG SAID THE AUTHORITY TO APPROVE FARE ADJUSTMENTS RESTED WITH THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL. FARE INCREASE APPLICATIONS WERE SUBJECT TO CLOSE SCRUTINY BY THE ADMINISTRATION AND INDEPENDENT ADVICE BY THE TAC.

"ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT IS PRECLUDED BY THE COMPANIES AND SECURITIES ORDINANCES FROM MAKING PUBLIC COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE INFORMATION IN THE FARE INCREASE APPLICATIONS, THE NECESSARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION IS PROVIDED IN FULL BY THE COMPANIES TO ENABLE A DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL," HE SAID.

NO FARE INCREASES WOULD BE APPROVED UNLESS THE GOVERNMENT WAS FULLY SATISFIED THAT THE ADJUSTMENTS SOUGHT WERE NECESSARY FOR CONTINUING EXISTING SERVICES AND FOR MAKING IMPROVEMENTS TO MEET PASSENGER DEMAND.

THE SECRETARY SAID: "FACTORS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT INCLUDE THE IMPACT OF INFLATION ON OPERATING COSTS, SUCH AS HIGHER WAGES AND FUEL PRICES; PATRONAGE PROJECTIONS HAVING REGARD TO COMPETITION FROM OTHER MODES AND CHANGES IN POPULATION DISTRIBUTION; INCREASES IN NON-RECURRENT EXPENSES SUCH AS PENSION BENEFITS; SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS REQUESTED BY THE DISTRICT BOARDS; THE NEED FOR AN EQUITABLE FARE STRUCTURE; AND PUBLIC AFFORDABILITY."

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BILL TO EXTEND TRADE MARKS REGISTRATION TO SERVICES

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THE TRADE MARKS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 SEEKS TO EXTEND THE EXISTING SYSTEM OF REGISTRATION OF TRADE MARKS TO COVER TRADE MARKS RELATING TO SERVICES, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, SIR PIERS SAID TRADE MARKS FOR SERVICES WERE NOW OF JUST AS MUCH IMPORTANCE AS THOSE FOR GOODS.

"HONG KONG SO FAR HAS NOT HAD A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PROTECTION, AND THIS IS A GAP THAT NOW NEEDS TO BE FILLED.

"AT PRESENT, PROTECTION IN RELATION TO SERVICE MARKS IS BY WAY OF COMMON LAW ACTION OF PASSING OFF, WHICH IS A MUCH HARDER, SLOWER AND MORE EXPENSIVE PROCESS," HE SAID.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID WITH THE RECENT GROWTH IN MAJOR SERVICE SECTORS, WHICH NOW ACCOUNTED FOR OVER 60 PER CENT OF THE GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT AND MORE THAN HALF OF THE EMPLOYMENT, IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR SERVICE INDUSTRIES, ESPECIALLY THOSE OPERATING ON A GLOBAL BASIS, TO BE ABLE TO REGISTER AND PROTECT THEIR MARKS WORLDWIDE.

"FOR OUR OWN BENEFIT AND TO KEEP PACE WITH THE INTERNATIONAL TREND, IT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE SUCH A SYSTEM," HE ADDED.

HE SAID THE EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO THE TRADE MARKS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 SET OUT IN DETAIL THE INTENT OF THE VARIOUS PROVISIONS.

IF THIS BILL WAS PASSED, THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT INTEND TO BRING THE ORDINANCE INTO EFFECT UNTIL THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1992, HE SAID.

"THIS WILL AFFORD TRADERS AND THE LEGAL PROFESSION AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO ACQUAINT THEMSELVES WITH THE NEW PROVISION, AND TO ALLOW SOME LEAD TIME FOR GOVERNMENT TO RECRUIT AND TRAIN STAFF AND TO EXPAND THE EXISTING COMPUTER SYSTEM IN THE TRADE MARKS REGISTRY.

"TO AVOID AN INFLUX OF APPLICATIONS ON THE COMMENCEMENT OF THIS LEGISLATION, WE PROPOSE TO INVITE APPLICATIONS FOR REGISTRATION ABOUT FOUR MONTHS BEFORE THE COMMENCEMENT DATE," HE ADDED.

UNDER THE TRADE MARKS ORDINANCE, SIR PIERS SAID A SYSTEM OF REGISTRATION WAS PROVIDED FOR TRADE MARKS IN RELATION TO GOODS.

REGISTRATION GAVE THE OWNER THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO USE A TRADE MARK IN RESPECT OF THE GOODS FOR WHICH IT WAS REGISTERED AND TO PROTECT HIS MARK AGAINST INFRINGEMENT.

IT ALSO GAVE THE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE THAT GOODS SOLD IN HONG KONG UNDER A PARTICULAR MARK DID INDEED EMANATE FROM THE PROPRIETOR OF THE MARK, HE SAID.

/"IN FACT

"IN FACT, THE AVAILABILITY OF A SYSTEM OF TRADE MARK REGISTRATION HAS ASSISTED HONG KONG TO DEVELOP ITS ROLE AS AN INTERNATIONAL MANUFACTURING AND TRADING CENTRE," SIR PIERS SAID.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY NOTED THAT IN MANY DEVELOPED ECONOMIES IN THE WORLD THERE WAS NOW A SYSTEM OF REGISTRATION TO PROTECT TRADE MARKS FOR SERVICES.

"BASICALLY, THE SYSTEMS ARE MODELLED ON THOSE SYSTEMS DESIGNED TO PROTECT TRADE MARKS FOR GOODS," HE ADDED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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AMENDMENTS TO LAW ON ELECTION PETITIONS

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THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) MOVED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1991 BE READ A SECOND TIME, WHICH WAS LARGELY A TECHNICAL "FOLLOW-UP" TO THE NOVEMBER 1990 AMENDMENTS TO THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS ORDINANCE AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (ELECTORAL PROVISIONS) ORDINANCE DEALING WITH THE BRINGING OF ELECTION PETITIONS.

MR MATHEWS SAID THE MAIN EFFECT OF THE NOVEMBER AMENDMENTS, WHICH WERE INTRODUCED AT COMMITTEE STAGE ON THE INITIATIVE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AD HOC GROUP ON ELECTORAL LEGISLATION, WAS TO PROVIDE THAT IN ELECTION PETITION PROCEEDINGS THE COURT SHOULD MAKE A DETERMINATION AS TO WHETHER A PERSON WAS "DULY ELECTED".

THE LEGISLATION WHICH WAS AMENDED CALLED FOR THE COURT TO MAKE A DETERMINATION AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE ELECTION WAS "VOID", AND THE NOVEMBER 1990 AMENDMENTS REMOVED THE UNCERTAINTY WHICH COULD FOLLOW FROM THIS SOMEWHAT EQUIVOCAL DETERMINATION.

MR MATHEWS SAID THE ADMINISTRATION SUPPORTED THE AD HOC GROUP'S AMENDMENTS IN NOVEMBER 1990, AND CONTINUED ITS SUPPORT NOW BY PROPOSING CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO OTHER ITEMS OF ELECTION PETITION LEGISLATION WHICH STILL CONTAINED REFERENCES TO A "VOID" ELECTION RATHER THAN THE "DULY ELECTED" FORMULA.

CLAUSES 4, 7 AND 9 OF THE BILL WERE TO AMEND, RESPECTIVELY, SECTION 18(A)(II) OF THE URBAN COUNCIL ORDINANCE, SECTION 14(1)(A)(II) OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS ORDINANCE AND SECTION 20(A)(II) OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL ORDINANCE, SO THAT WHERE THE COURT DETERMINED ON AN ELECTION PETITION THAT NO PERSON HAD BEEN "DULY ELECTED", RATHER THAN THAT THE ELECTION WAS "VOID", THESE AMENDED PROVISIONS WOULD AUTOMATICALLY APPLY TO TRIGGER THE RELEVANT BY-ELECTION PROVISIONS.

CLAUSE 5 WAS TO AMEND SECTION 9(1) AND (3) OF THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES ORDINANCE, WHICH CONTAINED REFERENCES TO "VOID" ELECTIONS; AND CLAUSE 6 WAS TO AMEND SECTION 25 OF THE SAME ORDINANCE BY REPLACING THE REFERENCE TO THE CANDIDATE'S ELECTION NOT BEING "VOID" BY A REFERENCE TO THE DETERMINATION OF THE COURT THAT THE CANDIDATE HAD BEEN "DULY ELECTED".

TURNING TO CLAUSES 2, 3 AND 8, MR MATHEWS SAID AS WELL AS BEING LARGELY CONSEQUENTIAL, THEY ALSO SOUGHT TO SIMPLIFY THE STRUCTURE OF THE EXISTING PROVISIONS.

CLAUSE 2 WAS TO REPEAL AND REPLACE SECTION 30 OF THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS ORDINANCE.

SECTION 30 AT PRESENT PROVIDED SIX GROUNDS FOR PRESENTING AN ELECTION PETITION, SEVERAL OF WHICH REFERRED TO THE ELECTION HAVING BEEN "AVOIDED" OR "WHOLLY AVOIDED". THESE GROUNDS DID NOT SIT WELL WITH THE NOVEMBER 1990 AMENDMENTS AND THEREFORE CLAUSE 2 PROPOSED A PRINCIPAL NEW GROUND THAT A PERSON HAD NOT BEEN "DULY ELECTED".

AT THE SAME TIME CLAUSE 2 TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO REMOVE DUPLICATION AND REPETITION IN THE STRUCTURE OF SECTION 30, SO THAT ANY QUESTIONING OF AN ELECTION WOULD BE DEPENDENT EITHER ON DISQUALIFICATIONS UNDER SECTION 19 OF THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS ORDINANCE OR THE COMMISSION OF CORRUPT OR ILLEGAL PRACTICES.

"THIS SHOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR PROSPECTIVE PETITIONERS AND THEIR ADVISERS TO FRAME CORRECTLY WORDED ELECTION PETITIONS," MR MATHEWS SAID.

CLAUSE 3 WAS TO REPEAL AND REPLACE SECTION 35 OF THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS ORDINANCE DEALING WITH TIME LIMITS FOR PRESENTATION OF ELECTION PETITIONS.

THE PROPOSED SECTION 35 WOULD MERELY BRING THE PROVISION INTO LINE WITH THE EQUIVALENT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (ELECTORAL PROVISIONS) ORDINANCE BY PROVIDING THAT AN ELECTION PETITION SHOULD BE PRESENTED WITHIN TWO MONTHS AFTER THE PUBLICATION BY THE RETURNING OFFICER OF THE RESULT OF THE ELECTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATIONS MADE UNDER SECTION 28.

CLAUSE 8 WAS TO AMEND SECTION 29 OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (ELECTORAL PROVISIONS) ORDINANCE IN THE SAME WAY AS THE EQUIVALENT SECTION 30 OF THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS ORDINANCE WAS TO BE AMENDED BY CLAUSE 2.

DEBATE ON THE MOTION WAS ADJOURNED.

