



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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GOVT ESTIMATES EXPLAINED

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THE SECRETARY FOR WORKS AND THE SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY ARE LOOKING AT WAYS TO ENABLE EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF POSSIBLE DEVIATIONS FROM THE ESTIMATES OF RECURRENT IMPROVEMENT, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, MR DAVID NENDICK, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR NENDICK SAID THIS WOULD ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO DIRECT SUMS LIKELY TO REMAIN UNSPENT IN A FINANCIAL YEAR TO OTHER PROJECTS.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID THE DIRECTORS OF THE WORKS GROUP OF DEPARTMENTS HAD BEEN ASKED TO REVIEW THEIR DEPARTMENTS' MANPOWER RESOURCES AND AVAILABILITY OF SITES MORE CAREFULLY.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSIDERING TO REQUIRE QUARTERLY BREAKDOWNS OF EXPENDITURE FROM THE WORKS GROUP OF DEPARTMENTS SO THAT ACTUAL SPENDING PATTERNS COULD BE MORE CLOSELY MONITORED AND REVIEW GAZETTING PROCEDURES TO IMPROVE THE ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATED START DATES OF NEW PROJECTS.

HE SAID RECURRENT EXPENDITURE WAS RELATIVELY EASY TO PREDICT, AND THE VARIATION IN 1991-92 BETWEEN THE ACTUAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE AND THE REVISED ESTIMATE WAS LESS THAN 1%.

ESTIMATES OF REVENUE, HOWEVER, INVOLVE JUDGEMENTS ABOUT THE STATE OF THE ECONOMIES OF HONG KONG'S MAJOR TRADING PARTNERS, AS WELL AS BUSINESS CONFIDENCE, INVESTMENT, INTEREST RATE MOVEMENTS AND INFLATION WITHIN THE ECONOMY.

HE SAID APPLYING ECONOMIC FORECASTS TO REVENUE PROJECTIONS BASED ON PAST TRENDS CLEARLY INVOLVED A SIGNIFICANT DEGREE OF SUBJECTIVE JUDGEMENT.

MR NENDICK SAID AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, THE GOVERNMENT'S ESTIMATES SYSTEM HAD WORKED WELL IN RECENT YEARS.

SINCE 1988-89, THE AMOUNT OF REVENUE ACTUALLY RECEIVED IN A PARTICULAR YEAR HAS VARIED BETWEEN 0.5% BELOW THE REVISED ESTIMATE (IN 1990-91) TO ABOUT 2.5% ABOVE IT (IN 1991-92).

HE EXPLAINED THAT MOST OF THE VARIATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR WAS DUE TO CERTAIN SPECIFIC FACTORS.

A RESURGENCE IN THE STOCK MARKET AND A GREATLY INCREASED LEVEL OF STAMPING OF PROPERTY DOCUMENTS IN MARCH 1991, FOR EXAMPLE, PUSHED STAMP DUTY RECEIPTS UP BY ABOUT \$700 MILLION.

"THIS COULD NOT REASONABLY HAVE BEEN ANTICIPATED," HE SAID.

SIMILARLY, THE INCREASE IN REVENUE RECEIVED FROM PROFITS TAX OVER THE REVISED ESTIMATE, THOUGH SMALL IN PERCENTAGE TERMS, AMOUNTED TO SOME \$400 MILLION, THE LARGER PART OF WHICH AROSE FROM AN UNANTICIPATED DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF CLAIMS FOR TAX HOLD-OVER.

THE VARIATION BETWEEN THE REVISED ESTIMATES AND ACTUAL REVENUE RECEIVED FOR OTHER INTERNAL REVENUE HEADS AND SUBHEADS WAS MINIMAL.

MR NENDICK SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE EXPLORING WHETHER THERE WERE WAYS TO IMPROVE FURTHER BOTH THE PRODUCTION AND PRESENTATION OF THE ESTIMATES IN THE LEAD-UP TO THE NEXT BUDGET.

"BUT WE MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT NO SYSTEM CAN PREDICT ALL CHANGES, LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL, WHICH MAY HAVE A SUDDEN EFFECT ON THE ECONOMY AND, IN CASE OF DOUBT, WE SHOULD ERR ON THE SIDE OF PRUDENCE IN ESTIMATING THE AMOUNT OF REVENUE WE HAVE AVAILABLE," HE SAID.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT FACED A DIFFERENT AND SOMEWHAT MORE SERIOUS PROBLEM WITH RESPECT TO CAPITAL EXPENDITURE.

LOOKING AT THE PERFORMANCE OF THE CAPITAL WORKS RESERVE FUND OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ORIGINAL ESTIMATES AND THE ACTUAL EXPENDITURE AVERAGED AT SOMETHING OVER 6% UP TO 1989-90, BUT INCREASED TO ABOUT 30% IN 1990-91 AND 1991-92.

THE LARGEST ELEMENTS IN THE UNDERSPENDING IN THE LAST TWO FINANCIAL YEARS OCCURRED UNDER HEAD 701 LAND ACQUISITION AND HEAD 702 PORT AND AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT.

HE SAID IN THE CASE OF LAND ACQUISITION, UNDERSPENDING WAS MAINLY DUE TO PROLONGED ARBITRATION ON CONTESTED CASES AND THE FAILURE OF LANDOWNERS TO COME FORWARD TO COLLECT COMPENSATION.

UNCERTAINTY OVER THE FUTURE OF THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO UNDERSPENDING, AS CONTRACTS AND TENDERS WERE HELD UP UNTIL THE SIGNING OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON JUNE 30, 1991.

"THIS WAS, OF COURSE, A MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH, BUT TIME WAS STILL REQUIRED TO MOBILISE RESOURCES AND OBTAIN THE NECESSARY APPROVALS FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE BEFORE THE PROJECTS CONCERNED COULD GO FORWARD AT FULL SPEED," MR NENDICK SAID.

HE SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE PADS-RELATED ESTIMATES WOULD BE IMPROVED IN 1992-93.

"PROJECTS WITHIN THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME ARE NOW PROGRESSING STEADILY AND A SERIES OF PORT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS ARE COMING ON STREAM."

AS FOR HEAD 701, HE SAID FACTORS OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT'S CONTROL WOULD ALWAYS MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO PREDICT ACCURATELY EACH YEAR'S EXPENDITURE ON LAND ACQUISITION.

PROLONGED DISCUSSION WITH A MAJOR CLEAREE OR ARBITRATION BY THE LANDS TRIBUNAL CAN, FOR EXAMPLE, RESULT IN SLIPPAGE OF HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN COMPENSATION PAYMENT.

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SCA ON DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT IN LEGCO

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FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT OF THE SPEECH BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR PETER LAI, IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TONIGHT (WEDNESDAY):

MR DEPUTY PRESIDENT,

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT'S, AND HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT'S, WISH TO SEE A STEADY PROGRESS TOWARDS A GREATER DEGREE OF DEMOCRACY IN HONG KONG ON A BASIS THAT CAN BE SUSTAINED AFTER THE TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY IN 1997. IN RESPONSE TO THE EXPRESSED DESIRES OF THE HONG KONG COMMUNITY FOR A MORE RAPID RATE OF PROGRESS IN THIS REGARD, HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT DECIDED IN EARLY 1990 AFTER DISCUSSION WITH THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF DIRECTLY ELECTED SEATS IN THIS COUNCIL FROM 10 TO 18 IN 1991, AND TO NOT BELOW 20 IN 1995. AT THE TIME OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF THIS DECISION IN PARLIAMENT, THE SECRETARY OF STATE, MR DOUGLAS HURD SAID: "WE WISH TO ESTABLISH IN HONG KONG, BEFORE 1997, A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH INCLUDES FROM THE OUTSET A SUBSTANTIAL ELEMENT OF DEMOCRACY, AND WHICH CAN ENDURE AND FURTHER DEVELOP AFTER 1997." HE ALSO SAID: "WE SHALL CONTINUE TO PRESS THE CASE FOR A FASTER PACE OF DEMOCRATISATION."

HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO RAISE WITH THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT BEFORE THE 1995 ELECTIONS THE PACE OF DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT IN HONG KONG HAS SINCE BEEN REAFFIRMED BY MINISTERS WHEN THEY VISITED THE TERRITORY IN APRIL AND SEPTEMBER 1990, AND ALSO BY THE PRIME MINISTER DURING HIS VISIT HERE IN SEPTEMBER LAST YEAR.

MEMBERS SPEAKING IN THIS DEBATE HAVE EXPRESSED DIFFERENT VIEWS ON THE PACE OF DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE YEARS AHEAD. THESE VIEWS WILL OF COURSE BE FULLY REFLECTED TO HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT. ON THE QUESTION OF TIMING FOR DISCUSSION WITH THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT, THE SECRETARY OF STATE STATED IN PARLIAMENT AS EARLY AS FEBRUARY THIS YEAR THAT THIS WILL NEED TO TAKE PLACE "WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT". THE NEW GOVERNOR OF HONG KONG WILL ALSO WANT TO CONSIDER THIS IMPORTANT MATTER IN DETAIL AND, IN THIS REGARD, I THINK I CAN DO NO BETTER THAN REPEATING AGAIN THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S WORDS IN PARLIAMENT EARLIER THIS MONTH:

"I DO NOT THINK THAT THE NEW GOVERNOR WILL WANT TO RUSH TO CONCLUSIONS ON THESE MATTERS AS SOON AS HE TAKES OVER. HE WOULD BE WISE TO WANT - I AM SURE THAT HE WILL WANT - TO CONSULT WIDELY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL, TO WEIGH UP ALL THE FACTORS AND THEN TO PUT HIS ADVICE TO US. THAT WILL TAKE TIME. I

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WOULD NOT EXPECT CONCLUSIONS ON THE KIND OF MATTERS THAT MY RT. HONOURABLE FRIEND MENTIONED TO EMERGE UNTIL THE AUTUMN AT THE EARLIEST. ON THE SPECIFIC POINT CONCERNING THE 1995 LEGCO ELECTIONS, WE HAVE SAID THAT WE SHALL BE DISCUSSING THOSE ELECTIONS WITH THE CHINESE SIDE WITH THE AIM OF ENSURING AS MUCH CONTINUITY AS POSSIBLE. DECISIONS ON ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS WILL NEED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF SUCH DISCUSSIONS: THEY ARE, I THINK, SOME WAY OFF."

MR DEPUTY PRESIDENT, THE ADMINISTRATION BELIEVES THAT THERE IS NO NEED TO RUSH INTO A CONCLUSION ON THIS IMPORTANT MATTER. THE EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL WILL THEREFORE ABSTAIN FROM VOTING ON MR MCGREGOR'S MOTION, OR ON MR NGAI SHIU-KIT'S AMENDMENT TODAY.

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INCREASED FAMILIARITY WITH CHINESE GOVT IMPORTANT FOR HK

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THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT IT IS IMPORTANT FOR GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS TO INCREASE THEIR FAMILIARITY WITH THEIR COUNTERPARTS ON THE MAINLAND.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID LI IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"WE BELIEVE IT BEST FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACTUAL WORKING CONTACTS TO PROCEED IN A NATURAL FASHION, AS OPERATIONAL NEEDS DICTATE," SIR DAVID SAID.

AREAS IN WHICH THESE HAD EXPANDED RECENTLY INCLUDED CROSS-BORDER POLICING, ANTI-CORRUPTION WORK, IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS MATTERS.

"IN ALL OF THESE AREAS THE RESPECTIVE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND SERVICES ARE IN REGULAR CONTACT WITH THEIR COUNTERPARTS OVER THE BORDER," HE SAID.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT THIS TREND OF INCREASED CONTACTS WAS ENCOURAGED AND PROMOTED BY THE GOVERNMENT, AND WAS CONTINUING.

SO FAR THIS YEAR, OVER 60 DELEGATIONS FROM HONG KONG HAD TRAVELLED TO THE MAINLAND.

