



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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FINAL STEP IN LIBERALISING CONTROL OVER PUBLICATIONS

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THE TIME IS RIGHT TO SEEK THE REPEAL OF SECTION 27 OF THE PUBLIC ORDER ORDINANCE AS A LOGICAL FINAL STEP IN THE PROCESS OF LIBERALISING CONTROL OVER PUBLICATIONS, STARTED BY THE GOVERNMENT TWO YEARS AGO.

THE SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE AND INFORMATION, THE HON PETER TSAO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE PUBLIC ORDER (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, MR TSAO SAID SECTION 27 MADE IT AN OFFENCE TO PUBLISH IN ANY LOCAL NEWSPAPER FALSE NEWS LIKELY TO CAUSE PUBLIC ALARM.

HE SAID THAT IN THE REVIEW OF SECTION 27, TWO THINGS STOOD OUT.

"THE FIRST IS THAT THE FACTORS SUPPORTING RETENTION ARE AS VALID TODAY AS THEY WERE NEARLY TWO YEARS AGO. FROM THAT POINT OF VIEW, THE CASE FOR RETENTION IS ALSO STILL STRONG.

"BUT THERE ARE ALSO NEW FACTORS TO WEIGH ON THE BALANCE," HE SAID.

"THE MOST IMPORTANT IS THAT DESPITE THE FACT THAT IT WAS OUR CLEAR INTENTION TO LIBERALISE THE LAW, THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION WAS THAT THE NEW PACKAGE WAS A MEANS FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO RESTRICT THE PRESS.

"AT A TIME WHEN PUBLIC INTEREST IN CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS IS UNPRECEDENTEDLY HIGH AND WIDESPREAD, THIS MISCONCEPTION IS MOST UNFORTUNATE."

MR TSAO SAID THAT AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND THE RETENTION OF THE RELEVANT SECTION WOULD BE LIKELY TO CAUSE CONCERN TO THE PUBLIC OUT OF PROPORTION TO THE VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY OF KEEPING IT.

"OVERSEAS THERE HAS ALSO BEEN SOME MISUNDERSTANDING," HE ADDED.

MR TSAO EXPLAINED THAT THE HISTORY OF SECTION 27 OF THE PUBLIC ORDER ORDINANCE DATED BACK TO THE EARLY 1950'S.

"IN 1951 THE GOVERNMENT AND LEGISLATURE OF THE DAY DEVISED AND ENACTED THE CONTROL OF PUBLICATIONS (CONSOLIDATION) ORDINANCE.

"TO MEET LOCAL CONDITIONS AT THE TIME, THE ORDINANCE CONTAINED A NUMBER OF FAIRLY DRACONIAN CONTROL PROVISIONS: THE POWER TO SUPPRESS NEWSPAPERS, ENTER PREMISES AND SEIZE PRINTING PRESSES, PROHIBIT IMPORTATION OF PUBLICATIONS, AND SUSPEND REGISTRATION OF NEWS AGENCIES," HE SAID.

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FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS THE COMMUNITY SURVIVED WITH THESE LAWS ON THE STATUTE BOOKS, THE PRESS IN HONG KONG FLOURISHED AND THE CITY CAME TO BE REGARDED AS A BASTION OF THE FREE PRESS WITH MANY INTERNATIONAL NEWS ORGANISATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS BASED HERE, MR TSAO NOTED.

"THROUGHOUT THAT LONG PERIOD, THE CONTROL PROVISIONS WERE USED MOST SPARINGLY -- AS INDEED THEY WERE ONLY EVER INTENDED TO BE -- AND NOT AT ALL SINCE 1967," HE SAID.

MR TSAO SAID THE ORDINANCE WAS REVIEWED AT VARIOUS TIMES AND FINALLY IN 1986 THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED THE TIME WAS RIGHT FOR A MAJOR LIBERALISATION OF THE LAW.

HE SAID IT WAS DECIDED THAT ALL THE CONTROL PROVISIONS, EXCEPT ONE, WERE TO BE REPEALED AND THE REMAINING PROVISIONS OF THE ORDINANCE WERE OVERHAULED AND TRANSFORMED INTO AN INNOCUOUS REGISTRATION OF LOCAL NEWSPAPERS ORDINANCE.

"THERE WAS ONE CONTROL PROVISION WHICH WE DID NOT FEEL WE COULD DISPENSE WITH, AT LEAST NOT IMMEDIATELY," MR TSAO SAID.