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AMENDMENT TO IMPROVE LEGAL AID PRACTICES

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THE LEGAL AID (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 SEEKS TO GIVE EFFECT TO A NEW SYSTEM OF MEANS TESTING IN ASSESSING ELIGIBILITY FOR LEGAL AID AND TO IMPROVE AND GIVE STATUTORY EFFECT TO CERTAIN EXISTING LEGAL AID PRACTICES.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON PETER TSAO, WHEN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

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AT PRESENT, AN APPLICANT IS MEANS TESTED SEPARATELY ON HIS CAPITAL AND INCOME, AND HAS TO SATISFY THE CRITERIA OF BOTH TESTS BEFORE HE IS ELIGIBLE.

THIS SYSTEM WORKS TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF A PERSON WHOSE FINANCIAL RESOURCES CONSIST MAINLY OF EITHER INCOME OR CAPITAL, AND IN FAVOUR OF THOSE WHO MAY HAVE THE SAME AMOUNT OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES BUT SPREAD BETWEEN BOTH INCOME AND CAPITAL.

MR TSAO POINTED OUT THAT HIS ANOMALY WAS REMOVED BY THE PROVISIONS IN THE BILL.

HE SAID: "UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM, AN APPLICANT WILL BE ASSESSED ACCORDING TO HIS FINANCIAL RESOURCES, WHICH ARE DEFINED AS BEING THE SUM OF HIS DISPOSABLE INCOME AND CAPITAL.

"IF THE AGGREGATE FIGURE DOES NOT EXCEED \$120,000 THE APPLICANT WILL BE ELIGIBLE ON MEANS GROUNDS FOR LEGAL AID IN BOTH CIVIL AND CRIMINAL CASES."

MR TSAO SAID A NEW GRADUATED SCALE OF CONTRIBUTION WILL ALSO BE INTRODUCED TO REPLACE THE EXISTING SCALE. UNDER THE NEW SCALE, NO CONTRIBUTION WILL BE REQUIRED FOR THOSE WHOSE FINANCIAL CAPACITY IS \$50,000 OR LESS.

HOWEVER, AN APPLICANT WILL STILL HAVE TO SATISFY THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AID THAT HE HAS REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR INSTITUTING PROCEEDINGS IN CIVIL CASES.

THE BILL ALSO SEEKS TO CLOSE A LOOPHOLE IN THE LAW WHEREBY SOME APPLICANTS DELIBERATELY FAIL TO MAXIMISE THEIR EARNING POTENTIAL SO AS TO BRING THEMSELVES WITHIN THE LIMITS OF ELIGIBILITY, MR TSAO SAID.

"THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT IS TO PROVIDE THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AID WITH AUTHORITY TO REFUSE AN APPLICATION FOR LEGAL AID FROM AN APPLICANT WHO MAKES NO ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT WHILST AWAITING THE OUTCOME OF HIS LEGAL AID APPLICATION, OR WHO REMAINS OUT OF HONG KONG FOR A CONTINUOUS PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS AFTER SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION FOR LEGAL AID, SO AS TO MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO ASSESS HIS ELIGIBILITY.

"THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AID WILL DRAW UP GUIDELINES TO ENSURE THAT THE DISCRETION WILL BE EXERCISED FAIRLY AND EQUITABLY, AND THAT NO GENUINE CASES WILL BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST. THE STATUTORY RIGHT OF APPEAL TO THE REGISTRAR, SUPREME COURT AGAINST THE DIRECTOR'S REFUSAL WILL REMAIN AVAILABLE."

THERE IS ALSO A CLAUSE PROPOSING AN EXTENSION TO THE SUPPLEMENTARY LEGAL AID SCHEME TO COVER EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION CLAIMS.

AT PRESENT AN APPLICANT UNDER THE SUPPLEMENTARY LEGAL AID SCHEME WHO IS SEEKING COMPENSATION FOR INJURIES CANNOT BE ASSISTED IN HIS CLAIM FOR EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION, ALTHOUGH HE IS ELIGIBLE FOR LEGAL AID FOR THE SUBSEQUENT COMMON LAW CLAIM.

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"SINCE THE TWO CLAIMS ARE CLOSELY LINKED AND MUCH OF THE EVIDENCE IS COMMON TO BOTH IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE SUPPLEMENTARY LEGAL AID SCHEME SHOULD EXTEND TO COVER BOTH CLAIMS," MR TSAO SAID.

THE REST OF THE CHANGES ARE PROPOSED TO IMPROVE EXISTING LEGAL AID PRACTICES.

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ICAC WILL EXERCISE POWER WITH GREAT CAUTION

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THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, SAID SOME MEMBERS OF THE AD HOC GROUP SET UP TO STUDY THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 HAD UNDERSTANDABLY EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERN AT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE ICAC'S POWER TO ARREST IN RESPECT OF RELATED OFFENCES UNCOVERED DURING AN INVESTIGATION UNDER THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES ORDINANCE MIGHT IN PRACTICE BE ABUSED.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMPTION OF SECOND READING DEBATE ON THE BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR MATHEWS SAID: "THE COMMISSIONER OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION HAS ASKED ME TO ASSURE MEMBERS THAT THE COMMISSION WILL EXERCISE THIS POWER WITH GREAT CAUTION.

"THE NEED FOR THIS POWER IS TO ENSURE THAT, IN RELATION TO ELECTIONS IN HONG KONG, MAJOR OFFENCES AND MISCHIEFS OUTSIDE THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES ORDINANCE CAN BE DEALT WITH MORE EFFECTIVELY.

"AS A MATTER OF POLICY THE COMMISSION HAS NOT ARRESTED AND WILL NOT ARREST FOR MERELY MINOR OR TECHNICAL OFFENCES WHICH ARE MOSTLY THE RESULT OF FORGETFULNESS OR OVER-ENTHUSIASM."

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MOTION ON MAXIMUM CONTINGENT LIABILITY OF HKECIC PASSED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED A RESOLUTION THAT IT APPROVES THAT THE CONTINGENT LIABILITY OF THE HONG KONG EXPORT CREDIT INSURANCE CORPORATION (HKECIC) UNDER CONTRACTS OF INSURANCE SHALL NOT AT ANY TIME EXCEED THE SUM OF \$7,500 MILLION.

MOVING A MOTION UNDER THE HONG KONG EXPORT CREDIT INSURANCE CORPORATION ORDINANCE, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN MAY 1989 THE MAXIMUM CONTINGENT LIABILITY OF THE HKECIC WAS INCREASED FROM \$5,000 MILLION TO \$6,000 MILLION UNDER SECTION 23 OF THE ORDINANCE.

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"SINCE THEN, THE CORPORATION'S CONTINGENT LIABILITY UNDER CONTRACTS OF INSURANCE HAS RISEN AT A RATE OF ABOUT \$150 MILLION PER QUARTER.

"AS AT FEBRUARY 1, 1991, THE FIGURE STOOD AT ABOUT \$5.7 BILLION.

"IN ADDITION, THERE IS POTENTIAL COMMITMENT IN RESPECT OF NEW POLICIES, AND POLICIES PENDING RENEWAL, AMOUNTING TO \$98 MILLION, LEAVING ONLY \$108 MILLION FOR NEW BUSINESS," SIR PIERS SAID.

"GIVEN THIS RATE OF INCREASE, THE CORPORATION ESTIMATES THAT THE EXISTING STATUTORY LIMIT WILL BE REACHED VERY SOON," HE SAID.

SIR PIERS SAID THE CORPORATION, ON THE ADVICE OF ITS ADVISORY BOARD, HAD THEREFORE RECOMMENDED THAT THE MAXIMUM CONTINGENT LIABILITY BE INCREASED BY \$1,500 MILLION TO \$7,500 MILLION.

"FAILURE TO RAISE THIS LIMIT WOULD RENDER THE CORPORATION UNABLE TO ACCOMMODATE FURTHER BUSINESS AND HENCE DISCOURAGING OUR EXPORTS," HE SAID.

SIR PIERS ADDED THAT THE MAXIMUM LIABILITY WAS A THEORETICAL CONTINGENT AMOUNT WHICH WAS NEVER LIKELY TO BE AT RISK IN TOTALITY AT ANY ONE TIME.

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FUND SEEKING MOTION PASSED
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED A MOTION PROVIDING FUNDS ON ACCOUNT TO ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO CARRY ON EXISTING SERVICES BETWEEN THE START OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR ON APRIL 1 AND THE ENACTMENT OF THE APPROPRIATION BILL.

THE FUNDS INVOLVED AMOUNTED TO \$44.5 BILLION.

MOVING THE MOTION UNDER THE PUBLIC FINANCE ORDINANCE, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID THE FUNDS ON ACCOUNT SOUGHT UNDER EACH SUBHEAD HAD BEEN DETERMINED BY REFERENCE TO PERCENTAGES OF THE PROVISION SHOWN IN THE DRAFT ESTIMATES.

AS THE DRAFT ESTIMATES WERE CHANGED FROM TIME TO TIME, BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OR UNDER DELEGATED POWERS, THE PROVISION TO WHICH THE PERCENTAGES WERE APPLIED WOULD ALSO CHANGE, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID.

"THUS THE PROVISION ON ACCOUNT UNDER EACH HEAD IS NOT CONSTANT BUT MAY VARY, WITH EVERY INCREASE BEING MATCHED BY AN EQUAL DECREASE.

"THE INITIAL PROVISION ON ACCOUNT UNDER EACH HEAD IS SHOWN IN A FOOTNOTE TO THIS SPEECH.

"THE AGGREGATE TOTAL UNDER ALL HEADS IS FIXED, HOWEVER, AT \$44,502,060,000 AND CANNOT BE EXCEEDED WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF THIS COUNCIL," HE SAID.

SIR PIERS SAID THE MOTION ALSO ENABLED THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO VARY THE FUNDS ON ACCOUNT IN RESPECT OF ANY SUBHEAD, PROVIDED THAT THESE VARIATIONS DID NOT CAUSE AN EXCESS OVER THE AMOUNT OF PROVISION ENTERED FOR THAT SUBHEAD IN THE DRAFT ESTIMATES OR AN EXCESS OVER THE AMOUNT OF FUNDS ON ACCOUNT FOR THE HEAD.

"A VOTE ON ACCOUNT WARRANT WILL BE ISSUED TO THE DIRECTOR OF ACCOUNTING SERVICES AUTHORISING HIM TO MAKE PAYMENTS UP TO THE AMOUNT SPECIFIED IN THIS MOTION AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS CONDITIONS.

"THE VOTE ON ACCOUNT WILL BE SUBSUMED UPON THE ENACTMENT OF THE APPROPRIATION BILL, AND THE GENERAL WARRANT ISSUED AFTER THE ENACTMENT OF THE APPROPRIATION BILL WILL REPLACE THE VOTE ON ACCOUNT WARRANT AND WILL BE EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 1, 1991," HE SAID.

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DIFFERENTIAL RATES OF DUTY FOR LEADED AND UNLEADED PETROL
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THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) MOVED A MOTION UNDER THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES ORDINANCE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SEEKING THE INTRODUCTION OF DIFFERENTIAL RATES OF DUTY ON LEADED AND UNLEADED PETROL IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A PRICE DIFFERENTIAL OF ABOUT \$1 PER LITRE IN FAVOUR OF UNLEADED PETROL.