SIR DAVID NOTED THAT RECENT YEARS HAD SEEN AN INCREASE IN THE AMOUNT OF CONTACTS BETWEEN HONG KONG GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND THEIR MAINLAND COUNTERPARTS, BOTH IN THE CENTRAL PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT IN BEIJING AND IN PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS, NOTABLY GUANGDONG.

LAST YEAR, 152 DELEGATIONS FROM HONG KONG TRAVELLED TO CHINA. SOME OF THESE WERE FOR THE PURPOSE OF FAMILIARISATION, BUT THE MAJORITY WERE WORKING VISITS.

LIKEWISE, 91 DELEGATIONS CAME TO HONG KONG FROM THE MAINLAND.

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HK SPENDS MORE ON NEW ROADS

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THE GOVERNMENT ON AVERAGE SPENT \$3,200 MILLION A YEAR BETWEEN 1988 AND 1990 ON NEW ROADS IN HONG KONG, COMPARED WITH \$800 MILLION IN SINGAPORE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PETER WONG HONG-YUEN, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN THE THREE-YEAR PERIOD FROM 1989 TO 1991, GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ON ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

	CONSTRUCTION (\$ MILLION)	MAINTENANCE (\$ MILLION)
1989	3,837	413
1990	3,255	486
1991	2,580	546

MR LEUNG POINTED OUT THAT THE HIGHER EXPENDITURE ON ROAD CONSTRUCTION IN 1989 AND 1990 WAS DUE TO WORK ON SEVERAL MAJOR PROJECTS, INCLUDING THE KWUN TONG BYPASS, SHING MUN TUNNELS AND TSEUNG KWAN O TUNNEL.

HE SAID THE TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENDITURE ON ROAD CONSTRUCTION ACCOUNTED FOR 0.57% OF GDP, COMPARED WITH 0.35% IN SINGAPORE DURING THE THREE-YEAR PERIOD.

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WORK IN PROGRESS TO ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

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THE ADMINISTRATION IS EXAMINING WHETHER THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW) SHOULD BE APPLIED TO HONG KONG, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR PETER LAI, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ANDREW WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR LAI SAID CEDAW WENT FURTHER IN OUTLAWING DISCRIMINATION IN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS.

"IT IS BECAUSE THE CONVENTION, IF IMPLEMENTED, WOULD HAVE SUCH A DIRECT AND POSSIBLY SERIOUS IMPACT ON THE PUBLIC THAT A DETAILED STUDY OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED IS REQUIRED," HE SAID.

THE SECRETARY ADDED:

"WE HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT HONG KONG CAN COMPLY WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONVENTION BEFORE WE ARE IN A POSITION TO ASK THE UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT TO EXTEND THE CONVENTION TO HONG KONG."

THE INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS ARISING FROM THE CONVENTION ARE COMPLEX.

MR LAI SAID IT MIGHT LEAD TO THE ENACTMENT OF ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION APPLYING TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR, WHICH MIGHT CREATE PROBLEMS OF ENFORCEMENT AS WELL AS SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES.

HE SAID A MAJOR STEP AGAINST SEX DISCRIMINATION HAD BEEN TAKEN IN JUNE LAST YEAR WITH THE ENACTMENT OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS ORDINANCE.

THAT ORDINANCE, TOGETHER WITH THE RELATED AMENDMENT TO THE LETTERS PATENT, PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES AGAINST WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, AS WELL AS DISCRIMINATORY LAWS AGAINST WOMEN.

MR LAI SAID IT WAS STILL PREMATURE FOR HIM TO SAY THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS THE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP ON SEX DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT WOULD HAVE AS IT WAS STILL IN THE PROCESS OF DELIBERATION.

THE WORKING GROUP, CHAIRED BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, WAS SET UP IN MARCH THIS YEAR WITH AN AIM TO ADVISE THE GOVERNMENT WHETHER, IN SO FAR AS EMPLOYMENT MATTERS ARE CONCERNED, CEDAW SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO HONG KONG.

IT ALSO TRIED TO ASCERTAIN THE EXTENT TO WHICH DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT BASED ON SEX IS A PROBLEM IN HONG KONG AND TO CONSIDER WHAT GOVERNMENT MEASURES SHOULD BE TAKEN TO TACKLE IT.

THE SECRETARY SAID THE WORKING GROUP HAD CONSULTED RELEVANT ACADEMIC STUDIES, ESTABLISHED DIALOGUE WITH INTERESTED WOMEN'S GROUPS AND WAS EXAMINING A NUMBER OF SUBJECTS RELATED TO SEX DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT.

HE ALSO SAID A LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AD HOC GROUP HAD RECENTLY COMPLETED A STUDY ON THE NEED TO ESTABLISH A WOMEN'S COMMISSION IN HONG KONG.

IN A RECENT IN-HOUSE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL, MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOUR OF THE SETTING UP OF AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

HE SAID THE PROPOSAL WAS CONVEYED TO THE ADMINISTRATION IN MAY AND WAS AT PRESENT BEING CAREFULLY STUDIED.

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MEASURES IN PLACE TO COMBAT CRIME IN NEW HOUSING ESTATES

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THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THE POLICE WERE TAKING A NUMBER OF PREVENTIVE MEASURES TO TACKLE TRIAD AND CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES IN NEW PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES.

THESE INCLUDE UNDERCOVER OPERATIONS WITH OFFICERS POSING AS TENANTS OR DECORATORS, AND TELEVISION PUBLICITY TO ENCOURAGE AFFECTED TENANTS TO REPORT TO THE POLICE.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON WONG WAI-YIN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), HE SAID THE APPROVED DECORATION CONTRACTOR SYSTEM WAS ANOTHER MEASURE TO COMBAT CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES RELATED TO DECORATION WORKS IN NEW ESTATES.

UNDER THE SYSTEM, THE HOUSING AUTHORITY MAINTAINS AN APPROVED LIST OF DECORATION CONTRACTORS AND ONLY THOSE CONTRACTORS REGISTERED ON THE LIST ARE ALLOWED TO CARRY OUT DECORATION WORKS IN NEWLY COMPLETED RENTAL ESTATES.

AT PRESENT, THERE ARE 87 SUCH APPROVED DECORATION CONTRACTORS.

"THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT MONITORS THE SYSTEM CLOSELY IN RESPECT OF PRICE, WORKMANSHIP AS WELL AS BACKGROUND AND CONDUCT OF THE APPROVED DECORATION CONTRACTORS," HE SAID.

ON TIN YIU ESTATE, MR ASPREY SAID BEFORE IT WAS OCCUPIED, THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT LIAISED CLOSELY WITH THE POLICE WHO STRENGTHENED THEIR PRESENCE IN THE ESTATE TO COUNTER TRIAD AND CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES.

SINCE OCCUPATION IN APRIL THIS YEAR, THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT HAS RECEIVED TWO COMPLAINTS OF NUISANCE CAUSED BY UNAUTHORISED DECORATORS AND ONE ALLEGING ASSAULT.

"ALL THESE HAVE BEEN REFERRED TO THE POLICE FOR INVESTIGATION; NO PROSECUTIONS HAVE YET RESULTED," HE ADDED.

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PROPOSED LAW ON FOREIGN LAW FIRMS TO BE READY IN 1992-93 SESSION

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PROPOSED LEGISLATION TO REGULATE THE PRACTICES OF FOREIGN LAW FIRMS IS EXPECTED TO BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN THE LATTER HALF OF THE 1992-93 SESSION, THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR JAMES FINDLAY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MARTIN BARROW, MR FINDLAY SAID RECOMMENDATIONS WERE MADE BY THE LAW SOCIETY IN TWO REPORTS PRODUCED IN OCTOBER 1991 IN RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS FOR A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK ON FOREIGN LAW FIRMS.

IT WAS PROPOSED THAT A FOREIGN LAW FIRM WOULD HAVE TO REGISTER WITH THE LAW SOCIETY AND COULD ENTER INTO AN ASSOCIATION WITH A LOCAL LAW FIRM.

THE ASSOCIATION COULD SHARE FEES, PREMISES, RESOURCES AND PERSONNEL BUT THE RATIO OF FOREIGN LAWYERS TO LOCAL LAWYERS IN THE ASSOCIATION COULD NOT EXCEED 1:1.

A REGISTERED FOREIGN LAW FIRM WHICH HAD PRACTISED IN HONG KONG FOR THREE YEARS WOULD BE ABLE TO ESTABLISH A HONG KONG PRACTICE AND COULD PRACTISE HONG KONG LAW PROVIDED THAT THOSE WHO WERE TO PRACTISE HONG KONG LAW WERE QUALIFIED HONG KONG SOLICITORS.

"SINCE 1971, HONG KONG HAS PERMITTED FOREIGN LAW FIRMS TO OPERATE IN THE TERRITORY TO ADVISE ON FOREIGN LAW," MR FINDLAY SAID.

"THERE IS AN INFORMAL PROCEDURE UNDER WHICH THE LAW SOCIETY ISSUES ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES SPECIFYING THE TERMS ON WHICH THESE FIRMS ARE PERMITTED TO PRACTISE IN HONG KONG.

"THE INFORMAL PROCEDURE IS NOT SATISFACTORY TO THE LAW SOCIETY BECAUSE THESE FIRMS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO THEIR RULES REGULATING PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT, ETHICS AND DISCIPLINE.

"FOREIGN LAW FIRMS ARE ALSO DISSATISFIED BECAUSE THERE ARE NO STATUTORY CRITERIA THAT SET OUT THE CONDITIONS FOR ESTABLISHING AND FOR THE REGULATION OF THEIR PRACTICES HERE."

IT WAS PROPOSED THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE LAW SOCIETY WHICH WERE APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL IN PRINCIPLE IN JANUARY THIS YEAR BE IMPLEMENTED BY AMENDMENTS TO THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ORDINANCE AND BY SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION, SAID MR FINDLAY.

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NEW FACILITY FOR THE DEAF TO MAKE EMERGENCY CALLS EXPLORED

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL PURSUE THE POSSIBILITY OF INSTALLING FAXLINES FOR MAKING 999 EMERGENCY CALLS BY HEARING-IMPAIRED PERSONS, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LAU CHIN-SHEK IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MRS WONG SAID AT PRESENT, IF THE DEAF ASKED FOR HELP THROUGH THE 999 EMERGENCY HOTLINE, THEIR MESSAGES WOULD BE ACTED UPON AS NORMAL 999 EMERGENCY CALLS.

"SHOULD THERE BE INDICATIONS THAT THE CALLER WAS UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE OR SHOULD THERE BE OTHER SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES, THE POLICE WILL TAKE AUTOMATIC ACTION TO LOCATE THE CALL, OR ANY OTHER ACTION AS APPROPRIATE," SHE SAID.

"999 EMERGENCY CALLS WILL NOT THUS PRESENT A PROBLEM FOR THE POLICE."

HOWEVER, MRS WONG AGREED THAT SINCE THOSE WITH SERIOUS HEARING PROBLEM DO NOT NORMALLY USE TELEPHONES, THE VERY EXISTENCE OF 999 EMERGENCY CALL FACILITY MIGHT NOT PROVIDE SUFFICIENT ASSURANCE TO THEM AND CATER TO THEIR NEEDS.

ON THE SUGGESTION TO ENACT LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE TELEVISION STATIONS TO PRODUCE SUBTITLES IN CHINESE FOR ALL NEWS BULLETINS AND INFORMATION PROGRAMMES, MRS WONG SAID THE GOVERNMENT FAVOURED A VOLUNTARY APPROACH INSTEAD OF MAKING IT MANDATORY.

SHE SAID RTHK'S NEWS REVIEW BETWEEN 8.30 AM AND 9 AM EVERY SUNDAY WAS PRESENTED WITH SIGN-LANGUAGE AND CAPTIONS.

/SUBTITLING IS

SUBTITLING IS ALSO QUITE COMMON IN OTHER TELEVISION PROGRAMMES, PARTICULARLY ON THE ENGLISH CHANNELS.

"GOVERNMENT IS SYMPATHETIC TO THE NEEDS OF HEARING-IMPAIRED PERSONS," SHE STATED.