HE SAID IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE PROVISION WHICH DEALT WITH PUBLISHING FALSE NEWS WOULD BE KEPT AND TRANSFERRED TO THE PUBLIC ORDER ORDINANCE BECAUSE THE RATIONALE FOR KEEPING IT WAS RELATED TO THE DESIRE TO PRESERVE THE SECURITY OF THE COMMUNITY.

MR TSAO SAID THAT TWO DISTINCT VIEWS EMERGED WHEN, ON MARCH 11, 1987 THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATED AND PASSED THE CONTROL OF PUBLICATIONS (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL AND THE PUBLIC ORDER (AMENDMENT) BILL OF 1986.

"ON THE ONE HAND WAS A GROUP WHICH SAID THAT, SINCE WE WERE REPEALING AN OUT-DATED LAW, WE SHOULD GO THE WHOLE HOG IN ONE LEAP AND ABOLISH ALL CONTROLS," HE SAID.

"THIS WAS A SINCERELY HELD VIEW AND A PERFECTLY LEGITIMATE ASPIRATION, THOUGH IT WOULD PROBABLY BE FAIR TO SAY THAT MOST OF THOSE PROPOUNDING IT WERE THINKING NOT OF THE PAST OR EVEN THE PRESENT, BUT OF THE FUTURE.

"ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE WAS ANOTHER VIEW EQUALLY SINCERELY HELD, AND JUST AS LEGITIMATE, THAT WHAT WAS PROPOSED BY GOVERNMENT IN THE TWO BILLS ALREADY CONSTITUTED AN ENORMOUS STEP FORWARD, AND THAT IT WOULD BE PRUDENT TO PAUSE AT THAT POINT BEFORE CONTEMPLATING FURTHER CHANGES," HE ADDED.

MR TSAO SAID THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF RETAINING THE FALSE NEWS PROVISION AT THAT TIME WERE CONSIDERABLE.

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"HONG KONG IS A DENSELY POPULATED CITY WHERE NEWS TRAVELS FAST. THE COMMUNITY IS VULNERABLE TO BOUTS OF ACUTE NERVOUSNESS FROM TIME TO TIME," HE SAID.

"POWERFUL REASONS INDEED, AND NOT ONES TO BE CAST LIGHTLY ASIDE.

"LOOKING BACK NOW, IN A LESS HEATED ATMOSPHERE, THOSE REASONS STILL STAND AS VALID," HE ADDED.

"IT WAS FOR THESE REASONS THAT THIS COUNCIL ENDORSED THAT APPROACH AND DECIDED TO DRAW THE LINE WHERE IT DID, AT LEAST IN THE FIRST INSTANCE," HE SAID.

MR TSAO SAID THAT HE HAD REACHED OUT TO THE MEDIA AND HAD SPOKEN TO PEOPLE AT ALL LEVELS -- OWNERS, PUBLISHERS, EDITORS, WORKING JOURNALISTS -- IN ORDER TO OBTAIN VIEWS FROM ALL PERSPECTIVES.

"THIS LIAISON HAS OF COURSE INCLUDED CONTACT WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE INDUSTRY'S MAIN UMBRELLA ORGANISATIONS INCLUDING THE HONG KONG JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION," HE SAID.

"I WAS ALSO IN TOUCH WITH THE LEGAL PROFESSION AND RECEIVED MUCH VALUABLE ADVICE FROM SOME MEMBERS OF THE BAR. PERHAPS NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE VIEWS ALL POINTED TO ONE DIRECTION."

MR TSAO SAID HONG KONG WAS AND WOULD REMAIN A BASTION OF THE FREE PRESS.

"THERE WAS NEVER ANY DOUBT IN THE GOVERNMENT'S MIND ABOUT THAT INTENTION," HE SAID.

"BUT IF THERE WERE DOUBTS ELSEWHERE, LET THEM NOW BE DISPELLED."

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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POLLING DAY ELECTIONEERING WILL BE STUDIED

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THE ACTING CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) HE NOTED A LEGCO AD HOC GROUP'S SUGGESTION THAT THERE BE GREATER CONTROL ON ELECTIONEERING ACTIVITIES ON POLLING DAY.

"THE ADMINISTRATION WILL BE EXAMINING IN DETAIL WHAT MEASURES SHOULD BE PROPOSED TO ACHIEVE THIS," MR JACOBS SAID IN WINDING UP DEBATE ON THE DISTRICT BOARDS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1988.