MR BARNES SAID: "THE INTRODUCTION OF UNLEADED PETROL INTO HONG KONG IS AN ESSENTIAL STEP IN THE CONTROL OF POLLUTION FROM MOTOR VEHICLES.

"INTRODUCTION OF UNLEADED PETROL IS ESSENTIAL IF THE MOST MODERN PETROL-ENGINED VEHICLES, DESIGNED TO MINIMISE POLLUTION, ARE TO BE USED IN HONG KONG, SINCE THOSE VEHICLES CAN ONLY OPERATE ON UNLEADED PETROL.

"MOST EXISTING PETROL-ENGINED VEHICLES CAN USE UNLEADED PETROL, AND, SHOULD THEY DO SO, WOULD EMIT LESS POLLUTION.

"HENCE IT IS OUR WISH TO INTRODUCE UNLEADED PETROL, AND TO ENCOURAGE ITS USE IN HONG KONG," MR BARNES SAID.

IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE USE OF UNLEADED PETROL IT HAS BEEN AGREED THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE FOR UNLEADED PETROL TO BE AVAILABLE AT A CHEAPER PRICE THAN LEADED PETROL.

MR BARNES SAID THE OIL COMPANIES HAD INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD SUPPLY UNLEADED PETROL AT ABOUT 60 CENTS A LITRE CHEAPER THAN LEADED PETROL.

/"TO INCREASE

"TO INCREASE THIS DIFFERENTIAL TO AT LEAST \$1, IT HAS BEEN FELT DESIRABLE TO INTRODUCE A DIFFERENTIAL RATE OF DUTY FOR THE TWO TYPES OF PETROL.

"IT IS ACCORDINGLY PROPOSED THAT THE RATE OF DUTY OF LEADED PETROL BE \$4.17 PER LITRE AND THE RATE OF DUTY OF UNLEADED PETROL SHOULD BE \$3.72 PER LITRE FROM APRIL 1, WHICH IS THE DAY FROM WHICH UNLEADED PETROL WILL BE AVAILABLE TO CONSUMERS," MR BARNES SAID.

THIS RATE OF DUTY WILL MAKE UNLEADED PETROL AT LEAST \$1 CHEAPER THAN LEADED PETROL TO THE CONSUMER.

MR BARNES STATED: "IT IS INTRODUCED TODAY SOLELY BECAUSE APRIL 1 IS THE MOST CONVENIENT TIME TO INTRODUCE UNLEADED PETROL.

THE TWO RATES WILL NOT INCREASE OR DECREASE REVENUE SIGNIFICANTLY DURING THIS FINANCIAL YEAR.

"I BELIEVE THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS DIFFERENTIAL RATE OF DUTY WILL BE WELCOMED BY THE BULK OF CONSUMERS AND BY THE PUBLIC AT LARGE. IT IS ACCEPTABLE TO THE OIL COMPANIES," HE SAID.

THE MOTION WAS PASSED IN THE COUNCIL.

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SECOND STAGE RISE IN LEGAL AID FEES
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THE SECOND STAGE OF THE INCREASE IN THE MAXIMUM FEES PAYABLE TO COUNSEL AND SOLICITORS ASSIGNED BY THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AID TO CONDUCT CRIMINAL CASES WILL BE IMPLEMENTED ON APRIL 1, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON PETER TSAO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE LEGAL AID IN CRIMINAL CASES (AMENDMENT) RESOLUTION 1991, MR TSAO SAID THE FEES WERE FIRST REVIEWED IN EARLY 1990.

"IT WAS PROPOSED THAT THE MAXIMUM FEES PAYABLE SHOULD BE INCREASED ON AVERAGE BY 50 PER CENT, BUT WITH GREATER INCREASES IN RESPECT OF APPEAL CASES WHICH REQUIRE SUBSTANTIALLY MORE PREPARATION.

"THE PROPOSED INCREASE WAS TO REFLECT INFLATION AND THE HIGHER OPERATING COSTS SINCE THE FEES WERE LAST REVISED IN 1987, AND HAVING REGARD TO THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT EXPERIENCED AND ABLE LAWYERS ARE AVAILABLE TO CONDUCT CRIMINAL CASES," MR TSAO SAID.

HE ADDED THAT IT WAS ALSO PROPOSED THAT THE INCREASE SHOULD TAKE EFFECT IN TWO STAGES SPREADING OVER TWO YEARS.

THE FIRST STAGE, HE NOTED, TOOK EFFECT ON APRIL 1 LAST YEAR AND THE PROPOSED AMENDED RULES WERE TO ENABLE THE SECOND STAGE OF THE INCREASE TO TAKE EFFECT FROM APRIL 1 THIS YEAR.

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FIXED PENALTY COURT COSTS TO BE INCREASED

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THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON PETER TSAO, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SOUGHT TO INCREASE THE COURT COSTS PAYABLE UNDER THE FIXED PENALTY (TRAFFIC CONTRAVENTION) ORDINANCE FROM \$70 TO \$125.

MOVING THE FIXED PENALTY (TRAFFIC CONTRAVENTIONS) (AMENDMENT) RESOLUTION 1991, MR TSAO TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT INFLATION HAD GIVEN RISE TO THE NEED FOR THE INCREASE IN THE COURT COSTS TO MAINTAIN THEIR VALUE IN REAL TERMS.

"AT PRESENT, UNDER SECTION 20B OF THE ORDINANCE, A PERSON IS ALLOWED TO DISCHARGE LIABILITY FOR A TRAFFIC CONTRAVENTION, DESPITE THE INSTITUTION OF PROCEEDINGS AGAINST HIM, BY PAYING DOUBLE FIXED PENALTY TOGETHER WITH A SUM OF \$70 BY WAY OF COURT COSTS AT LEAST 72 HOURS BEFORE A COURT APPEARANCE."

COURT COSTS, HE ADDED, WERE REGULATORY FEES AND WERE BASED ON THE NEED TO ENFORCE PAYMENT OF THE FIXED PENALTIES CONCERNED.

MR TSAO POINTED OUT THAT THESE FEES WERE LAST REVISED IN 1984.

FOR IDENTICAL REASONS, HE ALSO MOVED THE FIXED PENALTY (CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS) (AMENDMENT) RESOLUTION 1991 SEEKING AN INCREASE IN THE COURT COSTS PAYABLE UNDER SECTION 9 OF THE FIXED PENALTY (CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS) ORDINANCE FROM \$70 TO \$125.

BOTH RESOLUTIONS WERE PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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CURFEW HOURS NOT AFFECTED BY ALTERNATIVE FLIGHT ROUTEING

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TO ENABLE CIVIL AVIATION TO AVOID OVERFLYING THE GULF AREA DURING THE RECENT HOSTILITIES A NUMBER OF AIRLINES HAVE BEEN USING A NEW ALTERNATIVE ROUTEING FROM HONG KONG TO EUROPE OVER CHINA, MONGOLIA AND THE USSR, ON A CONTINGENCY BASIS.

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON ELIZABETH BOSHER, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON DANIEL TSE.

ALTHOUGH THE FLIGHT TIME ON THIS ROUTEING WAS SLIGHTLY SHORTER THAN THAT OF THE EXISTING ROUTEINGS, MRS BOSHER SAID IT HAD NOT GIVEN RISE TO A SITUATION WHERE FLIGHTS HAD TAKEN OFF OR LANDED DURING CURFEW HOURS AT THE HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BECAUSE THE AIRLINES CONCERNED HAD RE-SCHEDULED THE ARRIVAL TIMES OF THEIR FLIGHTS TO EUROPE.

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ESTABLISHMENT AND STRENGTH OF GOVT DOCTORS EXPLAINED

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THE ESTABLISHMENT AND STRENGTH OF MEDICAL DOCTORS IN THE HOSPITAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT STAND AT 1,444 AND 1,423 RESPECTIVELY, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON ELIZABETH WONG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON LEONG CHE-HUNG, MRS WONG SAID THE ESTABLISHMENT FIGURE, TOGETHER WITH THE ADDITIONAL 253 DOCTORS FROM THE MEDICAL FACULTIES OF THE UNIVERSITIES WHO WERE REQUIRED TO CONTRIBUTE 65 PER CENT OF THEIR TIME TO PATIENT SERVICE, MADE FOR A TOTAL PROVISION EQUIVALENT TO 1,608 DOCTORS IN OUR HOSPITALS.

"THIS COMPARES WITH AN ESTIMATED FIGURE OF SOME 1,700 POSTS, CALCULATED BY REFERENCE TO THE GUIDELINES OF THE MANNING RATIO RECOMMENDED BY THE MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PLANNING PURPOSES," SHE SAID.

MRS WONG SAID IN EARLY 1989 THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO SEEK CREATION OF ADDITIONAL POSTS IN THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH OFFICER GRADE.

"THAT IS TO SAY:

- (A) 18 CONSULTANT AND ABOUT 70 SENIOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH OFFICER POSTS TO ALLEVIATE THE WORKLOAD OF DOCTORS AND TO IMPROVE PROMOTION PROSPECTS FOR THE GRADE AS A WHOLE; AND
- (B) 23 CONSULTANT AND ABOUT 50 SENIOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH OFFICER POSTS WHICH WERE EXPECTED TO BE REQUIRED FOR NEW AND IMPROVED SERVICES.

"THESE ADD UP TO 41 CONSULTANT AND ABOUT 120 SENIOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH OFFICER POSTS.

"ALL THESE POSTS HAVE NOT ONLY BEEN CREATED BUT FILLED AS WELL," SHE SAID.

MRS WONG SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD ADDITIONALLY IDENTIFIED THE NEED FOR A FURTHER 73 CONSULTANT AND 53 SENIOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH OFFICER POSTS, BOTH TO MEET SERVICE NEEDS AND TO FURTHER ENHANCE THE PROMOTION PROSPECTS FOR DOCTORS.

"FOR THESE, ALL SENIOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH OFFICER AND THREE CONSULTANT POSTS HAVE BEEN CREATED AND FILLED.

"THE REMAINING CONSULTANT POSTS ARE BEING PROCESSED AND WILL BE CREATED IN STEP WITH SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND SUBJECT TO THE NORMAL PROCESSES FOR THE CREATION OF SUCH POSTS," SHE SAID.

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RISE IN PROJECT COSTS NOTHING TO DO WITH DUTY DERELICTION

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THERE IS NO INDICATION IN ANY OF THE CASES THAT AN INCREASE IN THE COSTS OF PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS COMPLETED OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS SUGGESTS ANY DERELICTION OF DUTY BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON POON CHI-FAI, SIR PIERS SAID AS FOR CONSULTANCY STUDIES, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE CASE WHICH WAS AT PRESENT UNDER ACTIVE INVESTIGATION, TO HIS KNOWLEDGE THERE HAD BEEN NO CASES IN RECENT YEARS OF INCOMPETENCE BY CONSULTANTS LEADING TO MAJOR ERRORS IN PROJECT ESTIMATES.