"WE CONSIDER THAT SUCH SERVICE SHOULD BE EXTENDED. WE URGE THAT RTHK'S PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMMES BE SO SUBTITLED.

"WE WILL ALSO URGE LOCAL TELEVISION BROADCASTERS TO PROVIDE SUBTITLES OR SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION FOR MORE PROGRAMMES AS A COMMUNITY SERVICE."

MRS WONG ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT KEPT A LIST OF SIGN INTERPRETERS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE IN HONG KONG.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS REQUIRING SIGN INTERPRETATION SERVICE MAY ASK FOR HELP FROM THESE SIGN INTERPRETERS.

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STRINGENT CONTROL OVER USE OF PESTICIDES

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ALL INSECTICIDES ARE CONTROLLED UNDER THE PESTICIDES ORDINANCE WHICH AIMS AT PROTECTING THE PUBLIC FROM HAZARDS ARISING FROM THE USE OF SUCH PRODUCTS, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HUANG CHEN-YA IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MRS WONG SAID ONLY PESTICIDES CONSIDERED SAFE COULD BE REGISTERED FOR LOCAL USE.

"THEY ARE ALSO REQUIRED TO BE PROPERLY PACKED AND LABELLED," SHE SAID.

"PERSONS DEALING IN PESTICIDES MUST ALSO BE LICENSED BY THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES."

AT PRESENT, THERE ARE 31 ORGANOPHOSPHATE COMPOUNDS REGISTERED AS PESTICIDES IN HONG KONG.

OF THESE, ONLY 12 ARE READILY AVAILABLE IN THE LOCAL MARKET, INCLUDING 'CHLORPHRIFOS'.

HOWEVER, MRS WONG POINTED OUT THAT 'CHLORPHRIFOS' WAS NOT IN COMMON USE OWING TO ITS LIMITED APPLICATION AND THE AVAILABILITY OF OTHER SYNTHETIC PYRETHROID FORMULATIONS.

STAFF OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT CONDUCT REGULAR RANDOM CHECKS AT RETAIL OUTLETS TO ENSURE THAT PESTICIDES ARE PROPERLY PACKED AND LABELLED.

PESTICIDES SAMPLES ARE TAKEN FROM THE LOCAL MARKET FOR CHEMICAL ANALYSIS TO CHECK IF ANY UNREGISTERED PESTICIDE IS BEING OFFERED FOR SALE.

/IN ADDITION

IN ADDITION, THE DEPARTMENT MAINTAINS A CLOSE WATCH ON THE TOXICITY STATUS OF VARIOUS PESTICIDES.

"SHOULD A REGISTERED PESTICIDE BE FOUND OR REPORTED TO BE DANGEROUS, OR CAUSING HEALTH HAZARDS, THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES CAN ORDER THE CANCELLATION OF THE REGISTRATION OF THE PESTICIDE IN QUESTION.

"SINCE 1983, 15 PESTICIDES HAVE BEEN DEREGISTERED ON HEALTH HAZARD OR ENVIRONMENTAL GROUNDS," SHE SAID.

THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT ALSO PROVIDES FARMERS WHO ARE THE MAJOR USERS OF PESTICIDES WITH LEAFLETS.

IT ALSO HOLDS PERIODIC TECHNICAL SEMINARS AND DISCUSSION MEETINGS WITH THEM ON THE SAFE USE OF PESTICIDES AND EFFECTIVE PEST CONTROL.

FURTHERMORE, FIELD STAFF OF THE DEPARTMENT COUNSEL AND REMIND FARMERS ON THE SAFE AND PROPER USE OF PESTICIDES IN THEIR REGULAR CONTACTS WITH THEM.

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MONITORING OF BUS COMPANIES BEING STRENGTHENED

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THE GOVERNMENT IS STRENGTHENING THE SYSTEM TO MONITOR THE PERFORMANCE OF BUS COMPANIES INCLUDING THEIR PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND IS MAKING THE SUPPLY OF FRANCHISED BUS SERVICES MORE COMPETITIVE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ZACHERY WONG, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR LEUNG SAID THE APPRAISAL SYSTEM COVERED SERVICE AVAILABILITY, PUNCTUALITY, MAINTENANCE, SAFETY, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, AS WELL AS GENERAL MANAGEMENT.

HE SAID THE RESULTS OF THE APPRAISAL WOULD BE RELEASED FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION AND SCRUTINY. THE OBJECTIVE WAS TO ENCOURAGE THE BUS COMPANIES TO BECOME MORE ACCOUNTABLE TO THEIR CUSTOMERS.

"WE ALSO INTEND TO STRENGTHEN THE PENALTY PROVISIONS IN THE PUBLIC BUS SERVICES ORDINANCE TO PREVENT THE COST OF PENALTIES FROM BEING PASSED ON TO PASSENGERS," HE SAID.

THIS WILL LEAD TO CLOSER MONITORING AND GREATER TRANSPARENCY IN THE OPERATION OF BUS COMPANIES TO DETER AVOIDABLE COST ESCALATION.

WIDER EXPOSURE TO MARKET FORCES WILL ALSO MAKE THE BUS COMPANIES MORE CUSTOMER-ORIENTED AND RESULT IN BETTER VALUE FOR MONEY FOR PASSENGERS.

/IN CONSIDERING

IN CONSIDERING THE FARE INCREASE APPLICATIONS BY BUS AND OTHER PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPERATORS NOT GOVERNED BY A PROFIT CONTROL SCHEME, MR LEUNG SAID THE GOVERNMENT NORMALLY ALLOWED THEM TO RECOVER COSTS AND EARN A REASONABLE PROFIT, HAVING REGARD TO FACTORS INCLUDING SERVICE QUALITY, COMMITMENT TO FURTHER INVESTMENTS, PREVIOUS PROFIT LEVELS, CHANGES IN THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT, INFLATION AND OTHER SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS.

REGARDING SUGGESTIONS TO PHASE OUT THE PROFIT CONTROL SCHEMES OF OTHER PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMPANIES, MR LEUNG SAID WHENEVER A FRANCHISE WAS DUE FOR RENEWAL, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER CAREFULLY WHETHER EXISTING FRANCHISE TERMS, INCLUDING ANY PROFIT CONTROL SCHEME, SHOULD BE ROLLED FORWARD IN THEIR PRESENT FORM.

MR LEUNG POINTED OUT THAT CHANGES TO STRENGTHEN THE MONITORING MECHANISM FOR THE OPERATION OF CMB WOULD INCLUDE FORMATION OF PASSENGER LIAISON GROUPS, ESTABLISHING A TRUST FOR PENSION FUNDS, A COMPUTER LINK GIVING GOVERNMENT INSTANT ACCESS TO OPERATIONAL INFORMATION, TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS GOVERNING THE DISPOSAL OF ANY SURPLUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT FUND AND OTHER ASSETS, AND THE SHARED USE OF BUS STOPS AND TERMINAL FACILITIES WITH THE FUTURE BUS OPERATOR ON HONG KONG ISLAND.

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ORDERS REVISED TO IMPROVE POLICE'S OVERTIME MANAGEMENT

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THE POLICE HAVE RECENTLY ISSUED REVISED ORDERS TO ACHIEVE BETTER MANAGEMENT OF OVERTIME ACCUMULATED BY POLICE OFFICERS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THESE ORDERS CLARIFY AND SIMPLIFY THE PROCEDURES FOR RECORDING OVERTIME, AND THE CONDITIONS FOR TIME-OFF IN LIEU OF PAYMENT OF DISCIPLINED SERVICES OVERTIME ALLOWANCE (DSOA).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON JAMES TO, MR ASPREY SAID THEY WERE DESIGNED TO ENSURE THAT ALL OFFICERS RECEIVE PROMPT AND ACCURATE RECOMPENSE FOR ANY OVERTIME WORKED, AND TO PREVENT THE BUILD-UP OF LARGE BALANCES OF UNRECOMPENSED OVERTIME.

NOTING THAT OVERTIME WORK WAS COMPENSATED FOR IN ACCORDANCE WITH CIVIL SERVICE REGULATIONS, HE SAID COMPENSATION WAS NORMALLY BY WAY OF TIME-OFF WITHIN A REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME.

"AN INDIVIDUAL POLICE DISTRICT COMMANDER WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE DEPLOYMENT NEEDS AND MANPOWER SITUATION IN HIS DISTRICT IN GRANTING TIME-OFF," HE SAID.

WHERE TIME-OFF CANNOT BE GRANTED WITHIN A REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME, DSOA MAY BE PAID FOR HOURS OF OVERTIME WORKED.

MR ASPREY SAID THERE HAD BEEN ONLY ONE CASE OF AN OFFICER KILLED ON DUTY WHO HAD ACCUMULATED OVERTIME HOURS.

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IN THE CASE, AN EX-GRATIA PAYMENT WAS MADE TO THE ESTATE OF THE OFFICER EQUIVALENT TO THE CASH VALUE OF THE OUTSTANDING ACCUMULATED TIME-OFF HOURS, HE SAID.

AS AT MAY 1 THIS YEAR, 880,127 HOURS OF OVERTIME WORK WERE ACCUMULATED BY SOME 20,000 POLICE OFFICERS, IN ALL RANKS FROM CONSTABLE TO CHIEF INSPECTOR.

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WHOLE-DAY SCHOOLING A LONG-TERM GOAL

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THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) REITERATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO SET WHOLE-DAY SCHOOLING AS A LONG-TERM GOAL.

HE STRESSED THAT THERE HAD NEVER BEEN ANY PLAN FOR WHOLE-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOLING AT NEWLY-BUILT SCHOOLS AND THUS, THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF SHELIVING SUCH A PLAN.

"OUR POLICY NOW IS TO WORK TOWARDS THIS GOAL BY ENCOURAGING SCHOOLS TO CONVERT TO WHOLE-DAY OPERATION WHEN DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES ALLOW.

"THIS ENCOURAGEMENT TAKES THE FORM OF PROVIDING ADDITIONAL TEACHERS FOR THOSE SCHOOLS WHICH ARE ALREADY OPERATING WHOLE-DAY CLASSES OR WHICH MAY TURN WHOLE-DAY FROM NOW ON," HE SAID.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LEE WING-TAT IN TODAY'S LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR CHAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS ALREADY AWARE OF GENERAL PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE CONCEPT OF WHOLE-DAY SCHOOLING AND HAD TAKEN FULL ACCOUNT OF THIS SUPPORT IN REACHING ITS DECISION TO ENCOURAGE SCHOOLS TO CONVERT TO WHOLE-DAY OPERATION WHERE POSSIBLE AND TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL TEACHERS FOR SUCH SCHOOLS.

ON THE QUESTION OF COSTS IF WHOLE-DAY SCHOOLING WERE TO BE ACHIEVED IN 14 YEARS FROM 1992-93 SCHOOL YEAR, MR CHAN ESTIMATED THE ANNUAL CAPITAL AND RECURRENT COSTS WOULD HAVE BEEN \$140 MILLION IN THE FIRST YEAR RISING PROGRESSIVELY TO \$761 MILLION IN THE 14TH YEAR.

THESE WOULD BRING THE TOTAL TO \$6.5 BILLION FOR THE 14-YEAR PERIOD AS A WHOLE.

"I SHOULD ADD THAT THE COST ESTIMATE, WHICH WAS PREPARED SOME TIME AGO FOR PLANNING PURPOSES, IS IN RESPECT OF IMPLEMENTING WHOLE-DAY SCHOOLING IN ALL PRIMARY SCHOOLS, INCLUDING BOTH NEWLY-BUILT AND EXISTING SCHOOLS," HE NOTED.

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DISTRICT OFFICES CO-ORDINATES EMERGENCY RELIEF WORK

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IN NATURAL DISASTERS, DISTRICT OFFICES OF THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION WILL CO-ORDINATE EMERGENCY RELIEF WORK BY RELEVANT DEPARTMENTS, INCLUDING THE URGENT REINSTATEMENT OF DISRUPTED SERVICES.