HE SAID HE WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT THAT HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THE BILL AND ALSO TO THE REGIONAL COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 AND THE URBAN COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S ORIGINAL PROPOSAL REGARDING THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 1991 DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS AND MUNICIPAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS WAS THAT THEY SHOULD BE HELD AT THE SAME TIME IN MARCH OF THAT YEAR, MR JACOBS SAID.

"HOWEVER, MEMBERS OF THE AD HOC GROUP HAVE TOLD US OF THEIR PREFERENCE FOR THE TWO ELECTIONS TO BE SEPARATELY HELD IN MARCH AND MAY RESPECTIVELY," HE SAID.

"WE APPRECIATE THE REASONS GIVEN BY THE GROUP IN FAVOUR OF THIS ALTERNATIVE," MR JACOBS SAID, ADDING THAT HE AGREED WITH PROPOSED AMENDMENTS WHICH WOULD BE MOVED AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE OF THE TWO RELATED BILLS.

MR JACOBS ALSO MOVED A COMMITTEE STAGE AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 1 OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1988.

THIS AMENDMENT SOUGHT TO ADD A COMMENCEMENT DATE SO THAT THE ARRANGEMENTS TO REMOVE FROM ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE URBAN COUNCIL THE EX-OFFICIO MEMBERSHIP OF DISTRICT BOARDS IN THE URBAN AREA, AND TO REMOVE THE RIGHT OF THE URBAN COUNCIL TO NOMINATE APPOINTED MEMBERS OF THE URBAN COUNCIL TO BE MEMBERS OF URBAN DISTRICT BOARDS WILL TAKE EFFECT FROM APRIL 1, 1989.

"THIS ENSURES THAT PRESENT URBAN COUNCIL MEMBERS WILL NOT BE AFFECTED BY THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS UNTIL THEIR TERM OF OFFICE EXPIRES ON MARCH 31, 1989," HE SAID.

SPEAKING ON THE URBAN COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, MR JACOBS MOVED A NEW CLAUSE 10B.

"THE NEW CLAUSE 10B INCREASES THE QUORUM FOR A MEETING OF THE URBAN COUNCIL AND OF ITS STANDING COMMITTEE FROM SEVEN TO 10 MEMBERS, IN PROPORTION TO THE EXPANDED MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL WHICH WILL NUMBER 40 INSTEAD OF 30 FROM APRIL 1, 1989 ONWARDS," HE SAID.

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AGREEMENT TO STAGGER COUNCIL ELECTIONS

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THE ADMINISTRATION HAS ACCEPTED A RECOMMENDATION BY LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS THAT THE ELECTIONS FOR DISTRICT BOARDS AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILS IN 1991 SHOULD BE STAGGERED.

THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG TOLD THE COUNCIL THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN SPEAKING IN THE SECOND READING DEBATE ON THE DISTRICT BOARDS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1988.

MR CHEUNG WAS CONVENER OF A LEGCO AD HOC GROUP WHICH EXAMINED THE BILL AS A PACKAGE ALONG WITH THE REGIONAL COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 AND THE URBAN COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988.

THE LATTER TWO BILLS WERE ALSO BEFORE THE COUNCIL FOR SECOND AND THIRD READINGS.

MR CHEUNG SAID THE ADMINISTRATION HAD CITED A NUMBER OF VALID REASONS FOR ITS PREFERENCE TO AMALGAMATE THE TWO SETS OF ELECTIONS.

HOWEVER, MANY OF HIS LEGCO COLLEAGUES, WHO HAD PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED THE VIGOUR OF THESE ELECTIONS, WERE CONCERNED THAT TO ADOPT SUCH A DRASTIC TRANSITIONAL CHANGE WOULD CREATE UNNECESSARY CONFUSION FOR VOTERS.

AFTER DETAILED DISCUSSION, THE ADMINISTRATION HAD AGREED THAT THE TWO SETS OF ELECTIONS SHOULD BE HELD SEPARATELY, IN MARCH AND MAY 1991, MR CHEUNG SAID.

HE EXPLAINED THAT ONE OBJECTIVE OF THE THREE BILLS WAS TO ENABLE EACH OF THE 10 URBAN DISTRICT BOARDS TO ELECT THEIR OWN REPRESENTATIVE TO SIT ON THE URBAN COUNCIL.