HE NOTED THAT FROM 1988 TO 1990, ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF THE PROJECTS APPROVED REQUIRED AN UPWARD REVISION OF THE ORIGINAL APPROVED PROJECT ESTIMATES BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

DURING PAST THREE YEARS, OUT OF A TOTAL OF 847 CASES, 282 CASES HAD THEIR TOTAL PROJECT COSTS REVISED WITH AN INCREASE IN PROJECT ESTIMATES AMOUNTING TO ABOUT \$10 BILLION.

"IN MOST CASES, THE INCREASE IN PROJECT ESTIMATES WAS TO CATER FOR PRICE FLUCTUATIONS SINCE THE ORIGINAL APPROVED PROJECT ESTIMATES WERE BASED ON RATES PREVAILING WHEN THE ORIGINAL ESTIMATES WERE DRAWN UP, WITHOUT ANY ALLOWANCE FOR PRICE INCREASES," SIR PIERS EXPLAINED, NOTING THAT THIS HAD BEEN THE NORMAL PRACTICE FOR MANY YEARS.

"FOR SOME PROJECTS, THE INCREASE IN APPROVED ESTIMATES WAS NECESSITATED BY CHANGES IN THE ORIGINAL SCOPE OF PROJECTS OR BY UNFORESEEN TECHNICAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS DIFFICULT GROUND CONDITIONS," HE ADDED.

SIR PIERS SAID A WORKING GROUP HAD BEEN SET UP IN THE WORKS BRANCH TO REVIEW DEPARTMENTAL PRACTICES WITH A VIEW TO ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF PROJECT ESTIMATES AND THE GROUP'S REPORT WAS EXPECTED TO BE READY NEXT MONTH.

"IN THE MEANTIME, WORKS DEPARTMENTS HAVE BEEN SEEKING TO IMPROVE THE ACCURACY OF THEIR PROJECT ESTIMATES," HE SAID.

THE DEPARTMENTS WERE SETTING UP PLANNING, ESTIMATING AND COST CONTROL GROUPS AND INSTITUTING COMPUTER BASED MEASURING AND COST DATA BASED SYSTEMS, HE ADDED.

CHINA VISITS PROMOTE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS ESTABLISHED NUMEROUS CONTACTS WITH CHINESE OFFICIALS, BOTH FOR SPECIAL EXCHANGES ON KEY ISSUES AND FOR PROMOTION OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON. PETER TSAO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. MARTIN BARROW, MR TSAO SAID THERE HAD BEEN WELL OVER 100 WORKING VISITS TO CHINA BY HONG KONG OFFICIAL DELEGATIONS LAST YEAR, COVERING A WIDE RANGE OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

"THERE WERE ALSO OVER 75 INWARD VISITS BY CHINESE OFFICIALS OR DELEGATIONS FOR MEETINGS WITH VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS IN HONG KONG."

SINCE 1988, THE GOVERNMENT, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES, HAS BEEN RUNNING A SERIES OF SPONSORED VISITS AND LEGAL STUDY VISITS, MR TSAO ADDED.

"UNDER THESE SCHEMES EACH SIDE ORGANISES AND FINANCES A VISIT LED BY A SENIOR OFFICIAL FROM THE OTHER SIDE.

"THESE VISITS ARE DESIGNED TO ENABLE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT OFFICERS TO OBTAIN A FIRST HAND UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHINESE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT; AND FOR VISITING CHINESE OFFICIALS TO BE BRIEFED ON THE SYSTEM IN HONG KONG," HE SAID.

THE SECRETARY SAID THERE HAD SO FAR BEEN FOUR LEGAL STUDY VISITS AND SIX GENERAL SPONSORED VISITS.

MR TSAO ALSO DISCLOSED THAT THE NEXT GENERAL SPONSORED VISIT UNDER THIS PROGRAMME WHICH HE HOPED TO LEAD IN APRIL, WAS AT AN ADVANCED STAGE OF PREPARATION.

"WE ARE NOW PLANNING A NEW SERIES OF FAMILIARISATION VISITS TO CHINA FOR OFFICERS AT A LESS SENIOR LEVEL AS PART OF OUR CHINA TRAINING PROGRAMME.

"THE FIRST OF THESE, TO BEIJING WILL TAKE PLACE LATER THIS MONTH. ARRANGEMENTS FOR ANOTHER VISIT TO GUANGDONG IN APRIL/MAY ARE ALSO UNDERWAY," HE ADDED.

MR TSAO STRESSED THAT THE OBJECT OF THESE VISITS WAS TO PROMOTE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, AND TO ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HONG KONG GOVERNMENT OFFICERS, AT DIFFERENT LEVELS AND WITH DIFFERENT RESPONSIBILITIES, TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE OPERATION OF THE CHINESE SYSTEM.

IN ADDITION, HE SAID, TWO VISITS TO BEIJING BY THE SENIOR STAFF COURSE HAD BEEN ARRANGED SINCE 1988 AS PART OF THE REGULAR OVERSEAS COMPONENT OF THE COURSE.

CHATER ROAD PEDESTRIAN PRECINCT BEING KEPT TIDY

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THE URBAN COUNCIL BELIEVES THAT ITS ACTIONS TO KEEP THE CHATER ROAD PEDESTRIAN PRECINCT AND THE NEARBY AREAS TIDY ON SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS HAVE BEEN REASONABLY SUCCESSFUL, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IT IS CONSIDERED THAT BETWEEN 10,000 AND 20,000 PEOPLE MAY BE IN THE AREA ON SUCH DAYS, HE NOTED.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PEGGY LAM, MR BARNES SAID THERE WAS A LITTER PROBLEM AND SOME ILLEGAL HAWKING AS IN ALL PLACES WHERE CROWDS CONGREGATED.

"THE URBAN COUNCIL TAKES OUT REGULAR PROSECUTION OF THESE OFFENCES, PUTS OUT LARGE NUMBERS OF EXTRA LITTER RECEPTACLES AND BROADCASTS ANTI-LITTER MESSAGES IN ENGLISH, CHINESE AND TAGALOG.

"IT CERTAINLY COMPARES VERY WELL WITH OTHER AREAS IN HONG KONG WITH BIG CROWDS OF PEOPLE USING THEM," HE SAID.

"BUT IN VIEW OF THE PROMINENCE OF THESE AREAS THE COUNCIL WOULD LIKE TO DO BETTER, AND INTENDS TO INCREASE ITS PROSECUTIONS AND PROPAGANDA," HE ADDED.

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CLOSURE OF AIRPORT INFORMATION COUNTER HAS NOT INCONVENIENCED PUBLIC

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THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION CONSIDERS THAT THE CLOSURE OF THE INFORMATION COUNTER AT THE KAI TAK AIRPORT HAS NOT CAUSED UNDUE INCONVENIENCE TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC OR VISITORS TO HONG KONG.

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON ELIZABETH BOSHER, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON HUI YIN-FAT.

MRS BOSHER SAID THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION ADVISED HER THAT THE INFORMATION COUNTER AT THE ARRIVALS GREETING HALL WAS CLOSED IN MARCH LAST YEAR BECAUSE HE CONSIDERED THAT SATISFACTORY AND MORE COST-EFFECTIVE MEANS NOW EXISTED OF PROVIDING SUCH SERVICE.

SHE NOTED THAT A SURVEY CONDUCTED EARLY LAST YEAR SHOWED THAT THE MAJORITY OF ENQUIRIES MADE AT THE INFORMATION COUNTER RELATED TO INFORMATION WHICH WAS READILY AVAILABLE THROUGH OTHER CHANNELS WITHIN THE PASSENGER TERMINAL.

"FOR EXAMPLE, UP-TO-DATE FLIGHT INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE, AT ALL TIMES, VIA THE ELECTRONIC DISPLAY BOARDS AND TELEVISION MONITORS LOCATED THROUGHOUT THE AIRPORT.

"MANY AIRLINES NOW MAN THEIR OWN TELEPHONE HOTLINES AND INFORMATION COUNTERS WHILE ARRIVING PASSENGERS MAY OBTAIN ASSISTANCE FROM THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY SERVICES COUNTERS PROVIDED BY THE HONG KONG TOURIST ASSOCIATION, THE HONG KONG HOTELS ASSOCIATION AND THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATIONS OF TRAVEL AGENTS LOCATED IN THE RESTRICTED BUFFER HALL," MRS BOSHER SAID.

"OTHER ENQUIRIES AND COMPLAINTS MAY BE DEALT WITH BY THE AIRPORT MANAGEMENT DUTY OFFICE WHICH IS LOCATED AT THE DEPARTURE HALL," SHE ADDED.

MRS BOSHER POINTED OUT THAT THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION WOULD NEVERTHELESS KEEP THE SITUATION UNDER REVIEW TO ENSURE THAT THE NEEDS OF AIRPORT USERS WERE MET FULLY AND EFFICIENTLY.

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NO CHANGE TO FIRST PHASE OF UK NATIONALITY SCHEME

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IT IS NOT INTENDED TO SEEK APPROVAL FOR A CHANGE IN THE BRITISH NATIONALITY SELECTION SCHEME FOR THE FIRST PHASE, SINCE A CHANGE COULD AFFECT THE CHANCES OF SUCCESS OF PERSONS WHO HAVE ALREADY APPLIED.

"NOR ARE ANY SUCH MODIFICATIONS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT THE FULL QUOTA WILL BE TAKEN UP BEFORE THE SCHEME EXPIRES IN 1997," THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON J.D. MCGREGOR, THE SECRETARY SAID IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT A SMALL NUMBER OF PLACES WOULD NOT BE USED UP IN THE FIRST PHASE; SUCH PLACES WOULD BE CARRIED FORWARD TO THE SECOND PHASE FOR ALLOCATION AFTER 1993.

"WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE SITUATION WILL NOT ARISE WHERE QUOTAS REMAIN UNALLOCATED AFTER THE SECOND PHASE," HE ADDED.

THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD, HOWEVER, BE REVIEWING THE OPERATION OF THE SCHEME, INCLUDING ITS COVERAGE, FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE SECOND PHASE, IN THE LIGHT OF EXPERIENCE AND INFORMATION GAINED FROM THE CURRENT PHASE, MR ASPREY SAID.

THE BRITISH NATIONALITY (HONG KONG) ACT 1990 EMPOWERED THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO REGISTER UP TO 50,000 HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS AS BRITISH CITIZENS BEFORE JUNE 30, 1997 UNDER A SCHEME OR SCHEMES APPROVED FOR THIS PURPOSE.

APPROXIMATELY 87 PER CENT OF THESE 50,000 PLACES ARE AVAILABLE FOR ALLOCATION IN THE FIRST PHASE OF THE SCHEME.

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"WE HAVE RECEIVED ABOUT 66,000 APPLICATIONS FOR SOME 43,000 PLACES AVAILABLE UNDER THE FIRST PHASE OF THE SCHEME.

"THESE APPLICATIONS WILL NOW BE PROCESSED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS ENACTED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND HONG KONG FOR THE PURPOSE," MR ASPREY SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE SCHEME HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY CHOSEN.

"WE BELIEVE THAT THE COVERAGE HAS BEEN BROAD ENOUGH TO ATTRACT APPLICANTS FROM KEY PROFESSIONS AND OCCUPATIONS, WHICH IS THE AIM OF THE SCHEME," HE SAID.