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

MR EASON SAID THE DRAINAGE SERVICES DEPARTMENT WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CLEARANCE OF SILT FROM PROPERLY BUILT DRAINS IN SQUATTER AREAS.

THE CLEARANCE OF DRAINS WHICH HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTED BY SQUATTERS SHOULD NORMALLY BE UNDERTAKEN BY THEM.

HOWEVER, IN EMERGENCIES, THE DEPARTMENT WILL CLEAR SILT FROM DRAINS IN SQUATTER AREAS IF NECESSARY.

THE SECRETARY SAID THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND REGIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR REMOVING REFUSE IN THE URBAN AREA AND THE NEW TERRITORIES RESPECTIVELY.

CLEAN-UP OPERATIONS ARE UNDERTAKEN BY THE TWO DEPARTMENTS JOINTLY WITH OTHERS SUCH AS THE HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT AND THE DRAINAGE SERVICES DEPARTMENT AS SOON AFTER NATURAL DISASTERS AS CONDITIONS PERMIT.

THESE OPERATIONS CAN INCLUDE THE REMOVAL OF SILT AND REFUSE FROM SQUATTER AREAS AND DRAINS.

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BRITISH OFFICES REGULARLY UPDATED ON VISA REQUIREMENTS

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BRITISH VISA OFFICES RECEIVE REGULAR NOTIFICATION OF ANY CHANGES IN HONG KONG'S VISA REQUIREMENTS WHICH ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE GENERAL POLICY TO WELCOME TOURISTS AND BUSINESS VISITORS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, WHILE REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MARTIN BARROW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID HONG KONG ADOPTED THIS POLICY AS IT WAS A REGIONAL AND WORLD CENTRE FOR FINANCE, TRADE, MANUFACTURING AND TOURISM.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 1992

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SECONDARY 6 ADMISSION PROCEDURE CLOSELY MONITORED

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THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WILL ENSURE THAT SCHOOLS COMPLY WITH THE REVISED SECONDARY 6 ADMISSION GUIDELINES BY CLOSELY MONITORING THE SITUATION IN INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TIK CHI-YUEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR CHAN SAID CERTAIN MEASURES HAVE BEEN OR WILL BE INTRODUCED. THESE INCLUDE:

- * REQUIRING SCHOOLS TO KEEP RECORDS OF CANDIDATE ACCEPTED OR REJECTED AT ALL THE STAGES OF THE ADMISSION PROCEDURE, AND TO SUBMIT A LIST OF SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES TO THE DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER FOR INFORMATION AT THE END OF EACH STAGE;
- * ADVISING SCHOOLS TO ACCEPT STUDENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POINTS SYSTEM AND SUBJECT RELEVANCE. IF, FOR ANY REASON, THIS GUIDELINE IS NOT FOLLOWED, AN EXPLANATION MUST BE RECORDED FOR FUTURE REFERENCE;
- * ADVISING SCHOOLS NOT TO ADMIT STUDENTS WITHOUT AN ADMISSION SLIP; AND
- * STAFF OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT VISITING SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT THE ADMISSION PROCESS TO ENSURE THAT SCHOOL COMPLY WITH THE ADMISSION PROCEDURE.

"SCHOOLS WHICH FAIL TO COMPLY WITH THE GUIDELINES WITHOUT GOOD REASON WILL BE ASKED TO RE-CONSIDER THE CASES OF ANY ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES WHO HAVE BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED," MR CHAN POINTED OUT.

MR CHAN SAID SCHOOL COUNCILS HAD BEEN CONSULTED ON THE MEASURES TO ENSURE ACCEPTABILITY AND COMPLIANCE.

LAST YEAR, 23 ALLEGATIONS OF MALPRACTICES WERE RECEIVED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT THROUGHOUT THE ADMISSION PROCESS.

THE MAJOR SUBJECTS OF THE COMPLAINTS RELATED TO SCHOOLS ABUSING THE ADMISSION PROCEDURES SUCH AS BY TAKING IN STUDENTS WITH HIGH SCORES FROM OTHER SCHOOLS AT STAGE I OR ANNOUNCING ADMISSIONS OF STUDENTS ON DAY 2 OF STAGE II RATHER THAN ON DAY 3 AS STIPULATED.

ALL CASES WERE INVESTIGATED AND EIGHT WERE FOUND TO BE SUBSTANTIATED.

ALL CASES WERE RECTIFIED UPON ADVICE GIVEN BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

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MEDICAL CERTIFICATES ISSUED BY UNREGISTRABLE PRACTITIONERS
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CIVIL SERVANTS MAY BE GRANTED SICK LEAVE ON THE BASIS OF CERTIFICATES ISSUED BY PRIVATE MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS, THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR BARRIE WIGGHAM, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR WIGGHAM SAID THESE CERTIFICATES INCLUDE THOSE ISSUED BY UNREGISTRABLE PRACTITIONERS WORKING IN EXEMPTED CLINICS.

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EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION PLEDGED ON MONETARY SYSTEM CHANGES
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THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO CONSULT EXTENSIVELY WITH INTERESTED PARTIES AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME AND TAKEN CAREFUL ACCOUNT OF THEIR VIEWS BEFORE MAKING ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO THE MONETARY SYSTEM.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS, MR DAVID NENDICK, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID LI ON A CENTRAL MONETARY AUTHORITY.

HE SAID IT WOULD NOT BE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST TO COMMENT ON WHAT MAY, OR MAY NOT, BE CONTEMPLATED IN RESPECT OF ANY FURTHER CHANGES TO THE MONETARY SYSTEM.

HE SAID IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT THE MONETARY SYSTEM WAS SUFFICIENTLY ROBUST TO MEET FUTURE CHALLENGES.

THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ALSO ENSURE THAT THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK, MECHANISM AND THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR MONETARY MANAGEMENT IN HONG KONG WERE ADEQUATE, HE SAID.

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LAWS AGAINST UNAUTHORISED USE OF PAVEMENT UNDER REGULAR REVIEW
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THE DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED KEEP THE LEGISLATION AGAINST UNAUTHORISED USE OF PAVEMENTS BY SHOP OPERATORS UNDER REGULAR REVIEW TO ENSURE THAT IT CONTINUES TO BE EFFECTIVE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TIMOTHY HA IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

/MR ASPREY

MR ASPREY SAID THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED THE PRESENT PENALTIES WERE ADEQUATE.

A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE TO ENFORCE THE LEGISLATION DEPENDING UPON THE NATURE OF THE OFFENCE.

"PRIME RESPONSIBILITY, HOWEVER, LIES WITH THE POLICE, THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND THE REGIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT," THE SECRETARY SAID.

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RAIL PLATFORM SAFETY MEASURES STRENGTHENED

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RAILWAY SAFETY IS A LEGAL OBLIGATION FOR BOTH THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION (MTRC) AND THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION (KCRC) AND IS CLOSELY MONITORED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG MAN-KWONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR LEUNG SAID A CHIEF INSPECTING OFFICER OF RAILWAYS WAS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO MONITOR AND ADVISE ON ALL RAIL SAFETY ISSUES AND BOTH RAILWAY CORPORATIONS WERE FULLY AWARE OF THE NEED TO ENSURE PLATFORM SAFETY.

"MEASURES TO WARN PASSENGERS TO KEEP OFF THE TRACKS INCLUDE MARKING YELLOW LINES ALONG PLATFORM EDGES, SENDING CONSTANT REMINDERS THROUGH THE PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM AND INTRODUCING PLATFORM QUEUING SCHEMES.

"PLATFORM ASSISTANTS ARE DEPLOYED TO ASSIST BOARDING AND ALIGHTING AND TO ENSURE PASSENGER SAFETY," MR LEUNG SAID.

MORE SPECIFICALLY, MR LEUNG SAID WHITE LINES HAD BEEN PAINTED ON THE EDGE OF CURVED PLATFORMS OF THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT TO ALERT PASSENGERS OF GAPS.

"SAFETY CAMPAIGNS SUCH AS COMMUNITY BRIEFINGS, SCHOOL TALKS AND EXHIBITIONS ARE HELD REGULARLY. SAFETY MESSAGES ARE PRINTED ON POSTERS AND PAMPHLETS TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC," HE SAID.

THE MTRC IS INSTALLING PRESSURE MATS WHICH WILL SET OFF AUDIBLE AND VISUAL ALARMS WHEN SOMEONE DESCENDS TO THE TRACKS. A CAMPAIGN ON PLATFORM SAFETY WILL BE LAUNCHED IN AUGUST.

MR LEUNG SAID THE KCRC WOULD SPEND \$344 MILLION TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PLATFORM ENTRANCES OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS TO SPREAD PASSENGERS MORE EVENLY ALONG THE PLATFORMS.

THE SIGNALLING SYSTEM IS ALSO BEING UPGRADED TO INCREASE TRAIN FREQUENCY AND THUS REDUCE OVERCROWDING.

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ONE SHIP CORROSION CASE IN THREE YEARS

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THERE HAS ONLY BEEN ONE REPORTED CASE OF A HONG KONG REGISTERED SHIP SUFFERING FROM SIGNIFICANT CORROSION AND STRESS PROBLEMS IN THE PAST THREE YEARS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ELIZABETH BOSHER, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HUANG CHEN-YA IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SHE SAID NO CONNECTION HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED BETWEEN THE CASE AND THE CARGO LOADING MECHANISM AT ANY LOCAL TERMINAL.

ON THE MONITORING OF THE SEA WORTHINESS OF HONG KONG VESSELS, SHE EXPLAINED THAT A VESSEL NEEDED TO PASS AN INITIAL SURVEY BEFORE IT COULD BE REGISTERED IN HONG KONG.

THEREAFTER, THE SHIP MUST BE SURVEYED EVERY YEAR, SHE SAID.

THESE SURVEYS MAY BE CONDUCTED BY MARINE DEPARTMENT SURVEYORS OF SHIPS IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL SAFETY STANDARDS OR BY AUTHORISED INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION SOCIETIES.

IN THE LATTER CASE MARINE DEPARTMENT CONDUCTS AUDIT INSPECTIONS TO ENSURE STRICT COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIRED STANDARDS.

"IN ANY EVENT MARINE DEPARTMENT CONDUCTS A THOROUGH SURVEY OF EACH REGISTERED VESSEL EVERY FIVE YEARS," MRS BOSHER SAID.

SHE SAID THE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE NOTIFIED IF ANY HONG KONG REGISTERED SHIP WAS FOUND BY ANY MARITIME ADMINISTRATION THAT PRACTICES "PORT STATE CONTROL" TO BE DEFICIENT IN MEETING INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS.

FOLLOWING THE LOSS OF A NUMBER OF BULK CARRIERS WORLDWIDE, THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANISATION AND THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CLASSIFICATION SOCIETIES HAVE DEVELOPED NEW SURVEY AND MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCH SHIPS.

MRS BOSHER SAID THESE STANDARDS HAD BEEN APPLIED TO HONG KONG REGISTERED SHIPS SINCE APRIL THIS YEAR.

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NO VILLAGE OF SIGNIFICANT POPULATION DENIED ELECTRICITY

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AS FAR AS THE GOVERNMENT RECORDS SHOW, NO VILLAGE OF ANY SIGNIFICANT POPULATION IN HONG KONG IS NOW WITHOUT AN ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ELIZABETH BOSHER, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

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IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MRS PEGGY LAM, MRS BOSHER SAID THE ELECTRICITY COMPANIES HAD A STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITY TO SUPPLY ELECTRICITY TO ANY PARTY WHO APPLIED TO BE CONNECTED TO THE SUPPLY, UNLESS THERE WERE GOOD REASONS FOR NOT DOING SO.

SHE SAID IF ANY VILLAGER CONSIDERED THAT HIS VILLAGE SHOULD HAVE SUCH A SUPPLY IN SPITE OF ITS REMOTENESS OR SMALL POPULATION, HE SHOULD CONTACT THE ELECTRICITY COMPANY DIRECT REQUESTING THE CONNECTION OF A SUPPLY.