A SECOND OBJECTIVE WAS TO TERMINATE THE EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS WHEREBY URBAN COUNCIL MEMBERS ALSO SERVED AS EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS OF URBAN DISTRICT BOARDS.

A FURTHER OBJECTIVE WAS TO ADJUST THE TERMS OF MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MEMBERS ELECTED IN MARCH NEXT YEAR AND OF DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED IN 1991.

THE TERMS WOULD THUS FIT IN WITH THE NEW SEQUENCE OF ELECTIONS PROMULGATED IN THE 1988 WHITE PAPER ON POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT.

MR CHEUNG SAID THE AD HOC GROUP HAD ALSO EXAMINED THE QUESTION OF ELECTIONEERING ACTIVITIES ON POLLING DAY.

MIXED OPINIONS HAD BEEN EXPRESSED BY HIS COLLEAGUES.

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"BUT A COMMON VIEW APPEARED TO BE THAT SHORT OF IMPOSING A TOTAL BAN ON ALL ELECTIONEERING ACTIVITIES ON POLLING DAY, SERIOUS CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO EXPANDING THE BUFFER ZONE OUTSIDE POLLING STATIONS AND TO STRENGTHENING CROWD CONTROL OUTSIDE POLLING STATIONS," HE SAID.

A BALANCE WOULD OBVIOUSLY HAVE TO BE STRUCK.

ON THE ONE HAND, THERE WAS THE RISK OF ALLOWING EXCESSIVE ELECTIONEERING ACTIVITIES TO BECOME A DISINCENTIVE TO VOTERS OR OF CREATING POTENTIAL CONFLICTS BETWEEN CANDIDATES.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE WAS THE NEED TO GENERATE A GOOD ATMOSPHERE ON POLLING DAY AND THUS IMPROVE VOTER TURNOUT.

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ENDORSEMENT FOR INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY

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THE FACT THAT THE PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE SEPARATE PENSIONS LEGISLATION FOR THE JUDICIARY HAS WON THE SUPPORT OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION AND ACCEPTANCE BY THE COMMUNITY IS AN ENDORSEMENT OF THE PHILOSOPHY THAT THE JUDICIARY SHOULD BE INDEPENDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE, BOTH IN SUBSTANCE AND IN STRUCTURE.

THE HON MARIA TAM SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DURING THE SECOND READING DEBATE ON THE PENSION BENEFITS (JUDICIAL OFFICERS) BILL 1988.

MISS TAM, CONVENER OF A LEGCO AD HOC GROUP FORMED TO STUDY THE BILL, SAID THE AD HOC GROUP SUPPORTED THE SETTING UP OF AN INDEPENDENT STRUCTURE ON PAY AND PENSION BENEFITS FOR THE JUDICIARY AND SAW THE BILL AS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

SHE SAID THE PROPOSED JUDICIARY PENSION SCHEME WAS MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN THE NEW PENSION SCHEME FOR CIVIL SERVANTS IN CERTAIN RESPECTS.

WHEN BETWEEN 50 AND 65 YEARS OF AGE JUDICIARY OFFICERS WHO WERE APPOINTED OR REAPPOINTED AFTER JULY 1, 1987 WOULD EARN PENSION AT DOUBLE THE STANDARD PENSION EARNINGS RATE.

JUDICIAL OFFICERS WHO RETIRED EARLY ON GROUNDS OF ILL HEALTH WERE GUARANTEED A MINIMUM PENSION EQUIVALENT TO ONE QUARTER OF SALARY.

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THESE PROPOSALS WOULD ENABLE MEMBERS OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION IN PRIVATE PRACTICE TO JOIN THE JUDICIARY AS A SECOND CAREER AND YET ENJOY A REASONABLE PENSION AFTER 10 YEARS OF SERVICE, SHE SAID.

THE AGE OF RETIREMENT OF JUDICIAL OFFICERS EXCLUDING MAGISTRATES AND SIMILAR RANKS WERE EXTENDED FROM 60 TO 65 SO THAT THE SECOND CAREER WOULD ALSO BE OF A SIGNIFICANT DURATION AND BENEFICIAL BOTH TO THE INDIVIDUAL JUDICIAL OFFICER AND THE JUDICIARY.