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CLEAR AND CONSISTENT STANDARDS FOR RECOGNITION OF
POST SECONDARY COURSES

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THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON K.Y. YEUNG, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ASSURED MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION WOULD CONTINUE TO APPLY CLEAR AND CONSISTENT STANDARDS WHEN CONSIDERING POST SECONDARY COURSES FOR RECOGNITION BY THE GOVERNOR.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON LEUNG WAI-TUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR YEUNG SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S AIM WAS TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

HE EXPLAINED THAT SECTION 17 OF THE EDUCATION ORDINANCE STATED THAT THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION WOULD NOT, WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNOR, REGISTER ANY SCHOOL WHICH PROVIDED A POST SECONDARY EDUCATION.

"EXERCISE OF THIS POWER, IN PRACTICE, REQUIRES THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION TO TAKE A VIEW AS TO WHETHER OR NOT A COURSE OFFERED IS POST SECONDARY IN NATURE," HE SAID.

FOR THE 20 OR SO PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS WHICH HAD BEEN REGISTERED AS SCHOOLS UNDER THE EDUCATION ORDINANCE AND WHICH CLAIMED TO OFFER POST SECONDARY COURSES, MR YEUNG SAID THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, WHEN REGISTERING THEM, TOOK THE VIEW THAT THE COURSES OFFERED COULD NOT PROPERLY BE REGARDED AS BEING POST SECONDARY.

"TO DATE ONLY THREE SCHOOLS HAVE RECEIVED THE GOVERNOR'S CONSENT UNDER SECTION 17 TO OFFER POST SECONDARY COURSES, AND THESE ARE NOT NUMBERED AMONGST THE SCHOOLS IN QUESTION," HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION WAS NOW UNDERTAKING A SURVEY OF THESE 20 OR SO SCHOOLS AND WOULD SHORTLY MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO HIM AS TO WHETHER ANY OF THE COURSES OFFERED BY THEM WERE NOW OF A POST SECONDARY NATURE AND WHETHER, AS A RESULT, THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNOR SHOULD BE SOUGHT.

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"IN RESPECT OF THOSE COURSES CONSIDERED BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AS BEING POST SECONDARY IN NATURE, THE SCHOOLS INVOLVED WILL BE REQUIRED TO MAKE A NEW APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION UNDER THE EDUCATION ORDINANCE FOLLOWING CONSENT BEING GIVEN BY THE GOVERNOR.

"IN RESPECT OF THOSE COURSES CONSIDERED AS NOT BEING OF A POST SECONDARY NATURE, THE REGISTRATION OF THE SCHOOLS INVOLVED WILL STAND, BUT THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION WILL WARN THEM TO CEASE ADVERTISING THEIR COURSES AS BEING POST SECONDARY," MR YEUNG SAID.

"FAILURE TO COMPLY MAY RESULT IN ACTION BEING TAKEN AGAINST THE SCHOOL MANAGERS AND ULTIMATELY IN DE-REGISTRATION OF THE SCHOOL," HE ADDED.

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TIMING FOR BUILDING ROUTE 3 COUNTRY PARK SECTOR
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THE AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES IS A PRIME FACTOR IN THE TIMING OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE COUNTRY PARK SECTOR OF ROUTE 3 BETWEEN TING KAU AND YUEN LONG, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TAI CHIN-WAH, MR LEUNG SAID THE TIMING OF AND PRIORITY FOR THE VARIOUS SECTIONS OF ROUTE 3 WERE CONSIDERED IN THE SECOND COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORT STUDY (CTS-2).

THE REPORT RECOMMENDED THAT THE COUNTRY PARK SECTOR SHOULD BE SCHEDULED FOR THE LATE 1990'S TO AVOID OVERLOADING THE ROUTES THROUGH WEST KOWLOON BEFORE COMPLETION OF THE WEST KOWLOON EXPRESSWAY.

HE SAID THE CONSEQUENCE OF OPENING THE SECTIONS NORTH OF KWAI CHUNG WITHOUT THE WEST KOWLOON EXPRESSWAY IN PLACE WOULD BE TO INCREASE THE TRAFFIC VOLUME IN WEST KOWLOON BY ABOUT 70 PER CENT, RESULTING IN UNACCEPTABLE CONGESTION.

THE STUDY ALSO ANTICIPATED FUNDING PROBLEMS IF THE COUNTRY PARK SECTOR WERE TO BE BUILT AT THE SAME TIME AS THE SOUTHERN SECTORS.

MR LEUNG SAID WHILE IT WAS DESIRABLE FOR THE COUNTRY PARK SECTOR OF ROUTE 3 TO BE COMPLETED BY THE MID-1990'S, THE AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES MUST REMAIN A PRIME FACTOR IN THE TIMING OF THIS PROJECT.

HE ADDED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD CONTINUE TO KEEP THE TIMING AND PRIORITY OF THE COUNTRY PARK SECTOR OF ROUTE 3 UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW.

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CNTA'S PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICE TO BE REORGANISED

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THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION'S PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICE WILL BE REORGANISED ON APRIL 1 THIS YEAR TO REDUCE SPENDING AND TO STREAMLINE THE OPERATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON PETER TSAO, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ELSIE TU, MR TSAO SAID THE REORGANISATION WAS BASED ON A REVIEW CONDUCTED BY THE FINANCE BRANCH IN MAY LAST YEAR.

"AS MANY OF THE 69 PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICE CENTRES IN THE 19 DISTRICTS ARE UNDER-UTILISED, THEIR NUMBER WILL BE REDUCED TO 20 ON APRIL 1, 1991. THAT IS, ONE CENTRE FOR EACH DISTRICT WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ISLANDS DISTRICT WHICH WILL HAVE A CENTRE ON LANTAU AND ON CHEUNG CHAU," HE SAID.

"SO FAR, 16 CENTRES IN 10 DISTRICTS HAVE BEEN CLOSED WITHOUT UNFAVOURABLE PUBLIC COMMENT."

NOTING THAT OVER 40 PER CENT OF ALL PUBLIC ENQUIRIES WERE MADE BY TELEPHONE AND TO PROVIDE BACKUP TO THE REMAINING 20 CENTRES, MR TSAO SAID A CENTRAL ENQUIRY SYSTEM WOULD BE INSTALLED IN THE CNTA HEADQUARTERS ON APRIL 1 TO DEAL SPECIFICALLY WITH TELEPHONE ENQUIRIES FROM THE PUBLIC.

IN ADDITION, HE SAID, CONSIDERATION WAS BEING GIVEN TO PROVIDING A COMPUTERISED DATA BANK AND COMPUTER NETWORK BETWEEN THE CENTRAL ENQUIRY SYSTEM AND THE 20 CENTRES.

ON THE LOCATION OF THESE CENTRES, MR TSAO SAID APART FROM THOSE ON CHEUNG CHAU AND LANTAU IN ISLANDS DISTRICT WHICH HAD TO BE RETAINED TO SERVE THE TWO ISLAND COMMUNITIES, THE 18 REMAINING CENTRES HAD BEEN SELECTED BECAUSE THEY WERE THE BUSIEST CENTRES IN THEIR DISTRICTS.

"HENCE, IT IS NOT TRUE THAT THEY ARE SITUATED IN UNPOPULAR LOCATIONS," HE SAID.

OF THIS NUMBER, 17 ARE ATTACHED TO THE DISTRICT MAIN OFFICES, INCLUDING THE EASTERN DISTRICT OFFICE, WHICH WAS REPROVISIONED FROM LEASED ACCOMMODATION IN QUARRY BAY TO THE EASTERN LAW COURTS BUILDING IN SAI WAN HO IN DECEMBER LAST YEAR.

"IN MY VIEW, MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WOULD NOT HESITATE TO VISIT THE SINGLE PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICE CENTRE IN THEIR DISTRICTS IF THEY REQUIRE ITS SERVICES," MR TSAO SAID.

"ALTERNATIVELY, THEY CAN FROM APRIL 1, 1991 RING THE CENTRAL TELEPHONE SYSTEM TO MAKE ENQUIRIES."

THE REORGANISATION OF THE PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICE WAS ONLY ONE OF SEVERAL COST-CUTTING MEASURES ANNOUNCED BY THE CNTA IN OCTOBER LAST YEAR FOR IMPLEMENTATION ON APRIL 1 THIS YEAR, MR TSAO SAID.

HE STRESSED THAT ALL THE MEASURES TO STREAMLINE THE OPERATION OF CNTA HAD BEEN DRAWN UP AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION AS PART OF THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORT TO CONTROL THE GROWTH OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE WHILE AT THE SAME TIME MAINTAINING STANDARDS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.

"IN THE CASE OF PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICES, WE HOPE TO END UP WITH A MORE EFFICIENT AND SPEEDIER SERVICE BACKED UP BY AUTOMATED RECORDS.

"THIS PROCESS WAS EXPLAINED TO MEMBERS BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY IN HIS BUDGET SPEECH LAST WEDNESDAY.

"IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN STANDARDS IF CUTS WERE MADE IN OTHER AREAS IN ORDER TO RETAIN MORE PUBLIC ENQUIRY CENTRES," HE SAID.

"LET ME STATE ONCE AGAIN THAT THE CENTRES TO BE CLOSED ARE ONES THAT RECORD A LOW UTILISATION RATE.

"HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO ASSURE MRS TU THAT, LIKE THE OTHER COST-CUTTING MEASURES, THE NEW PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICE WILL BE CLOSELY MONITORED AND MODIFICATIONS MADE AS NECESSARY," HE ADDED.

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GOVT ADOPTS PRAGMATIC AND REASONABLE APPROACH TO OVERSTAYERS

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THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT ADOPTS A PRAGMATIC AND REASONABLE APPROACH TO ALL CASES OF PERSONS OVERSTAYING A PERMITTED PERIOD OF STAY, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A WRITTEN QUESTION BY THE HON MARTIN BARROW, MR ASPREY SAID EACH CASE WAS CONSIDERED ON ITS MERITS.

"I BELIEVED THAT THE QUESTION REFERS TO THE CASE OF MR PETER LITWAK, WHO WAS CONVICTED ON FEBRUARY 20 THIS YEAR OF CONTRAVENING A CONDITION OF HIS STAY IN HONG KONG AND FINED \$500," THE SECRETARY SAID.

HE SAID WHERE A VISITOR HAD OVERSTAYED FOR A VERY SHORT PERIOD, FOR REASONS BEYOND HIS CONTROL OR THROUGH NO FAULT OF HIS OWN, HE WAS NORMALLY GRANTED THE NECESSARY EXTENSION OF STAY.

"HOWEVER, THOSE WHO OVERSTAY DELIBERATELY FOR LENGTHY PERIODS WITHOUT REASONABLE EXCUSE ARE NORMALLY PROSECUTED," THE SECRETARY SAID.

HE ADDED THAT MR LITWAK FELL VERY CLEARLY INTO THIS CATEGORY.