"AN APPLICANT AGGRIEVED BY REFUSAL OF THE RELEVANT ELECTRICITY COMPANY TO SUPPLY ELECTRICITY MAY APPEAL TO THE DIRECTOR OF ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES.

"HE MAY ALSO SEEK THE ASSISTANCE OF HIS LOCAL DISTRICT OFFICE IF HE ENCOUNTERS ANY DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING A SUPPLY," MRS BOSHER SAID.

SHE NOTED THAT NO INSTANCES OF SUCH REFUSALS OR APPEALS HAD BEEN RECORDED IN RECENT YEARS.

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MORE CONTROLS ON AIR POLLUTION

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A BILL THAT SEEKS TO CONTROL NEW AIR POLLUTION PROBLEMS SUCH AS THE EMISSION OF ASBESTOS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF AIR POLLUTION CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, SAID THE PROPOSED CONTROLS REQUIRE THE OWNERS OF PREMISES WHO INTEND TO CARRY OUT ANY ASBESTOS RELATED WORK TO APPOINT QUALIFIED REGISTERED CONSULTANTS, CONTRACTORS, SUPERVISORS AND LABORATORIES FOR THE PURPOSE.

HE SAID ALL BUILDINGS ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC OR USED FOR CERTAIN SENSITIVE PURPOSES WOULD BE SURVEYED FOR ASBESTOS IN PHASES, WITH THE FIRST PHASE COVERING SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS.

HE ADDED THAT THE SALE AND IMPORT FOR USE IN HONG KONG OF TWO HAZARDOUS TYPES OF ASBESTOS, AMOSITE AND CROCIDOLITE, AND PRODUCTS CONTAINING THESE TWO SUBSTANCES WOULD BE BANNED.

ON 23 TYPES OF SPECIFIED PROCESSES HAVING THE POTENTIAL TO CAUSE SERIOUS AIR POLLUTION, MR EASON SAID THEY HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO LICENSING CONTROL SINCE 1987.

EXEMPTION WAS PROVIDED FOR PREMISES ALREADY IN EXISTENCE AT THAT TIME.

"PROBABLY BECAUSE OF THEIR EXEMPTION, FEW OWNERS OF EXEMPTED PREMISES HAVE SOUGHT TO UPGRADE THEIR FACILITIES," HE SAID.

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IN THE INTERESTS OF PUBLIC HEALTH, THE BILL PROPOSES TO REMOVE THE EXEMPTION FOR SUCH PREMISES.

HOWEVER, MR EASON SAID THIS WILL BE DONE IN PHASES AND IN FULL CONSULTATION WITH THE INDUSTRIES AFFECTED.

IT IS ALSO PROPOSED THAT EIGHT NEW PROCESSES CAPABLE OF CONTRIBUTING TO SERIOUS AIR POLLUTION SHOULD BE INCLUDED AS SPECIFIED PROCESSES IN THE FIRST SCHEDULE TO THE ORDINANCE.

THE BILL ALSO IMPROVES THE PROVISIONS RELATING TO GENERAL CONTROL AND THE APPEAL BOARD, AND TO REVISE THE PENALTIES UNDER THE ORDINANCE TO INCREASE THEIR DETERRENT EFFECT AND BRING THEM IN LINE WITH PENALTIES UNDER OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION.

MR EASON STRESSED THAT THE PROPOSED CONTROLS ON BOTH EXISTING AND NEW SPECIFIED PROCESSES WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN PHASES FOLLOWING CONSULTATION WITH THE INDUSTRIES INVOLVED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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CHINESE TEXTS OF LAWS APPROVED
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED THE CHINESE TEXTS OF THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES ORDINANCE AND THE SHORT TITLES OF THE LAWS OF HONG KONG.

THE TWO CHINESE TEXTS WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL TO BE DECLARED AUTHENTIC.

MOVING THE TWO RESOLUTIONS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR JAMES FINDLAY, SAID THIS WAS A SIGNIFICANT MOMENT IN THE HISTORY OF LEGISLATION IN HONG KONG.

"WE MAY EXPECT TO SEE, IN THE NEAR FUTURE, THE FIRST AUTHENTIC CHINESE TEXT OF AN ORDINANCE IN OUR STATUTE BOOK PREPARED UNDER SECTION 4B OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE, AND HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF A COMPLETE LIST OF SHORT TITLES OF OUR ORDINANCES IN CHINESE," HE SAID.

MR FINDLAY SAID HE WAS DELIGHTED FOR ALL THOSE WHO HAD TOILED SO HARD AND SO LONG THAT THEY WERE TO SEE SOME CONCRETE RESULTS OF THEIR LABOURS.

"THEY ARE ENTITLED TO FEEL PROUD THAT THEY HAVE PLAYED SUCH A VALUABLE PART IN ATTAINING THE GOAL OF MAKING HONG KONG'S WRITTEN LAWS MORE ACCESSIBLE TO THE VAST MAJORITY OF OUR POPULATION.

"IT DOES NOT REQUIRE ANY ARGUMENT TO CONVINCING THIS COUNCIL THAT THE TASK OF PREPARING AN AUTHENTIC CHINESE TEXT OF AN EXISTING PIECE OF LEGISLATION IS AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT ONE.

"THIS IS ESPECIALLY SO WITH LEGISLATION ENACTED MANY YEARS AGO IN STYLE AND WORDING QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THAT ENACTED TODAY. THE OPPORTUNITY OF ADJUSTING THE LANGUAGE OF THE CHINESE AND ENGLISH VERSIONS OF A NEW LAW DOES NOT EXIST HERE.

"THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACHIEVEMENTS IN THIS AREA SO FAR HAVE WROUGHT MINOR MIRACLES, AND I SAY THIS BOLDLY IN SPITE OF THE CRITICISMS OF SOME WHO SHOULD KNOW BETTER," SAID MR FINDLAY.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO DR DANIEL TSE AND HIS COLLEAGUES ON THE BILINGUAL LAWS ADVISORY COMMITTEE, MR FINDLAY SAID 50 ORDINANCES COMPRISING 1,400 PAGES OF LEGISLATION HAD ALREADY BEEN EXAMINED BY THIS COMMITTEE.

HE POINTED OUT THAT CHAPTER 1, THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES ORDINANCE, WAS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT TO TRANSLATE IN VIEW OF ITS TECHNICAL AND CONCEPTUAL NATURE.

THE BILINGUAL LAWS ADVISORY COMMITTEE WAS NOW OPERATING WITH TWO SEPARATE SUB-COMMITTEES. A THIRD SUB-COMMITTEE WOULD BE FORMED LATER THIS YEAR IN ORDER TO FURTHER ACCELERATE ITS PROGRESS.

THE 50 ORDINANCES SO FAR EXAMINED BY THE BILINGUAL LAWS ADVISORY COMMITTEE RELATED MAINLY TO LEGISLATION THAT WAS LIKELY TO BE OF USE TO LARGE SECTIONS OF THE PUBLIC AND WHICH WAS MOST FREQUENTLY USED IN THE LOWER COURTS.

IN ADDITION TO THE ORDINANCES ALREADY EXAMINED BY THE BILINGUAL LAWS ADVISORY COMMITTEE, OFFICERS IN THE LAW DRAFTING DIVISION OF THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT WERE HARD AT WORK ON THE CHINESE TEXTS OF ANOTHER 120 ORDINANCES COMPRISING 4,100 PAGES. THESE WERE IN VARIOUS STAGES OF COMPLETION.

IN JULY LAST YEAR, THE LAW DRAFTING DIVISION STARTED A SIX-MONTH PILOT SCHEME FOR PART-TIME LAW TRANSLATION.

UNDER THIS SCHEME, GOVERNMENT CHINESE LANGUAGE OFFICERS WERE INVITED TO ACCEPT ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE TRANSLATION OF THE LESS COMPLEX ORDINANCES OUTSIDE THEIR OFFICE HOURS.

THEIR WORK WAS VETTED BY THE BILINGUAL LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL AND LAW TRANSLATION OFFICERS IN THE LAW DRAFTING DIVISION.

WORK OF A GOOD STANDARD AT A REASONABLE SPEED HAD BEEN PRODUCED.

IT HAD BEEN DECIDED TO CONTINUE WITH THIS PART-TIME LAW TRANSLATION PROJECT ON A LONG-TERM BASIS AND ABOUT 70 CHINESE LANGUAGE OFFICERS HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED AS SUITABLE TO DO THE WORK.

THIS HAD ADDED GREAT IMPETUS TO THE LAW TRANSLATION PROGRAMME.

IT WAS BELIEVED THAT WITH THIS ADDITIONAL HELP, AN ANNUAL PRODUCTION OF ABOUT 4,500 PAGES OF DRAFT CHINESE TEXTS COULD BE ACHIEVED.

THE TARGET WAS TO HAVE FINAL CHINESE DRAFTS OF ALL EXISTING LEGISLATIONS EXAMINED BY THE BILINGUAL LAWS ADVISORY COMMITTEE BY THE END OF 1995.

MR FINDLAY TOLD THE COUNCIL: "IT WOULD NOT BE RIGHT TO END THIS SPEECH WITHOUT A SPECIAL MENTION OF MR ERIC AU WHO DIED ON MARCH 30, 1992. ERIC WAS THE PRINCIPAL CROWN COUNSEL IN CHARGE OF THE BILINGUAL LAWS PROJECT.

"IT WAS VERY MUCH HIS CHILD, WHICH HE WAS CAREFULLY NURTURING TO MATURITY. HE WILL NOT SEE IT FULLY GROWN, BUT IT WILL STAND AS A PROUD MONUMENT TO HIS MEMORY AND ACHIEVEMENT".

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NEW MEANS TEST IN CRIMINAL LEGAL AID CASES
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A MOTION TO GIVE EFFECT TO A NEW MEANS TEST CALLED THE "FINANCIAL CAPACITY" APPROACH, IN CRIMINAL LEGAL AID CASES, WAS PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE MOTION, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, SAID THE GOVERNMENT AIMED TO IMPLEMENT THE "FINANCIAL CAPACITY" APPROACH WITH EFFECT FROM JULY 1 THIS YEAR.

TO THIS END, IT WAS NECESSARY TO AMEND THE SUBSIDIARY REGULATIONS APPLYING TO CIVIL CASES AND THE RULES MADE BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE APPLYING TO CRIMINAL CASES.

HE SAID THE AMENDMENTS TO THE LEGAL AID IN CRIMINAL CASES RULES MADE BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE WAS SUBMITTED TO THE LEGCO FOR APPROVAL.

"THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS WILL BRING ABOUT SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE EXISTING CRIMINAL LEGAL AID SYSTEM AND ARE WORTHY OF THE SUPPORT OF THIS COUNCIL," HE SAID.

UNDER THE EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS, AN APPLICANT FOR LEGAL AID IS REQUIRED TO SATISFY THE FINANCIAL LIMITS ON BOTH DISPOSABLE MONTHLY INCOME AND DISPOSABLE CAPITAL.

THIS APPROACH DISADVANTAGES APPLICANTS WHOSE FINANCIAL RESOURCES CONSIST MAINLY OF EITHER INCOME OR CAPITAL.

MOREOVER, THE FINANCIAL LIMITS WHICH WERE LAST REVISED IN 1986 LAG BEHIND INCREASES IN EARNINGS OVER THE YEARS AND NEED TO BE UPDATED.

THE "FINANCIAL CAPACITY" APPROACH ASSESSES AN APPLICANT'S MEANS ON THE BASIS OF HIS AGGREGATE "FINANCIAL RESOURCES", INCLUDING DISPOSABLE ANNUAL INCOME AND DISPOSABLE CAPITAL.

MORE APPLICANTS WILL BECOME FINANCIALLY ELIGIBLE FOR LEGAL AID UNDER THIS APPROACH.