THE AD HOC GROUP EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT MAGISTRATES WOULD HAVE TO RETIRE AT 60 AND MADE IT A POINT THAT AN EXTENSION OF THEIR RETIREMENT AGE TO 65 SHOULD BE PURSUED IN FUTURE.

MEMBERS SUGGESTED THAT IN ORDER TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN LOCAL LAWYERS FOR THE JUDICIARY, CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO CONVERTING HOUSING BENEFITS TO CASH TERMS OR GRANTING EXTRA ALLOWANCE TO JUDGES WHO WERE PROFICIENT IN CHINESE.

HOWEVER, THEY WERE DIVIDED ON WHETHER JUDGES SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO GO BACK TO PRIVATE PRACTICE AFTER SERVING THE JUDICIARY.

THEY ALSO QUESTIONED WHETHER THE PACKAGE HAD GONE FAR ENOUGH TO ACHIEVE ITS AIMS.

IN RESPONSE, THE ADMINISTRATION EXPLAINED THAT ONCE A SEPARATE STRUCTURE WAS SET UP FOR THE JUDICIARY, THERE COULD BE MORE FLEXIBILITY IN ACCOMMODATING ANY SUGGESTIONS, IF JUSTIFIED, TO IMPROVE ON THE TERMS OF JUDICIAL SERVICE.

"IT WILL ALSO BE HELPFUL IF CONSULTATION WITH THE LEGAL PROFESSION IN FUTURE ON RECRUITMENT OF LOCAL JUDICIAL OFFICERS CAN BE CARRIED OUT IN A MORE STRUCTURED WAY," MISS TAM CONTINUED.

SHE ADDED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION ALSO PROMISED AN OVERALL REVIEW ON THE PARITY OF TREATMENT BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE OFFICERS, AND MALE AND FEMALE DEPENDENTS, AND THE RIGHTS OR ENTITLEMENT OF CHILDREN, LEGITIMATE OR OTHERWISE.

"WE ALSO SUPPORT THE AMENDMENTS WHICH WILL BE INTRODUCED BY THE ADMINISTRATION TO ACHIEVE CONSISTENCY WITH THE PENSION BENEFITS (REFUSAL TO GRANT, SUSPENSION, REDUCTION AND CANCELLATION) BILL 1988 AND WELCOME THE ADMINISTRATION'S CLARIFICATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SECTION 20(3)(A) OF THE BILL (ON THE RIGHTS OF DEPENDANT CHILDREN WHERE MORE THAN SIX)," SHE SAID.

"THERE IS NEVER ANY DOUBT IN OUR MIND THAT MEMBERS OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION WHO HAVE THE QUALITY TO SERVE IN THE JUDICIARY MUST STAND OUT AND BE COUNTED IN PURSUING A CAREER WHICH INVOLVES REAL COMMITMENT TO HONG KONG.

"THE LEGAL PROFESSION HAS NEVER BEEN SLOW TO CHAMPION CAUSES FOR THE COMMON GOOD, OR TO UPHOLD THE RULE OF LAW. I HOPE THAT THEY WILL RISE TO THE CHALLENGE AND MAKE USE OF THE OPPORTUNITY GIVEN BY THE ENACTMENT OF THIS PIECE OF LEGISLATION."

TRIBUNAL IMPORTANT FOR SAFEGUARDING CIVIL LIBERTIES

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THE MENTAL HEALTH REVIEW TRIBUNAL WHICH COMMENCES OPERATION EARLY NEXT YEAR WILL BE AN IMPORTANT SAFEGUARD AGAINST INFRINGEMENT ON THE CIVIL LIBERTIES OF MENTAL PATIENTS.

THE HON ROSANNA TAM SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE MENTAL HEALTH REVIEW TRIBUNAL RULES 1988.

MRS TAM SAID THE TRIBUNAL WOULD SERVE AS AN APPEAL CHANNEL FOR PERSONS DETAINED IN A MENTAL HOSPITAL OR THE PSYCHIATRIC CENTRE OF THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

IT WOULD ALSO SERVE AS AN APPEAL CHANNEL FOR PERSONS PERMITTED TO BE ABSENT FROM THESE INSTITUTIONS FOR A TRIAL PERIOD OR CONDITIONALLY DISCHARGED, AND FOR PERSONS ADMITTED TO GUARDIANSHIP.

THE TRIBUNAL WOULD HAVE FULL AUTHORITY TO DEAL WITH ALL THE CASES SUBJECT TO ITS REVIEW, INCLUDING THE POWER TO DISCHARGE PATIENTS EITHER ABSOLUTELY OR CONDITIONALLY.