MR ASPREY SAID IT WAS NEITHER THE POLICY NOR THE PRACTICE OF THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT TO DETAIN PERSONS IN THE DEPARTURE LOUNGE AT THE AIRPORT.

/"MR LITWAK

"MR LITWAK WAS NOT SO DETAINED, INDEED HE WAS NEVER DETAINED UNTIL HE WAS BROUGHT TO COURT ON FEBRUARY 20," HE ADDED.

THE SECRETARY SAID THERE WAS NO INTENTION OR NEED TO CHANGE THE PRESENT PRACTICE.

"THE MAJORITY OF OVERSTAYERS DETECTED AT THE AIRPORT IN 1990 WERE GRANTED AN EXTENSION OF STAY AND ALLOWED TO DEPART.

"ONLY A SMALL NUMBER WERE PROSECUTED," HE ADDED.

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BLASTING CONTROLS UNDER REVIEW

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A REVIEW OF ALL ASPECTS OF BLASTING CONTROLS IS BEING UNDERTAKEN AND RELEVANT MODIFICATIONS WILL BE INTRODUCED SHOULD IT BE FOUND NECESSARY.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MRS PEGGY LAM, ON A ROCK SLIDE ON FEBRUARY 28.

AS PART OF THAT REVIEW, AND AS A MATTER OF HIGH PRIORITY, THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THIS INCIDENT WOULD BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED, MR BARNES STRESSED.

THE INCIDENT TOOK PLACE AT A SHAU KEI WAN EAST HOUSING DEVELOPMENT SITE WHERE BLASTING WAS BEING CARRIED OUT NEAR THE TOP OF A 50 METRE HIGH OLD QUARRY FACE AS PART OF THE SITE FORMATION WORKS.

MR BARNES SAID THE BLASTING WORK WAS BEING CARRIED OUT UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF A PERMIT ISSUED BY THE MINES DIVISION OF THE CIVIL ENGINEERING SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

HE ADDED THAT PRECAUTIONS WERE TAKEN TO MINIMISE THE RISK OF DAMAGE OR INJURY WHICH INCLUDED:

- * CONSTRUCTION OF A SAFETY FENCE BELOW THE BOTTOM OF THE ROCK FACE INTENDED TO CATCH ANY SMALL ROCKS OR BOULDERS DISLODGED DURING THE WORK;
- * CLEARING ALL PERSONNEL IN THE AREA AT THE BOTTOM OF THE ROCK FACE DURING BLASTING WHICH INCLUDED PEOPLE IN THE NEARBY CONSTRUCTION SHEDS; AND
- * USE OF SCREENS AND CAGES TO PREVENT SMALL PIECES OF ROCK BEING PROJECTED INTO THE AIR BY THE BLAST AND LANDING OUTSIDE THE SITE.

MR BARNES SAID THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT IS CURRENTLY INVESTIGATING THE INCIDENT TOGETHER WITH THE CONTRACTOR.

"INITIAL FINDINGS ARE THAT THE INCIDENT WAS TRIGGERED BY THE UNEXPECTED LOOSENING OF A ROCK JOINT AS A RESULT OF THE CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF THE BLASTING NEARBY WHICH HAD BEEN GOING ON FOR SEVERAL WEEKS," THE SECRETARY SAID.

MR BARNES SAID BLASTING IN THE OLD QUARRY AREA WAS STOPPED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE INCIDENT AND NO FURTHER BLASTING WOULD BE PERMITTED AND FUTURE EXCAVATION WOULD BE CARRIED BY ALTERNATIVE MEANS.

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SIX BILLS PASSED IN LEGCO
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SIX BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY WERE RATING (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1991, MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, HEUNG YEE KUK (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 AND JUBILEE SPORTS CENTRE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991.

MEANWHILE, SIX NOTIONS WERE ALSO PASSED.

THEY WERE MOVED UNDER HONG KONG EXPORT CREDIT INSURANCE CORPORATION ORDINANCE, PUBLIC FINANCE ORDINANCE, DUTIABLE COMMODITIES ORDINANCE, CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ORDINANCE, FIXED PENALTY (TRAFFIC CONTRAVENTIONS) ORDINANCE AND FIXED PENALTY (CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS) ORDINANCE RESPECTIVELY.

THE WHITE PAPER ON SOCIAL WELFARE INTO THE 1990'S AND BEYOND WAS ALSO TABLED IN THE LEGCO.

A TOTAL OF 13 MEMBERS SPOKE IN AN ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE "FRANCHISED PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES IN HONG KONG" MOVED BY THE HON MIRIAM LAU. SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT.

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GOVERNOR OPENS HK PAVILION AT CEBIT FAIR
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THE '91 HANNOVER CEBIT FAIR PROVIDES A CHANCE FOR HONG KONG TO SHOW AN INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE THE PROGRESS THE TERRITORY HAS MADE IN OFFICE, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY, THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE HONG KONG PAVILION, THE GOVERNOR THANKED DEUTSCHE MESSE FOR INVITING HONG KONG TO BE "BUSINESS PARTNER" AT THE FAIR.

"AND I AM DELIGHTED TO SEE THAT SO MANY HONG KONG BUSINESSES HAVE TAKEN THIS EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO DISPLAY THEIR PRODUCTS AT THIS WORLD-FAMOUS FAIR," HE SAID.

PARTNERSHIP WAS ABOUT MUTUAL BENEFIT, SIR DAVID SAID. "FOR CEBIT IT IS A CHANCE TO FOCUS ON AN INTERESTING MARKET AND A VERY COMPETITIVE SOURCE OF SUPPLY IN ONE OF THE WORLD'S FASTEST GROWING REGIONS.

"SO THIS WEEK WILL BE A REWARDING ONE FOR BOTH OF US," HE SAID.

THE GOVERNOR SAID THE RAPIDLY DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGY THAT CEBIT PROMOTED FED ON CREATIVITY, RESOURCEFULNESS AND ADAPTABILITY AND THESE WERE QUALITIES WHICH HONG KONG BUSINESSMEN HAD IN ABUNDANCE, PARTLY BY INHERITANCE, PARTLY ACQUIRED FROM THE LESSONS OF RECENT HISTORY.

HE POINTED OUT THAT OVER THE PAST 40 YEAR HONG KONG HAD MOVED UP-MARKET RAPIDLY AND HAD DIVERSIFIED FROM THE MANUFACTURE OF TEXTILES AND SIMPLE GARMENTS; THROUGH PLASTIC TOYS AND SIMPLE ELECTRONIC GADGETRY; TO A VERY WIDE RANGE OF MEDIUM TO HIGH QUALITY GOODS.

"TODAY HONG KONG IS A BUSINESS AND SERVICE CENTRE FOR THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION.

"SERVICES NOW ACCOUNT FOR NEARLY 70 PER CENT OF OUR GDP. IT IS A REMARKABLE STORY OF GROWTH ACHIEVED THROUGH BEING READY TO MEET THE CHANGING REQUIREMENTS OF OUR MARKETS QUICKLY AND COST-EFFECTIVELY, WITH A DUE REGARD FOR QUALITY," HE SAID.

THE GOVERNOR INVITED PROSPECTIVE BUYERS TO SEE AND TEST HONG KONG PRODUCTS TO DETERMINE FOR THEMSELVES WHETHER HONG KONG'S PERFORMANCE MATCHED ITS WORDS.

"THIS FAIR PROVIDES THAT OPPORTUNITY," HE ADDED.

SIR DAVID CONGRATULATED THOSE WHO HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN MAKING THE DISPLAY OF HONG KONG PRODUCTS POSSIBLE, INCLUDING THE GERMAN HOSTS, IN PARTICULAR DEUTSCHE MESSE; THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL; THE PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL AND THE HONG KONG BUSINESSMEN WHO HAD WORKED HARD TO REFINE THEIR PRODUCT DISPLAYS FOR THIS OCCASION.

AFTER THE OPENING CEREMONY, THE GOVERNOR, ACCOMPANIED BY LADY WILSON, TOURED THE FAIR GROUND. HE WILL FLY TO THE HAGUE LATER IN THE AFTERNOON.

SOCIAL WELFARE WHITE PAPER PUBLISHED
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THE GOVERNMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PUBLISHED A WHITE PAPER ON SOCIAL WELFARE SETTING OUT ITS POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES INTO THE 1990'S AND BEYOND.

SPEAKING AT A PRESS CONFERENCE, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID THE WHITE PAPER DEMONSTRATED THE GOVERNMENT'S STRONG COMMITMENT TO THE BUILDING UP OF A MORE CARING COMMUNITY.

MRS WONG CHAIRED A WORKING PARTY WHICH PUBLISHED A DRAFT WHITE PAPER IN SEPTEMBER 1990 FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION. A TOTAL OF 237 SUBMISSIONS WERE RECEIVED AND THE WORKING PARTY MET ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS TO RE-EXAMINE ITS PROPOSALS IN THE LIGHT OF THE WRITTEN COMMENTS AND VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, DISTRICT BOARDS AND A WIDE RANGE OF SEMINARS.

"IT WAS GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF SOCIAL SERVICES WAS BUILT ON SOUND AND ACCEPTABLE FOUNDATIONS BUT THAT IMPROVEMENTS AND INNOVATION WOULD BE NEEDED TO MEET THE CHANGING NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF OUR SOCIETY IN THE 1990'S AND BEYOND," SHE SAID, SUMMARISING THE PUBLIC COMMENTS.

"IT WAS GENERALLY AGREED THAT THE STATED PHILOSOPHY AND DIRECTIONS PROPOSED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES WERE ACCEPTABLE BUT CONCERN WAS RAISED ABOUT THE VAGUENESS OF PROPOSED FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND THE APPARENT LACK OF COMMITMENT TO FUNDING," SHE ADDED.

MRS WONG SAID THE WHITE PAPER NOW INCLUDED AN IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE AND AN ESTIMATE OF THE COSTS INVOLVED.

"IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE RECURRENT EXPENDITURE FOR THE SERVICE PROGRAMMES REVIEWED IN THE WHITE PAPER WILL AMOUNT TO SOME \$5 BILLION IN 1991/92, RISING TO MORE THAN \$7 BILLION IN 1999/2000," SHE ANNOUNCED.

THE WHITE PAPER DIFFERS FROM THE WORKING PARTY'S DRAFT REPORT IN SEVERAL OTHER RESPECTS, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE COMMENTS MADE DURING THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE.

MRS WONG SAID THAT IN RESPONSE TO CONCERN ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF FEE-CHARGING, IT HAD BEEN DECIDED THAT A WORKING PARTY OF GOVERNMENT AND SERVICE AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES WOULD BE FORMED TO STUDY FURTHER HOW THIS CONCEPT MIGHT BE DEVELOPED.

THERE WAS ALSO A STRONG CALL FOR THE WHITE PAPER TO ADDRESS THE CONSEQUENCES OF AN AGING POPULATION ON THE PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY.

"RETIREMENT PROVISION FOR THE ELDERLY DID NOT FALL WITHIN THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE WORKING PARTY OR THE SCOPE OF THE WHITE PAPER," MRS WONG POINTED OUT.