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BILL TO GIVE ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN LEGAL RIGHTS

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THE PARENT AND CHILD BILL 1992 INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SOUGHT TO AMEND THE PRESENT LAW THAT PLACED AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD AT A LEGAL DISADVANTAGE.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL IN THE COUNCIL, THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR JAMES FINDLAY, SAID THE DISADVANTAGE AROSE FROM THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS BIRTH, CIRCUMSTANCES FOR WHICH THE CHILD HIMSELF COULD CLEARLY HAVE NO RESPONSIBILITY.

"ARTICLE 20(1) OF THE HONG KONG BILL OF RIGHTS ORDINANCE 1991, PROVIDES THAT EVERY CHILD IS ENTITLED TO PROTECTION AS A MINOR, WITHOUT ANY DISCRIMINATION AS TO HIS BIRTH.

"ARTICLE 22 PROVIDES THAT ALL PERSONS ARE ENTITLED TO THE EQUAL PROTECTION OF THE LAW WITHOUT ANY DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUND OF BIRTH.

"IT IS CLEAR THAT THE EXISTING LAW, IN THIS AREA, IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE BILL OF RIGHTS," MR FINDLAY SAID.

THE ILLEGITIMATE CHILD WAS DISADVANTAGED BY THE EXISTING LAW IN, FOR INSTANCE, SUCCESSION MATTERS.

UNLIKE A LEGITIMATE CHILD, HE COULD NOT SUCCEED TO HIS FATHER'S ESTATE ON THE FATHER'S DEATH INTESTATE.

WHERE SUPPORT WAS CONCERNED, THE RANGE OF MAINTENANCE ORDERS AVAILABLE TO THE ILLEGITIMATE CHILD WAS MORE LIMITED.

HE HAD TO APPLY TO THE COURT FOR THESE BY WAY OF A SPECIAL PROCEDURE WHICH DID NOT APPLY TO LEGITIMATE CHILDREN.

IN CUSTODY PROCEEDINGS, THE CHILD'S WELFARE WAS NORMALLY THE PARAMOUNT CONSIDERATION FOR THE COURT BUT, WHERE AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD WAS CONCERNED, THE COURT HAD TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE MOTHER'S SUPERIOR CLAIM TO CUSTODY RATHER THAN THE CHILD'S WELFARE.

THE AIM OF THIS BILL, WHICH IMPLEMENTED THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LAW REFORM COMMISSION, WAS TO ENSURE THAT AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD WOULD, SO FAR AS IS PRACTICABLE, BE TREATED BY THE LAW IN THE SAME WAY AS A LEGITIMATE CHILD.

MR FINDLAY SAID: "THE NUMBERS OF THOSE AFFECTED BY THE PRESENT LAW MAY BE SMALL BUT IT IS CLEARLY DESIRABLE THAT THE PRESENT DISCRIMINATORY ASPECTS OF THE LAW SHOULD BE RECTIFIED."

THE LAW REFORM COMMISSION FOUND STRONG PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THEIR PROPOSALS.

IN ANSWER TO ANY SUGGESTION THAT THE PRESENT LAW SERVED TO UPHOLD MORAL STANDARDS AND TO SUPPORT THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE, THE COMMISSION SAID "THE LAW SHOULD PROTECT THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE AND THAT THE FAMILY IS THE FUNDAMENTAL UNIT OF SOCIETY BUT DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE PRESENT DISCRIMINATION ACHIEVED VERY MUCH IN THAT REGARD".

AS THE COMMISSION ARGUED, WHILE A MARRIED RELATIONSHIP SHOULD IN PRINCIPLE BE MORE STABLE THAN AN UNMARRIED ONE, AND SO PROVIDE A BETTER ENVIRONMENT FOR THE CHILD, THAT WAS NOT ALWAYS THE CASE.

MANY MARRIAGES WERE NOT STABLE AND THE COMMISSION SUGGESTED THAT THERE WAS SOME STATISTICAL EVIDENCE THAT A MARRIAGE ENTERED INTO PRIMARILY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENSURING THAT AN EXPECTED CHILD WOULD NOT BE BORN ILLEGITIMATE WAS ESPECIALLY AT RISK.

THE EFFECT OF THE PRINCIPAL PROVISION OF THE BILL, SET OUT IN CLAUSE 3, WAS THAT IN ALL LEGISLATION, EXISTING AND FUTURE, AND IN ALL FUTURE DOCUMENTS, WORDS IMPLYING A FAMILY RELATIONSHIP SUCH AS "SON" OR "CHILD" WERE TO INCLUDE ILLEGITIMATE PERSONS UNLESS A CONTRARY INTENTION WAS SHOWN.

THUS IT WOULD REMAIN OPEN FOR A TESTATOR TO EXCLUDE HIS ILLEGITIMATE CHILD BY SPECIFYING IN HIS WILL THAT HE WAS TO LEAVE HIS ESTATE TO HIS "LEGITIMATE CHILDREN", BUT A BEQUEST TO "HIS CHILDREN" WOULD INCLUDE AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD.

CLAUSES 9 TO 12 OF THE BILL RELATED TO SURROGACY AND BIRTHS BROUGHT ABOUT THROUGH ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION OR OTHER SCIENTIFIC MEANS.

MR FINDLAY SAID HE WAS CONSCIOUS THAT THIS WAS AN AREA WHICH RAISED SENSITIVE AND IMPORTANT QUESTIONS OF ETHICS AND MORALITY.

"I MUST STRESS, HOWEVER, THAT THIS BILL IS NOT CONCERNED WITH WHETHER OR NOT SURROGACY AND SCIENTIFICALLY ASSISTED BIRTH IS DESIRABLE, NOR WITH CONSIDERING THE CONTROLS, IF ANY, WHICH SHOULD BE APPLIED.

"THIS BILL DEALS ONLY WITH MAKING PROVISION TO IDENTIFY THE LEGAL PARENTS WHERE SUCH BIRTHS TAKE PLACE, AND TO PROVIDE A LEGAL MECHANISM FOR PARTIES TO A SURROGACY TO APPLY TO THE COURT FOR AN ORDER AS TO THE CHILD'S PARENTAGE WHICH REFLECTS THE REALITY OF THE SURROGACY ARRANGEMENT.

"THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE ALLOWED, OR HOW THEY SHOULD BE REGULATED, ARE QUESTIONS WHICH FALL OUTSIDE THE AMBIT OF THIS BILL AND ARE CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE AS A SEPARATE EXERCISE," HE SAID.

THE DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 1992

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STATUTORY EMPLOYEES RETRAINING FUND TO BE SET UP

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A BILL INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SOUGHT TO PROVIDE RETRAINING COURSES TO HELP WORKERS WHO WERE DISPLACED AS A RESULT OF THE ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING PROCESS TO FIND ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT.

THE EMPLOYEES RETRAINING BILL 1992 ALSO SEEKS TO SET UP A STATUTORY RETRAINING FUND FINANCED BY A LEVY IMPOSED ON EMPLOYERS WHO IMPORT WORKERS TO CHANNEL ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO AUGMENT THE PROVISION OF RETRAINING FOR LOCAL WORKERS.

IT PROPOSES TO ESTABLISH AN EMPLOYEES RETRAINING BOARD TO ADMINISTER THE FUND.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, SAID: "THE BOARD SHALL BE A TRIPARTITE BODY CONSISTING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF EMPLOYERS, EMPLOYEES AND THE GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS EXPERTS IN THE FIELD OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING OR MANPOWER PLANNING.

"APART FROM MANAGING THE EMPLOYEES RETRAINING FUND, THE BOARD SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR CONSIDERING THE PROVISION OF RETRAINING COURSES DESIGNED FOR THE BENEFIT OF LOCAL EMPLOYEES AND DETERMINING THE LEVEL OF RETRAINING ALLOWANCE TO BE PAID TO THOSE EMPLOYEES AS TRAINEES."

THE BILL FURTHER PROVIDES FOR TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS WHICH ENSURE THAT THE LEVY COLLECTED UNDER THE 1992 GENERAL IMPORTATION SCHEME COULD BE CHANNELLED DIRECTLY TO THE STATUTORY FUND AND THAT THE FUNDS ADVANCED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO FINANCE THE PILOT RETRAINING COURSES BEFORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BOARD COULD BE RECOVERED.

PENDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATUTORY FUND, MR CHAN SAID, A PROVISIONAL RETRAINING FUND BOARD WAS ESTABLISHED IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR TO CONSIDER AND PLAN SUITABLE RETRAINING COURSES.

AN ADVANCE OF \$50 MILLION HAS BEEN MADE AVAILABLE BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE PURPOSE.

TEN NEW PILOT RETRAINING COURSES WILL START EARLY NEXT MONTH.

UPON PASSAGE OF THE BILL, THE EMPLOYEES RETRAINING BOARD WOULD HAVE AN ESTIMATED INCOME OF AT LEAST \$120 MILLION IN THE FOLLOWING 12 MONTHS.

MORE RETRAINING COURSES ARE EXPECTED TO BE ORGANISED AS A RESULT, HE ADDED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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RIGHTS FOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DEPARTMENT LAWYERS

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THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DEPARTMENT (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL 1992 WOULD PLACE LAWYERS IN THE DEPARTMENT IN THE SAME POSITION, IN RELATION TO CERTAIN RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES UNDER SOME ORDINANCES, AS OTHER LAWYERS IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JAMES FINDLAY, SAID THESE RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES INCLUDED THE EXEMPTION FROM JURY SERVICE, THE COUNTING OF SERVICE TOWARDS ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ADMISSION AS A SOLICITOR AND FOR JUDICIAL APPOINTMENT, AND THE ABILITY TO TAKE ON TRAINEE SOLICITORS.

THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DEPARTMENT CAME INTO BEING ON JULY 2, 1990, SERVING AS A FOCAL POINT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HONG KONG'S INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY REGIME.

MR FINDLAY POINTED OUT THAT THE WORK PERFORMED BY LAWYERS IN THE DEPARTMENT WAS SIMILAR TO THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY WORK FORMERLY CARRIED OUT BY LAWYERS IN THE REGISTRAR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT.

THE BILL ALSO CLASSIFIED MONEY HANDLED BY THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AS PUBLIC MONEY FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE JURISDICTION OF THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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FEE FOR VERBATIM RECORD OF PHARMACISTS' PROCEEDINGS REVISED

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A RECENT COSTING EXERCISE REVEALS THAT THE ACTUAL COST OF PRODUCING A VERBATIM RECORD OF PHARMACISTS' DISCIPLINARY INQUIRY PROCEEDINGS FOR EACH FOLIO OF 72 WORDS IS \$73, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

AT PRESENT, THE FEE FOR EACH FOLIO OF 72 WORDS IS 75 CENTS.

MOVING A MOTION ON THE PHARMACISTS (DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE) (AMENDMENT) REGULATION 1992 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MRS WONG SAID THE PRESENT FEE LEVEL WAS SET ABOUT TWO DECADES AGO.

"IT IS SERIOUSLY OUT OF STEP WITH THE ACTUAL COST OF THE SERVICE AND IS THUS CONTRARY TO THE GOVERNMENT POLICY OF RECOVERING THE COST OF SERVICES RENDERED," SHE SAID.

THE PHARMACY AND POISONS BOARD HAS AGREED TO AMEND THE RELEVANT REGULATION TO RECOVER THE FULL COST OF THE SERVICE RENDERED.

SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE BOARD MAY MAKE REGULATIONS PRESCRIBING THIS FEE.

"THIS PROPOSED REVISION IS IN LINE WITH THAT OF SIMILAR FEES CONCERNING DOCTORS, DENTISTS, MIDWIVES AND NURSES RECENTLY EFFECTED BY AMENDMENT TO OTHER SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION MADE BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL," MRS WONG SAID.

UNDER THE PHARMACY AND POISONS ORDINANCE, A DISCIPLINARY BOARD MAY BE APPOINTED BY THE PHARMACY AND POISONS BOARD TO CONDUCT DISCIPLINARY INQUIRIES AGAINST PHARMACISTS.

ANY PARTY MAY, AFTER THE INQUIRY, OBTAIN A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS.