MRS TAM SAID A LEGCO AD HOC GROUP WHICH EXAMINED THE RULES HAD PROPOSED THREE AMENDMENTS, AND THESE HAD BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE ADMINISTRATION.

THE FIRST AMENDMENT WAS THAT EXCEPT WITH THE CONSENT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE TRIBUNAL, THE SECRETARY SHOULD SEND OUT NOTICE OF AN APPLICATION FOR REVIEW WITHIN 14 DAYS OF HIS RECEIPT OF THE APPLICATION.

"THIS WILL ENSURE THAT THE SECRETARY WILL CARRY OUT HIS DUTIES WITH DESPATCH," SHE SAID.

THE SECOND AMENDMENT PROVIDED THAT IF A PATIENT SO REQUESTED, AND THE TRIBUNAL WAS SATISFIED THAT IT WAS NOT CONTRARY TO THE PATIENT'S INTERESTS, THE TRIBUNAL SHOULD SIT IN PUBLIC.

THE THIRD AMENDMENT WAS TO DO AWAY WITH THE REFERENCE IN THE ORIGINAL RULES REGARDING THE VIEW OF THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE ON THE SUITABILITY OF A PATIENT FOR ABSOLUTE DISCHARGE.

MRS TAM SAID THE AD HOC GROUP, OF WHICH SHE WAS CONVENER, FELT THAT TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT A PATIENT WAS SUITABLE FOR ABSOLUTE DISCHARGE SHOULD BE THE PREROGATIVE OF THE TRIBUNAL.

SHE SAID THAT WITH THESE AMENDMENTS THE RULES WOULD PROVIDE A USEFUL CODE OF PROCEDURE FOR THE TRIBUNAL TO FOLLOW.

"BUT AS THE TRIBUNAL IS A NEW ESTABLISHMENT, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WHICH HAS YET TO BE ASSESSED, THE GROUP HAS SUGGESTED THAT THERE SHOULD BE AN ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OF ITS WORKINGS," SHE SAID.

THE ADMINISTRATION HAD AGREED TO THIS, AND A REVIEW WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN ABOUT 18 MONTHS AFTER COMMENCEMENT OF THE TRIBUNAL'S OPERATIONS.

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MENTAL HEALTH REVIEW TRIBUNAL RULES SUPPORTED

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THE MENTAL HEALTH REVIEW TRIBUNAL RULES 1988 MARK THE FIRST CONCRETE STEP BY THE GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS CONCERNING THE MENTAL HEALTH ORDINANCE, THE HON HUI YIN-FAT SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR HUI WAS SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE RULES, WHICH WERE TABLED IN THE COUNCIL ON NOVEMBER 23.

HE SAID HE PARTICULARLY WELCOMED THE INCLUSION OF THE SOCIAL ASSESSMENT REPORT AS PART AND PARCEL OF THE REVIEW PROCEDURES, AND THE INCLUSION OF A SOCIAL WORKER IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE MENTAL HEALTH REVIEW TRIBUNAL.

"THIS DENOTES A POSITIVE CHANGE IN THE OUTDATED CONCEPT THAT ALL DECISIONS RELATING TO THE DETENTION, CONDITIONAL DISCHARGE AND ADMISSION TO GUARDIANSHIP OF MENTAL PATIENTS REST WITH THE MEDICAL PROFESSION," HE SAID.

ON THE REFERENCE TO AN "APPROVED SOCIAL WORKER" UNDER THE GUARDIANSHIP SCHEME, MR HUI SAID THAT SOCIAL WORKERS WITH THE RELEVANT QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE COULD BE FOUND IN BOTH THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES.

HE SAID THAT VOLUNTARY AGENCIES PROVIDED THE BULK OF MENTAL HEALTH AFTER-CARE SERVICES IN HONG KONG.

AS TRANSFER OF MENTAL HEALTH CASES TO THE AUTHORITY MIGHT CAUSE DELAY, SOCIAL WORKERS IN VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WERE MORE THAN ABLE AND WILLING TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE CARE AND SERVICE FOR THEIR OWN MENTAL PATIENTS.

"AT THE MOMENT, HALF-WAY HOUSES AND WORK ACTIVITY CENTRES RUN BY VOLUNTARY AGENCIES ARE WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT IN PROVIDING THE MUCH-NEEDED AFTER-CARE SERVICES TO EX-MENTAL PATIENTS," HE SAID.