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"HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO EXAMINE THE ISSUE OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE ELDERLY BY KEEPING THE EXISTING SCHEMES UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW AS WELL AS INVESTIGATING OTHER RELATED AREAS SUCH AS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME SUITABLE FOR HONG KONG."

COMMENTS ON OTHER ISSUES OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE WHITE PAPER INCLUDED THE COVERAGE OF REHABILITATION SERVICES.

MRS WONG SAID THIS WOULD BE MET THROUGH THE COMPREHENSIVE GREEN PAPER ON REHABILITATION, WHICH WOULD BE READY FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION LATER THIS YEAR.

THE WHITE PAPER COVERS A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES RELATING TO THE NEEDS OF FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT RISK AND THE ELDERLY.

"IN THE CASE OF THE ELDERLY, THE AIM IS TO PROMOTE THEIR WELL-BEING THROUGH SERVICES WHICH WILL ENABLE THEM TO REMAIN ACTIVE AND VALUED MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY," MRS WONG EXPLAINED.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES IN THE FORM OF HOME HELP, MULTI-SERVICE CENTRES AND DAY CARE AND SOCIAL CENTRES FOR THE ELDERLY WILL BE EXPANDED.

A HIGH PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO MEETING THE GROWING DEMAND FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE IN THE FORM OF SUBVENTED CARE AND ATTENTION HOMES AND HOMES FOR THE AGED. IN ADDITION, PROPERLY REGULATED PRIVATE AND NON-PROFIT-MAKING HOMES WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO PLAY THEIR PART.

MRS WONG SAID THE WHITE PAPER LOOKED UPON THE FAMILY AS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF OUR SOCIETY.

"TRADITIONALLY, IT IS THROUGH THE FAMILY THAT YOUNG AND OLD ALIKE HAVE BEEN CARED FOR AND SUPPORTED.

"WITH THE INCREASE IN SMALLER FAMILIES, THIS NETWORK OF FAMILY SUPPORT HAS BECOME WEAKER AT A TIME WHEN THE STRESSES AND STRAINS OF OUR RAPIDLY DEVELOPING SOCIETY HAVE INCREASED THE PRESSURES ON ALL FAMILY MEMBERS," SHE SAID.

FAMILY CASEWORK AND COUNSELLING SERVICES WILL BE STEPPED UP TO HELP AND REACH OUT TO FAMILIES EXPERIENCING PERSONAL AND FAMILY PROBLEMS.

SUPPORT SERVICES SUCH AS HOME HELP AND DAY CARE FOR CHILDREN WILL BE STRENGTHENED. SPECIAL ATTENTION WILL BE PAID TO THE NEEDS OF THE GROWING NUMBER OF SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES AND TO THOSE FAMILIES WHO CANNOT PROVIDE FOR THEMSELVES THE BASIC NECESSITIES OF DAILY LIFE.

"IN PARTICULAR, THE WHITE PAPER PROPOSES THAT THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN IN FAMILIES RECEIVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE BE RECOGNISED BY AN ADDITIONAL CHILD SUPPLEMENT," MRS WONG SAID, "AND THIS SUPPLEMENT WILL BE INTRODUCED LATER THIS YEAR."

MRS WONG SAID THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE IN HONG KONG WAS NOT SOLELY A MATTER OF MORE MONEY, SERVICES AND FACILITIES.

"MUCH WILL ALSO DEPEND ON HONG KONG'S ABILITY TO PROVIDE MORE SOCIAL WORKERS OF THE SAME CALIBRE AND COMMITMENT AS THOSE WHO ALREADY SERVE THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY SO ADMIRABLY.

"THE WHITE PAPER RECOGNISES THE DIFFICULTIES IN EXPANDING THE SUPPLY OF CERTAIN SOCIAL WORK PERSONNEL AND THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL WORK TRAINING AND MANPOWER PLANNING AND THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE WILL CONTINUE TO EXPLORE WAYS AND MEANS TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION."

MRS WONG CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT THE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS THAT HAD ALREADY BEEN ACHIEVED IN SOCIAL WELFARE IN THE PAST DECADE REPRESENTED A SOLID FOUNDATION UPON WHICH TO BUILD.

"THE WHITE PAPER SETS OUT CLEAR OBJECTIVES AND PROPOSALS TO COPE WITH THE CHANGING NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF OUR SOCIETY.

"I AM CONFIDENT THAT WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE DEDICATION OF GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP, THESE OBJECTIVES WILL BE ACHIEVED," SHE ADDED.

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GUIDELINES FOR EXCO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS PUBLISHED THE GUIDELINES FOR DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

ANNOUNCING THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY), A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THE GUIDELINES WERE NOW AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION IN THE CLERK OF COUNCILS' OFFICE AND AT OMELCO FOLLOWING A REVIEW OF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY'S OFFICE AND ADVICE GIVEN BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

"GIVEN THE RANGE AND VARIETY OF MATTERS WHICH HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, IT IS INEVITABLE THAT MEMBERS FROM TIME TO TIME WILL HAVE A DIRECT OR SIGNIFICANT INTEREST IN SOME OF THE SUBJECTS DISCUSSED," HE SAID.

"THIS NEED NOT BE SEEN AS NECESSARILY HARMFUL TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST : ON OCCASION, IT CAN BE USEFUL TO HAVE MEMBERS WITH SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE PRESENT TO GIVEN ADVICE.

"WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT THE INTEREST BE RECOGNISED, AND DUE ACCOUNT TAKEN OF IT WHEN CONSIDERING THE VIEWS TENDERED."

HE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT WHILST THERE WERE NO LEGAL PROVISIONS GOVERNING THE NEED TO DECLARE INTERESTS IN THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, THERE WERE LONGSTANDING CONVENTIONS.

THE GUIDELINES NOW BEING PUBLISHED OUTLINE THE WAY THESE CONVENTIONS APPLY; THE GOVERNING PRINCIPLE BEING THAT THE ADVICE GIVEN TO THE GOVERNOR SHOULD BE DISINTERESTED AND IMPARTIAL.

ULTIMATELY IT REMAINS THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS TO DECIDE WHETHER THEY HAVE AN INTEREST IN A PARTICULAR MATTER UNDER DISCUSSION AND TO DECLARE IT.

THERE ARE TWO CATEGORIES OR DEGREES OF INTEREST, "EXCLUSIONARY" AND "DECLARATORY".

THE TERM "EXCLUSIONARY INTERESTS" APPLIES WHERE A MEMBER DECLARES A SIGNIFICANT PECUNIARY INTEREST, WHETHER PERSONAL OR THROUGH A CLOSE RELATIVE OR FRIEND, WHICH MAY BE MATERIALLY AFFECTED BY THE DECISION ABOUT TO BE TAKEN. HE OR SHE MAY THEN BE REQUIRED BY THE GOVERNOR TO WITHDRAW FROM THE MEETING.

PECUNIARY INTERESTS INCLUDE OWNERSHIP OF, PARTNERSHIP WITH, SHAREHOLDING IN, AND OTHER SIMILAR CONNECTIONS SUCH AS BEING A TRUSTEE OR BENEFICIARY OF, THE ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED.

MEMBERS WHO PERSONALLY, OR THROUGH AN ASSOCIATE, HAVE GIVEN PROFESSIONAL ADVICE OR REPRESENTED ANY PERSON OR BODY LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED BY THE ITEM UNDER DISCUSSION WOULD ALSO BE TREATED AS HAVING AN EXCLUSIONARY INTEREST.

"DECLARATORY INTERESTS" ARE MORE DISTANT : INDIRECT REMOTE OR NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS SUCH AS MEMBERSHIP OF AN ADVISORY BOARD OR A UNIVERSITY COUNCIL ARE DECLARED BUT IT WOULD NOT USUALLY BE NECESSARY FOR THE MEMBER TO WITHDRAW FROM THE MEETING.

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FIVE NOMINATIONS RECEIVED TODAY FOR UC/RC ELECTIONS
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A TOTAL OF FIVE NOMINATIONS FOR THE URBAN COUNCIL AND REGIONAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN MAY WERE RECEIVED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THREE WERE FOR THE URBAN COUNCIL ELECTIONS AND TWO FOR THE REGIONAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS.

THIS BRINGS TO 16 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF NOMINATIONS FOR THE ELECTIONS.

SO FAR, THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF NOMINATIONS RECEIVED WAS IN THE KOWLOON CITY WEST CONSTITUENCY WITH TWO CANDIDATES.

NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES WILL LAST UNTIL MARCH 25.

CANDIDATES WILL BE CONTESTING 27 SINGLE SEAT CONSTITUENCIES - 15 IN THE URBAN COUNCIL AREA AND 12 THE REGIONAL COUNCIL AREA.

/FOLLOWING ARE

FOLLOWING ARE THE PERSONAL PARTICULARS OF THE CANDIDATES WHOSE NOMINATION FORMS WERE RECEIVED TODAY:

URBAN COUNCIL CONSTITUENCY AREA	NAME	SEX	AGE	OCCUPATION	CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER
SHAU KEI WAN	BERNACCHI, BROOK ANTONY	M	69	BARRISTER-AT-LAW (QUEEN'S COUNSEL)	522 0066 890 8650
SOUTHERN	YEUNG CHUI-CHUN HARLANNA	F	42	KINDERGARTEN HEADMISTRESS	553 88864 555 9731
SHAM SHUI PO WEST	MA LEE-WO	M	30	SOCIAL WORKER	360 0161

REGIONAL COUNCIL CONSTITUENCY AREA	NAME	SEX	AGE	OCCUPATION	CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER
SAI KUNG	WONG SHUI-SANG	M	53	BUSINESSMAN	792 7354
SHA TIN EAST	LEE YORK-FAI	M	24	CLINICAL MEDICAL UNDERGRADUATE	116 8999 CALL 5599

FOLLOWING IS A STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN OF THE NOMINATIONS RECEIVED SO FAR:

URBAN COUNCIL CONSTITUENCY AREA	NO. OF NOMINATIONS RECEIVED
1. CENTRAL AND WESTERN	NIL
2. WAN CHAI	1
3. NORTH POINT	1
4. SHAU KEI WAN	1
5. SOUTHERN	1
6. KOWLOON CITY WEST	2
7. KOWLOON CITY EAST	NIL
8. KWUN TONG WEST	1
9. KWUN TONG EAST	1
10. MONG KOK	NIL
11. SHAM SHUI PO EAST	NIL
12. SHAM SHUI PO WEST	1
13. WONG TAI SIN SOUTH	1
14. WONG TAI SIN NORTH	NIL
15. YAU TSIM	NIL
SUB-TOTAL:	10

/REGIONAL COUNCIL

REGIONAL COUNCIL CONSTITUENCY AREA	NO. OF NOMINATIONS RECEIVED
1. ISLANDS	1
2. NORTH	1
3. SAI KUNG	1
4. SHA TIN EAST	1
5. SHA TIN WEST	1
6. TAI PO	NIL
7. TSUEN WAN	NIL
8. TUEN MUN EAST	NIL
9. TUEN MUN WEST	NIL
10. YUEN LONG	NIL
11. KWAI CHUNG EAST	1
12. KWAI CHUNG WEST AND TSING YI	NIL

SUB-TOTAL:	6

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STATEMENT ON RESUMPTION OF HOI PA VILLAGE

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IN RESPONSE TO MEDIA ENQUIRIES ON LAND RESUMPTION IN HOI PA VILLAGE, TSUEN WAN, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) GAVE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

"THE APPEAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS OF THE SITE AND THE CLEARANCE OF THE SITE ARE CONSIDERED TO BE TWO SEPARATE ISSUES.