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MOTION ON DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT PASSED

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AN AMENDED MOTION PROPOSED BY THE HON NGAI SHIU-KIT ON DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS PASSED BY THE COUNCIL AFTER A THREE-HOUR DEBATE YESTERDAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE ORIGINAL MOTION MOVED BY THE HON J. D. MCGREGOR WAS DEFEATED. A TOTAL OF 27 MEMBERS SPOKE IN THE DEBATE. THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR. PETER LAI, REPLIED FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

THIRTEEN MEMBERS DEBATED A MOTION ON PRIVATE BUILDINGS' REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSED BY THE HON JAMES TO. VOTING WAS DEFERRED TO THE NEXT SITTING ON JULY 1.

ALSO PASSED WERE FOUR OTHER MOTIONS - ONE WAS MOVED BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, UNDER THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ORDINANCE; TWO WERE MOVED BY THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JAMES FINDLAY, UNDER THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES ORDINANCE AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE; THE FOURTH BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, UNDER THE PHARMACY AND POISONS ORDINANCE.

AT THE MEETING, NINE BILLS WERE PASSED BY THE COUNCIL.

OF THEM, CRIMES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1991, ACETYLATED SUBSTANCES (CONTROL) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992, GOVERNMENT FLYING SERVICE BILL AND LAND REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 WERE PASSED WITHOUT AMENDMENTS.

INSURANCE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, INSURANCE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1991, DANGEROUS DRUGS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1992, POLICE FORCE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 AND HONG KONG ACADEMY OF MEDICINE BILL WERE PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS.

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GOVERNOR CONFIDENT OF HK'S ECONOMIC STRENGTH AND GROWTH POTENTIAL

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THE GOVERNOR, LORD WILSON, BELIEVES THAT 1997 DOES NOT PRESENT HONG KONG WITH INSUPERABLE CHALLENGES.

ADDRESSING THE 75TH LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION AT THE HONG KONG COLISEUM TODAY (WEDNESDAY), LORD WILSON SAID: "MY CONFIDENCE IS BASED TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT ON THE STRENGTH OF OUR ECONOMY AND ITS POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER GROWTH."

HE SAID OVERALL INVESTMENT HERE HAD CONTINUED TO INCREASE, REACHING 10% IN REAL TERMS IN 1991.

HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC GROWTH WAS EXPECTED TO RISE FROM 3% IN 1990 TO 5% THIS YEAR.

THE GDP PER CAPITA WOULD EXCEED US\$16,000 PER YEAR IN 1992 AND WOULD RANK AMONG THE HIGHEST IN THE REGION.

NOTING THAT HONG KONG HAD BEEN DESCRIBED AS A "BARREN ROCK WITH HARDLY A HOUSE UPON IT" 150 YEARS AGO, THE GOVERNOR SAID HONG KONG AT PRESENT WAS A LEADING INTERNATIONAL TRADING AND FINANCIAL CENTRE.

"UNDERPINNING HONG KONG'S SUCCESS IS THE RESILIENCE, INGENUITY AND CAPACITY FOR HARD WORK OF ITS PEOPLE," HE SAID.

"THEIR WISH TO MAKE A SUCCESS OF THEIR OWN LIVES AND TO MAKE HONG KONG A BETTER PLACE FOR THEIR CHILDREN AND THEIR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN HAS DRIVEN THEM FORWARD.

"AS A RESULT OF THIS DYNAMIC CAPITALIST ENVIRONMENT, HONG KONG CONTINUES TO THRIVE ECONOMICALLY," HE ADDED.

LORD WILSON POINTED OUT THAT MUCH OF HONG KONG'S SUCCESS IN RECENT YEARS COULD BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE MASSIVE GROWTH IN HONG KONG'S TRADE WITH CHINA.

"BELIEVE IT OR NOT, WE ARE NOW EACH OTHERS' LARGEST TRADING PARTNER. MANY HONG KONG BUSINESSMEN HAVE MOVED THEIR MANUFACTURING BASE TO THE LOW COST ENVIRONMENT OF GUANGDONG PROVINCE.

"HONG KONG WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE GUANGDONG AND THE REST OF CHINA WITH THE CAPITAL, SERVICES AND TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW IT NEEDS TO DRIVE ITS BURGEONING ECONOMY.

"OUR OWN ECONOMY TOO WILL BENEFIT AS A RESULT," THE GOVERNOR SAID.

FOR FEAR THAT PEOPLE WOULD THINK THAT HONG KONG'S ENERGY AND DYNAMISM WERE POURED EXCLUSIVELY INTO BUSINESS AND TRADE, LORD WILSON POINTED OUT THAT THE TERRITORY WAS ALSO A COMMUNITY WHICH CARED.

CITING EXAMPLES, THE GOVERNOR SAID OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, 6,300 EXTRA BEDS HAD BEEN PROVIDED IN HOSPITALS. IN THE SAME PERIOD, THE HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY HAD BUILT ABOUT 120 NEW FLATS EVERY DAY AND BY THE END OF THIS DECADE, IT SHOULD HAVE BUILT 400,000 MORE. MOREOVER, HONG KONG WAS DOUBLING THE NUMBER OF TERTIARY LEVEL FIRST-YEAR AND FIRST-DEGREE PLACES FROM JUST OVER 7,000 IN 1990 TO 14,500 PLACES IN 1995.

BRINGING THIS CARING-CLOSER TO THE LIONS' HEART, DISTRICT 303 HAD MADE A REAL DIFFERENCE TO PEOPLE'S LIVES THROUGH ITS IMAGINATIVE PROJECTS, THE GOVERNOR SAID.

THESE INCLUDED :

- * A NATURE EDUCATION CENTRE TO HELP PEOPLE OF ALL AGES APPRECIATE THEIR ENVIRONMENT AND LEARN ABOUT LOCAL AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES.
- * A KIDNEY EDUCATION CENTRE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON KIDNEY-RELATED DISEASES FOR DOCTORS, KIDNEY PATIENTS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC; AND
- * THE RECENTLY INTRODUCED SECONDARY SCHOOL ADOPTION SCHEME, TO PUT 450 OF HONG KONG'S SCHOOLS IN TOUCH WITH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS THROUGH INTERNATIONAL LIONS CLUBS FOR SHARING CULTURAL EXCHANGES.

THE GOVERNOR FELT HONOURED THAT HONG KONG HAD BEEN CHOSEN TO HOST THIS HISTORIC CONVENTION AND BELIEVED THAT THEY COULD NOT HAVE MADE A BETTER CHOICE. WITH OVER 20,000 DELEGATES, THE FUNCTION WAS THE LARGEST CONVENTION EVER HELD IN HONG KONG, THE GOVERNOR SAID.

THE GOVERNOR CONGRATULATED LIONS CLUBS DISTRICT 303 AND THE HONG KONG TOURIST ASSOCIATION ON THEIR EXCELLENT WORK IN ORGANISING THE CONVENTION.

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HURD'S STATEMENT ON HK

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A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT RECENT PRESS REPORTS ABOUT A STATEMENT MADE BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS, MR DOUGLAS HURD, IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON JUNE 3 HAVE BEEN INACCURATE. MR HURD'S STATEMENT CONCERNED APPOINTMENTS TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. IN ORDER TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT, THE GOVERNMENT HAS TODAY ISSUED THE TRANSCRIPT OF MR HURD'S STATEMENT.

MR RENTON: LIKE MANY HON MEMBERS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE HOUSE, I WELCOME THE CHOICE OF CHRIS PATTEN AS GOVERNOR. HE IS A FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE OF HON MEMBERS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE HOUSE AND I BELIEVE THAT HE WILL BE AN OUTSTANDING GOVERNOR. FURTHER TO THE ANSWER THAT MY RIGHT HON FRIEND THE FOREIGN SECRETARY HAS JUST GIVEN, CAN HE TELL THE HOUSE A LITTLE MORE ABOUT WHAT DECISIONS HE EXPECTS TO BE TAKEN REGARDING, FOR EXAMPLE, THE FUTURE COMPOSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND THE NUMBER OF ELECTED MEMBERS ON THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN THE RUN-UP TO 1997? OBVIOUSLY, THOSE MATTERS ARE OF CONTINUING AND GREAT INTEREST TO HONG KONG.

/MR HURD

MR HURD: I DO NOT THINK THAT THE NEW GOVERNOR WILL WANT TO RUSH TO CONCLUSIONS ON THESE MATTERS AS SOON AS HE TAKES OVER. HE WOULD BE WISE TO WANT - I AM SURE THAT HE WILL WANT - TO CONSULT WIDELY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL, TO WEIGHT UP ALL THE FACTORS AND THEN TO PUT HIS ADVICE TO ME. THAT WILL TAKE TIME. I WOULD NOT EXPECT CONCLUSIONS ON THE KIND OF MATTERS THAT MY RIGHT HON FRIEND MENTIONED TO EMERGE UNTIL THE AUTUMN AT THE EARLIEST.

ON THE SPECIFIC POINT CONCERNING THE 1995 LEGCO ELECTIONS, WE HAVE SAID THAT WE SHALL BE DISCUSSING THOSE ELECTIONS WITH THE CHINESE SIDE WITH THE AIM OF ENSURING AS MUCH CONTINUITY AS POSSIBLE. DECISIONS ON ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS WILL NEED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF SUCH DISCUSSIONS: THEY ARE, I THINK, SOME WAY OFF.

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OPENING HOURS AT BORDER EXTENDED

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HONG KONG AND THE SHENZHEN AUTHORITIES HAVE AGREED TO EXTEND THE OPENING HOURS AT BORDER CROSSINGS TO FACILITATE THE GROWING AMOUNT OF CROSS-BORDER TRAFFIC.

THE AGREEMENT WAS REACHED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) FOLLOWING TALKS IN SHENZHEN BETWEEN THE POLITICAL ADVISER, MR WILLIAM EHRMAN, AND THE VICE MAYOR OF SHENZHEN, MR ZHANG HONGYI.

UNDER THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS, WHICH WILL TAKE EFFECT FROM JULY 1, THE OPENING HOURS AT LO WU WILL BE FROM 7 AM TO 11 PM. FOR MAN KAM TO, THE OPENING HOURS WILL BE FROM 7 AM TO 10 PM FOR GOODS VEHICLES AND 7 AM TO 8 PM FOR PASSENGER VEHICLES.

THE OPENING HOURS AT SHA TAU KOK WILL BE FROM 7 AM TO 6 PM, AND THE OPENING HOURS FOR GOODS AND PASSENGER VEHICLES AT LOK MA CHAU WILL BE FROM 7 AM TO 8 PM.

FOR GOODS VEHICLES, THE OPENING HOUR AT LOK MA CHAU WILL BE FURTHER EXTENDED TO 7 AM - 10 PM FROM DECEMBER 1.

THE TWO SIDES AGREED TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN CO-OPERATION ON ANTI-SMUGGLING AND ANTI-ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION WORK.

THE TWO SIDES ALSO AGREED THAT THE SHENZHEN RIVER WORKING GROUP SHOULD COMMENCE ITS WORK.

THE WORKING GROUP WILL CONCENTRATE ON THREE AREAS: THE FLOOD CONTROL ENGINEERING WORKS, REVIEWING THE COST OF THE PROJECT, AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.

THE TWO SIDES EXCHANGED VIEWS ON HOW TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC LINKS AND AGREED THAT TRADE ORGANISATIONS SUCH AS THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO INCREASE THEIR ECONOMIC LINKS WITH SHENZHEN.

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HK AND NORWAY SIGN TEXTILE AGREEMENT

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REPRESENTATIVES OF HONG KONG AND NORWAY GOVERNMENTS SIGNED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) A NEW 18-MONTH AGREEMENT THAT WILL GIVE CERTAIN HONG KONG TEXTILE AND CLOTHING PRODUCTS BETTER ACCESS TO THE NORWEGIAN MARKET.

THE NEW AGREEMENT, WHICH WILL COME INTO FORCE ON JULY 1 ON EXPIRY OF THE CURRENT AGREEMENT, WAS SIGNED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR T. H. CHAU, AND THE NORWEGIAN CONSUL-GENERAL, MR BJARNE E. SOLHEIM.