"IT IS HOPED THAT THEIR SERVICE WILL BE RECOGNISED AND THAT CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO APPOINTING SOCIAL WORKERS IN VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AS APPROVED SOCIAL WORKERS."

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CIVIL SERVANTS' BENEFITS A PARAMOUNT FACTOR
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THE CIVIL SERVICE IS THE MAINSTAY OF THE STRENGTH IN THE HONG KONG ADMINISTRATION, AND THE RIGHTS OR ENTITLEMENT OF CIVIL SERVANTS TO THEIR PENSION BENEFITS AFTER RETIREMENT IS PARAMOUNT IN KEEPING THEIR CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE AND IN FACING RETIREMENT AND OLD AGE.

THE HON MARIA TAM SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DURING THE SECOND READING DEBATE ON THE PENSION BENEFITS (REFUSAL TO GRANT, SUSPENSION, REDUCTION AND CANCELLATION) BILL 1988.

MISS TAM SAID THAT A LEGCO AD HOC GROUP SET UP TO STUDY THE PENSION BENEFITS BILL 1987 HAD, AFTER CONSIDERING REPRESENTATIONS FROM STAFF ASSOCIATIONS, REQUESTED THE ADMINISTRATION TO GIVE FURTHER THOUGHT TO DEVISING AN IMPROVED APPEALS SYSTEM IN RESPECT OF OFFICERS WHOSE PENSIONS WERE CANCELLED, SUSPENDED, REDUCED OR NOT GRANTED.

THE OBJECTION TO THE EXISTING SYSTEM WAS THAT THE DECISION ON AN APPEAL WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN BY THE GOVERNOR, WHO MADE THE ORIGINAL DECISION TO CANCEL OR SUSPEND, SHE EXPLAINED.

SHE SAID THE NEW PROPOSALS FORMULATED BY THE ADMINISTRATION WERE CONTAINED IN THE PRESENT BILL WHICH SOUGHT TO PRESERVE THE BASIC PRINCIPLE THAT THE GOVERNOR HAD THE FINAL DECISION ON ANY APPEAL, WHILST AT THE SAME TIME INTRODUCING A STRUCTURED SYSTEM FOR THE INITIAL DECISION ON CANCELLATION TO BE TAKEN BY A SENIOR PUBLIC OFFICER DESIGNATED BY THE GOVERNOR.

"ADDITIONALLY, AN INDEPENDENT ADVISORY ELEMENT IS INJECTED IN THE FORM OF A THREE-PERSON PANEL TO CONSIDER AND ADVISE THE GOVERNOR ON APPEALS," SHE SAID.

"THE PANEL IS TO BE MADE UP OF NON-CIVIL SERVANTS TO ENSURE THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE PANEL ARE IMPARTIAL AND ALSO SEEN TO BE IMPARTIAL."

ON THE ACTUAL CONTENTS OF THE BILL, MISS TAM SAID THAT THE AD HOC GROUP HAD DISCUSSED WHETHER THE POLICY INTENTION WAS THAT A DESIGNATED OFFICER SHOULD, IN ALL CASES, TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ADVICE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OR THE JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION AS APPROPRIATE IN EXERCISING HIS POWER TO REFUSE TO GRANT A PENSION, OR CANCEL OR REDUCE A PENSION GRANTED.

ANOTHER ISSUE DISCUSSED WAS WHETHER, FOR THE SAKE OF FAIRNESS, IN THE WRITTEN COMMUNICATION ADDRESSED BY A DESIGNATED OFFICER TO THE OFFICER CONCERNED ON THE INTENTION TO EXERCISE THE POWER TO SUSPEND, REDUCE, CANCEL OR NOT TO GRANT PENSION BENEFITS, THE REASONS FOR CONSIDERING THE EXERCISE OF SUCH A POWER SHOULD BE STATED.

/MISS TAM

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MISS TAM ADDED THAT OTHER MATTERS THAT AROSE DURING THE GROUP'S DISCUSSIONS INCLUDED THE PROVISIONS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATE MEMBERS IN THE EVENT THAT ONE OF THE THREE APPOINTED MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY PANEL WAS UNABLE TO ATTEND PANEL MEETINGS; APPOINTMENTS FROM AMONGST MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY, THE BAR OR THE SOLICITORS' PROFESSION; AND THE SPECIFICATION THAT THE INTENTION WAS FOR ALL PETITIONS TO BE IN WRITTEN FORM.