"EVEN THOUGH THE GOVERNMENT WILL CARRY OUT THE CLEARANCE, IT HAS AGREED THAT THE SITE WILL NOT BE DISPOSED OF UNTIL A FINAL COURT RULING IS MADE.

"A MEETING HAS BEEN HELD WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DISTRICT OFFICE AND THE RURAL COMMITTEE TO ASSIST THE VILLAGERS TO MOVE OUT. THE SCHEDULED CLEARANCE FOR MARCH 14 HAS BEEN POSTPONED TO MARCH 21 TO ALLOW MORE TIME FOR THE VILLAGERS TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS.

"IT IS NECESSARY FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY REASONS TO ENSURE EARLY CLEARANCE OF THE SITE, THE CONDITION OF WHICH IS DETERIORATING RAPIDLY.

"AS THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAS DECLARED THAT THE RESUMPTION OF THE PRIVATE LAND IN HOI PA IS FOR A PUBLIC PURPOSE, THE LAND HAS BEEN RESUMED AND IS NOW PROPERTY OF THE GOVERNMENT.

"LEGALLY, ALL PRIVATE RIGHTS CEASED TO EXIST AS FROM OCTOBER 30 LAST YEAR. IT IS A NORMAL PRACTICE TO CUT OFF THE WATER AND ELECTRICITY SUPPLY DURING A CLEARANCE SO AS TO PROTECT THE SAFETY OF THE WORKERS.

"IN ACCORDANCE WITH CURRENT POLICY, THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY OFFERED TERMS OF COMPENSATION TO THE INDIGENOUS VILLAGERS INCLUDING THE OFFER OF RESITE HOUSES, BUT THESE TERMS HAVE ALL BEEN REJECTED BY THE VILLAGERS. HOWEVER, THESE TERMS ARE STILL OPEN FOR ACCEPTANCE SHOULD THE VILLAGERS CHANGE THEIR MINDS."

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ANTI-LITTERING API'S WIN MEDAL

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TWO TELEVISION ANNOUNCEMENTS IN PUBLIC INTEREST (API'S) ON PENALTY FOR LITTERING WON A SILVER MEDAL AT THE 33RD INTERNATIONAL FILM AND TV FESTIVAL OF NEW YORK HELD LAST YEAR.

THEY WERE PRODUCED BY AN ADVERTISING AGENCY, LINTAS: HONG KONG LTD, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE JOINT URBAN COUNCIL/REGIONAL COUNCIL KEEP HONG KONG CLEAN STEERING COMMITTEE.

THE TWO API'S, NAMELY "CAR" AND "MELON", REMIND THE PUBLIC NOT TO LITTER FROM VEHICLES OR ON ROADS, AND EXPECT TO GET AWAY WITH IT.

THEY SCOOPED HONOURS IN THE CIVIC/SOCIAL EDUCATION CAMPAIGN CATEGORY IN THE TELEVISION AND CINEMA ADVERTISING COMPETITION.

MORE THAN 400 PUBLIC SERVICE SPOTS AND CAMPAIGNS FROM AROUND THE WORLD COMPETED FOR THE AWARDS IN THIS CATEGORY.

A CEREMONY WAS HELD THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON AT THE URBAN COUNCIL CHAMBERS TO CELEBRATE THE WINNING OF THE SILVER MEDAL AND TO ACKNOWLEDGE EFFORTS MADE BY ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

SPEAKING AT THE CEREMONY, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE, MR TONG KAM-BIU, SAID IT WAS ENCOURAGING THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME, ANTI-LITTERING TELEVISION API'S HAD WON INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION.

MR TONG SAID LINTAS: HONG KONG LTD HAD BEEN APPOINTED BY THE STEERING COMMITTEE SINCE 1989/90 TO FORMULATE ADVERTISING STRATEGY FOR THE KEEP HONG KONG CLEAN CAMPAIGN.

HE COMMENDED THE ADVERTISING AGENCY FOR ITS CREATIVITY IN PUTTING ACROSS THE SIMPLE AND WELL-KNOWN KEEP CLEAN MESSAGES THROUGH A LIGHT-HEARTED APPROACH.

HE ALSO THANKED THE THREE ARTISTES, MS MO SHUN-KWAN, MR ERIC TSANG AND MR LEE CHI-HUNG, WHOSE VOLUNTARY SERVICE AND SKILFUL ACTING HAD CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE TWO API'S.

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AT TODAY'S CEREMONY, THE CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF LINTAS: HONG KONG LTD, MR THOMAS KUPCIUNAS, PASSED ON THE SILVER MEDAL AWARD CERTIFICATE TO MR TONG AND THE STEERING COMMITTEE'S VICE-CHAIRMAN, DR PANG HOK-TUEN.

TWO ARTISTES PRESENT AT THE CEREMONY, MS MO SHUN-KWAN AND MR LEE CHI-HUNG, WERE GIVEN CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE KEEP HONG KONG CLEAN CAMPAIGN.

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SECRETARY FOR CIVIL SERVICE VISITS HOUSING DEPARTMENT
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THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR BARRIE WIGGHAM, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) VISITED THE NEW HOUSING DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS IN HO MAN TIN TO SEE FOR HIMSELF THE LATEST IN PUBLIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND TO MEET REPRESENTATIVES OF HOUSING STAFF.

ACCOMPANIED BY THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING, MR FUNG TUNG, MR WIGGHAM WAS TAKEN ON A TOUR OF THE BUILDING WHICH INCLUDED THE APPLICATIONS SECTION AND THE HOUSING AUTHORITY CHAMBER WHERE THE AUTHORITY'S ANNUAL OPEN MEETING WILL BE HELD NEXT MONTH.

MR WIGGHAM THEN MET THE DEPARTMENT'S DIRECTORATE STAFF TO DISCUSS MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING MATTERS.

BEFORE CONCLUDING THE VISIT, MR WIGGHAM MET REPRESENTATIVES FROM VARIOUS STAFF ASSOCIATIONS OF THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT AND DISCUSSED GENERAL ISSUES OF CONCERN.

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SALARIES TAX PAYMENT REMINDER
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THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) REMINDED TAXPAYERS TO CHECK THEIR SALARIES TAX DEMAND NOTES AND ENSURE THAT THE AMOUNT OF TAX DUE IS PAID ON OR BEFORE THE SPECIFIED DUE DATE.

"IF THE FIRST TAX INSTALMENT IS NOT PAID BY THE SPECIFIED DUE DATE, THE TOTAL TAX PAYABLE (INCLUDING THE TAX DUE AND PAYABLE ON THE SECOND INSTALMENT DATE) WILL BE DEEMED TO BE IN DEFAULT AND WILL BECOME IMMEDIATELY RECOVERABLE," A DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

"IN ADDITION, THE COMMISSIONER OF INLAND REVENUE MAY ORDER THAT A SUM NOT EXCEEDING FIVE PER CENT OF THE TOTAL TAX IN DEFAULT BE ADDED.

/ "THIS SURCHARGE

"THIS SURCHARGE WILL ALSO BE DUE FOR IMMEDIATE PAYMENT."

THE SPOKESMAN SAID RECOVERY NOTICES WOULD THEN BE ISSUED TO THE TAXPAYERS' EMPLOYERS TO EFFECT THE COLLECTION OF THE TAX AND SURCHARGE IN DEFAULT.

PROCEEDINGS FOR THE RECOVERY OF TAX IN THE DISTRICT COURT MIGHT ALSO BE COMMENCED WITHOUT FURTHER NOTICE, HE ADDED.

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IRD KOWLOON SUB-OFFICE ON MOVE
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THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT'S KOWLOON SUB-OFFICE WILL OPERATE FROM ITS NEW OFFICE AT FIRST FLOOR, MONG KOK GOVERNMENT OFFICES, 30 LUEN WAN STREET, MONG KOK, FROM MONDAY (MARCH 18).

THE NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR GENERAL ENQUIRIES IS 399 2222.

DUE TO THE REMOVAL, THE EXISTING OFFICE AT 12TH FLOOR, PARK-IN COMMERCIAL CENTRE, 56 DUNDAS STREET WILL SUSPEND SERVICE ON SATURDAY (MARCH 16).

THE SUB-OFFICE COLLECTS ALL TAXES ASSESSED UNDER THE INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE, INCLUDING SALARIES TAX, PROFITS TAX AND PROPERTY TAX. IT ALSO COLLECTS HOTEL ACCOMMODATION TAX AND ENTERTAINMENT TAX AND ISSUES TAX RESERVE CERTIFICATES.

THE SUB-OFFICE ALSO SERVES AS A BUSINESS REGISTRATION AND STAMP DUTY SUB-OFFICE, AND AS A BASE FOR TAX INSPECTORS.

IT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FROM 9 AM TO 4 PM MONDAY TO FRIDAY, AND FROM 9 AM TO 11.30 AM ON SATURDAY.

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DTC REGISTRATION REVOKED
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THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING ANNOUNCED THAT THE REGISTRATION OF AMRO FINANCE AND SECURITIES (ASIA) LIMITED AS A DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANY HAS BEEN REVOKED AS AT THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AT ITS OWN REQUEST UNDER SECTION 31(2) OF THE BANKING ORDINANCE.

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WINNERS PICKED FOR CLEAN AND GREEN COMPETITIONS
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THE CLEAN AND GREEN SCHEME '90 PHOTO COMPETITION AND THE PAINTING AND POSTER DESIGN COMPETITION HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED WITH 132 AND 134 ENTRIES RESPECTIVELY.

AN ADJUDICATION SESSION WAS HELD THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON AT THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT (AFD) TO SELECT 10 WINNING ENTRIES FOR EACH COMPETITION.

JUDGES FOR THE PHOTO COMPETITION COMPRISED COUNTRY PARKS BOARD MEMBER MR GEORGE TAN, RENOWNED PHOTOGRAPHER MR DAVID HSIUNG, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMPETITION'S SPONSOR, MR CHARLES LEUNG AND MR TERRY WONG OF KODAK (FAR EAST) LTD.

THOSE FOR THE PAINTING AND POSTER DESIGN COMPETITION COMPRISED MR GEORGE TAN, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SCHEME'S CO-ORGANISER, MRS CECILIA LI OF TIMBERLAND, AND MR KWAN KAI-TAI OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND MR CHEUNG MAN-KWONG OF THE AFD.

THE WINNERS WILL BE NOTIFIED IN WRITING. AND TOGETHER WITH ALL PARTICIPANTS OF THE TWO COMPETITIONS, THEY WILL BE INVITED TO THE CLEAN AND GREEN FUN DAY TO BE HELD ON MARCH 29 AT THE SHING MUN COUNTRY PARK.

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