THE AGREEMENT REDUCES THE NUMBER OF CATEGORIES SUBJECT TO EXPORT QUOTA FROM THE EXISTING FIVE TO THREE. A NEW CATEGORY WILL BE INCLUDED FOR SURVEILLANCE PURPOSE.

EXISTING QUOTA CATEGORIES OF KNITTED UNDERGARMENTS (CATEGORY 4) AND MEN'S AND BOYS' WOVEN SHIRTS (CATEGORY 5) WILL BE REMOVED.

THE REMAINING CATEGORIES SUBJECT TO EXPORT QUOTAS INCLUDE WOVEN JACKETS (CAT. 1), WOVEN TROUSERS (CAT. 2), AND BED LINEN (CAT. 7).

UNDER THE NEW AGREEMENT, HONG KONG WILL ALSO PROVIDE NORWAY WITH QUARTERLY EXPORT LICENSING STATISTICS ON THE EXPORTS OF FISHING NETS (CATEGORY 70).

"THE NEW AGREEMENT, PROVIDING FOR THE REMOVAL OF QUOTAS ON TWO CATEGORIES AND IMPROVED FLEXIBILITY, IS AN IMPROVEMENT OVER THE EXISTING AGREEMENT," MR CHAU SAID.

CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN HONG KONG AND NORWAY ON THE NEW AGREEMENT WERE HELD IN HONG KONG FROM MARCH 24 TO 26.

DETAILS OF THE NEW HONG KONG/NORWAY TEXTILE AGREEMENT AND THE RELATED QUOTA ALLOCATION AND CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN ANNOUNCED IN THE TRADE DEPARTMENT'S NOTICES TO EXPORTERS SERIES 3 NUMBERS 30/92 AND 55/92.

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SURVEY OF EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL STARTS

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THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT HAS STARTED A SURVEY IN MAJOR SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY TO COLLECT INFORMATION ON EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL IN RESPECT OF THE SECOND QUARTER OF THIS YEAR.

THE QUARTERLY SURVEY SERVES TO PROVIDE SHORT-TERM ECONOMIC INDICATORS AND INFORMATION ON THE STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN THE LOCAL LABOUR MARKET.

THE JUNE 1992 ROUND OF THE SURVEY COVERS ABOUT 120,000 ESTABLISHMENTS DRAWN FROM VARIOUS SECTORS INCLUDING THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR (MINING AND QUARRYING; MANUFACTURING; ELECTRICITY AND GAS), THE DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES SECTOR (WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS) AND THE SERVICES SECTOR (TRANSPORT, STORAGE AND COMMUNICATION; FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES; COMMUNITY, SOCIAL AND PERSONAL SERVICES).

INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER OF PERSONS ENGAGED AND EXISTING VACANCIES ON JUNE 30 THIS YEAR WILL BE SOUGHT FROM EACH SELECTED ESTABLISHMENT.

SOME 10,000 ESTABLISHMENTS ARE RANDOMLY SELECTED FROM THIS SAMPLE TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON PAYROLL IN EACH OF THE THREE MONTHS DURING THE REFERENCE PERIOD OF APRIL-JUNE 1992.

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

SHOULD RESPONDENTS FIND DIFFICULTIES IN COMPLETING THE FORMS, THEY ARE WELCOME TO CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT FOR HELP ON 582 5076.

AS FOR THOSE ESTABLISHMENTS KNOWN TO THIS DEPARTMENT DURING APRIL-JUNE 1992, THEY WILL ALSO BE ENUMERATED IN ORDER TO MAKE THE SURVEY RESULTS COMPLETE.

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

IN CASE OF ANY ENQUIRIES REGARDING THE FIELD VISITS, PLEASE CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT FOR HELP ON 582 4782.

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\$115 MILLION ROAD WORK CONTRACT FOR BETTER TRAFFIC
FLOW IN TSUEN WAN

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THE TERRITORY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AWARDED A \$115 MILLION CONTRACT FOR A PACKAGE OF ROAD WORKS TO BE CARRIED OUT TO IMPROVE THE TRAFFIC FLOW IN TSUEN WAN .

THE CONTRACT WAS SIGNED BY THE PROJECT MANAGER OF THE TSUEN WAN DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF THE DEPARTMENT, MR TANG KWOK-KEE, WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHINA STATE CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING CORPORATION, THE CONTRACTOR FOR THE PROJECT.

THE CONTRACT WILL COVER WORKS ON THE COMPLETION PHASE OF THE TEXACO ROAD/TSUEN WAN BYPASS INTERCHANGE AS WELL AS THE PHASE II IMPROVEMENTS TO TEXACO ROAD.

PRINCIPAL WORKS IN THE CONTRACT COMPRISE THE CONSTRUCTION OF A TWO-WAY VIADUCT OVER TSUEN TSING INTERCHANGE TO CONNECT TEXACO ROAD DIRECT WITH TSING TSUEN ROAD AND AN ELEVATED SINGLE LANE SLIP ROAD TO CONNECT THE PROPOSED VIADUCT WITH TSUEN WAN ROAD.

OTHER WORKS INCLUDE THE PROVISION OF AT-GRADE SLIP ROADS AND RECONSTRUCTION OF THE EXISTING CARRIAGEWAY IN THE INTERCHANGE AREA.

/THE CONSTRUCTION

THE CONSTRUCTION IS SCHEDULED TO START NEXT WEEK AND WILL BE COMPLETED IN 1994.

UPON COMPLETION OF THE CONTRACT, THE TRAFFIC CONDITION AT TSUEN TSING INTERCHANGE WILL BE EASED CONSIDERABLY. IN PARTICULAR, THE TRAFFIC BETWEEN NORTH TSING YI AND TSUEN WAN IS EXPECTED TO BE GREATLY IMPROVED.

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RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL/IBM PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

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THE RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL (RGC) AND IBM CHINA/HONG KONG CORPORATION (IBM) TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ANNOUNCED THE INAUGURATION OF AN RGC/IBM PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME INVOLVING A DONATION BY IBM OF COMPUTER EQUIPMENT WORTH \$1 MILLION OVER A FOUR-YEAR PERIOD.

UNDER THE TERMS OF THIS PROGRAMME, FIVE OF THE TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS FUNDED BY THE UNIVERSITY & POLYTECHNIC GRANTS COMMITTEE (UPGC) WILL EACH RECEIVE IBM-SPONSORED EQUIPMENT WORTH \$200,000 FOR USE IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH.

IN ADDITION TO PROVIDING THE HARDWARE, IBM WILL ALSO PROVIDE, FREE OF CHARGE, CONSULTANCY FOR INITIAL EQUIPMENT SET-UP AS WELL AS MAINTENANCE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT DURING THE FOUR-YEAR CONTRACT PERIOD.

THE FIVE INSTITUTIONS SELECTED BY THE RGC TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROGRAMME ARE THE CITY POLYTECHNIC OF HONG KONG, HONG KONG BAPTIST COLLEGE, HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC, THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG AND THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG.

AT A CEREMONY THIS AFTERNOON, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FIVE INSTITUTIONS SIGNED INITIAL AGREEMENTS WITH IBM CONFIRMING THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME.

DETAILED ARRANGEMENTS REGARDING THE SCHEDULE OF RESEARCH PROJECTS TO BE SUPPORTED, RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND TYPES OF EQUIPMENT TO BE SUPPLIED WILL BE WORKED OUT OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS BETWEEN IBM AND THE INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTIONS.

THE TYPE OF MACHINES TO BE SPONSORED WILL DEPEND ON THE NEEDS OF EACH RESEARCH PROJECT.

RESEARCH PROJECTS TO BE SUPPORTED WILL FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, REHABILITATION FOR THE DISABLED AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, AMONG OTHER AREAS.

THE IBM EQUIPMENT USED WILL BE DONATED TO THE INSTITUTIONS CONCERNED AT THE END OF THE FOUR-YEAR CONTRACT PERIOD.

ANY INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS RELATING TO THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECTS WILL BELONG TO THE INSTITUTIONS.

/SPEAKING AFTER

SPEAKING AFTER THE INITIAL CONTRACT SIGNING CEREMONY THIS AFTERNOON, CHAIRMAN OF THE RGC, PROFESSOR DAVID TODD, SAID: "I WELCOME THIS GENEROUS DONATION FROM IBM IN SUPPORT OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH."

"I AM DELIGHTED THAT THE RGC HAS BEEN ABLE TO FACILITATE FURTHER COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND ACADEMIA AND THEREBY SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN THE UPGC-FUNDED INSTITUTIONS," HE ADDED.

COMMENTING ON THE PROGRAMME, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF IBM CHINA/HONG KONG CORPORATION, ROBERT SAVAGE, SAID: "IBM IS PLEASED TO TEAM UP WITH THE RGC AND THE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN THIS INNOVATIVE PROGRAMME."

"WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT, WITH IBM TECHNOLOGY, WE SHALL BE ABLE TO EXPLORE FURTHER INTO AREAS THAT ONE WAY OR ANOTHER AFFECT ALL OF US IN OUR DAILY LIVES," HE SAID.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE INSTITUTIONS SAID: "WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR IBM'S GENEROUS SPONSORSHIP AND THE RGC'S CONTINUING SUPPORT. THE RGC/IBM PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME PROVIDES A MOST WELCOMED BOOST TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE."

THE INSTITUTIONS WILL PROVIDE ANNUAL REPORTS TO THE RGC AND IBM ON THE APPLICATION OF THE SPONSORED EQUIPMENT AND THE RESEARCH PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME.

THE RGC FUNCTIONS AS A SEMI-AUTONOMOUS ADVISORY BODY WITHIN THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF, AND WORKS IN CLOSE PARTNERSHIP WITH, THE UPGC.

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NEW POST OFFICE OPENS IN TSUEN WAN

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THE TSUEN WAN WEST POST OFFICE, A NEW BRANCH POST OFFICE AT BAYVIEW GARDEN, 633 CASTLE PEAK ROAD, TSUEN WAN, OPENED FOR BUSINESS TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE POST OFFICE PROVIDES GENERAL COUNTER SERVICES. THE TELEPHONE NUMBER IS 417 0467.

THE BUSINESS HOURS ARE:

MONDAY TO FRIDAY : 9.30 AM TO 1 PM
2 PM TO 5 PM

SATURDAY : 9.30 AM TO 1 PM

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL, MR MICHELANGELO PAGLIARI; THE CHAIRMAN OF THE TSUEN WAN DISTRICT BOARD, MR CHAU HOW-CHEN; AND THE TSUEN WAN DISTRICT OFFICER, MR RAYMOND YOUNG, OFFICIATED AT AN OPENING CEREMONY THIS MORNING.

THIS BRINGS TO 119 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF BRANCH POST OFFICES IN HONG KONG.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 1992

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FINANCE COMMITTEE TO MEET ON FRIDAY

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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WILL HOLD A MEETING AT 2.30 PM ON FRIDAY (JUNE 26) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO OBSERVE THE COMMITTEE'S PROCEEDINGS FROM THE CHAMBER'S PUBLIC GALLERIES. THEY MAY MAKE RESERVATIONS BY CALLING 869 9492.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

THE COMMITTEE'S PAPERS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR ADVANCE READING FROM 4 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT THE OMELCO PRESS ROOM. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CONTENT OF THE PAPERS WILL BE EMBARGOED FOR USE UNTIL THE MEETING ENDS.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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	\$ MILLION

OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	988
REVERSAL OF LAF	NIL
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	988
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	NIL
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	988
LAF RATE 2.50 BID/4.50 OFFER TWI 110.8 *+0.1* 24.6.92	

/HONG KONG

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS

TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1W	2.85 PCT	17M	2311	6.25	102.44	4.48
1M	2.83 PCT	20M	2402	5.50	101.12	4.84
3M	2.86 PCT	23M	2405	5.50	100.78	5.13
6M	3.23 PCT					
12M	3.94 PCT					

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 5,448MN

CLOSED 24 JUNE 1992

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