SHE SAID THAT SUITABLE AMENDMENTS TO COVER ALL THESE WOULD BE MOVED BY THE ADMINISTRATION.

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ADDITIONAL POWERS FOR BUS COMPANY STAFF
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THE PUBLIC BUS SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 GIVES AUTHORISED BUS COMPANY STAFF ADDITIONAL POWERS TO ENFORCE REGULATIONS AND BY-LAWS GOVERNING PASSENGER CONDUCT IN ORDER THAT THERE COULD BE PROPER CONTROL OVER MISBEHAVIOUR OCCURRING ON BUSES.

THE HON MARIA TAM SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL.

MISS TAM SAID THE POWERS PROPOSED INCLUDED THE POWER TO REQUIRE A SUSPECT TO PROVIDE PROOF OF IDENTITY AND PASSENGERS TO COMPLY WITH REASONABLE DIRECTIONS GIVEN BY THE AUTHORISED COMPANY STAFF.

SHE SAID A LEGCO AD HOC GROUP HAD BEEN FORMED TO LOOK INTO THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE BILL AND WHETHER THE PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF IT WOULD CREATE MORE PROBLEMS THAN IT COULD SOLVE.

ONE OF THE TWO MAJOR ISSUES INVOLVED WAS THE DRIVERS' POWER OF ARREST AND DETENTION.

ON THIS, THE AD HOC GROUP HAD MET TWICE WITH THE ADMINISTRATION AND HAD EXAMINED THE OTHER RULES AND REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE "POWER OF ARREST OR DETENTION", AND THE CHECKING OF DOCUMENTS OF IDENTIFICATION BY THE EMPLOYEES OF OTHER PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMPANIES.

ACCORDING TO MISS TAM, RECORDS OF THE FRANCHISED BUS COMPANIES HAD SHOWN THAT THERE WERE ABOUT 800 OCCASIONS IN THE PAST THREE YEARS WHEN POLICE ASSISTANCE HAD TO BE ENLISTED IN DEALING WITH MISBEHAVIOUR ON BUSES, AND AT TIMES IT HAD BEEN NECESSARY FOR THE DRIVER TO RESTRAIN THE TROUBLE-MAKERS BEFORE THE POLICE ARRIVED.

/SHE SAID

SHE SAID THAT MEMBERS FINALLY ACCEPTED THE ADMINISTRATION'S EXPLANATION THAT THE POWERS UNDER S36A(1) WERE NEEDED TO CONTROL PASSENGER MISCONDUCT WHICH MIGHT ENDANGER PUBLIC SAFETY, AFFECT NORMAL BUS OPERATION OR CAUSE DAMAGE TO THE BUSES.

SIMILAR POWERS ALREADY EXISTED IN OTHER TRANSPORT LEGISLATION SUCH AS THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION ORDINANCE AND THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION ORDINANCE, SHE ADDED.

ON CONCERN OVER THE ADDITIONAL JOB PRESSURE PLACED UPON DRIVERS, MISS TAM SAID THE ADMINISTRATION HAD CLARIFIED THAT IT WAS WITHIN THE DRIVER'S DISCRETION TO USE OR NOT TO USE THE ENFORCEMENT POWERS AND THERE WERE NO LEGAL SANCTIONS AGAINST THE NON-EXERCISE OF SUCH POWERS.

"BESIDES, DRIVERS WERE NOT PRECLUDED FROM USING OTHER APPROPRIATE METHODS OF HANDLING THE SITUATION E.G. GIVING VERBAL WARNING AND SEEKING POLICE ASSISTANCE," SHE SAID.

TO ENSURE THAT BUS DRIVERS WERE AWARE OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROPOSED NEW POWERS, TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT HAD REQUESTED THE BUS COMPANIES TO FULLY BRIEF THEIR STAFF BOTH ON THE EXISTING AND THE NEW PROVISIONS.

MISS TAM SAID THE SECOND ISSUE INVOLVED THE PROFIT CONTROL SCHEME OF FRANCHISED BUS SERVICES.

SHE NOTED THAT EVERY TWO YEARS OR SO, THE PANELS, OR AD HOC GROUPS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WOULD CALL FOR A REVIEW ON THE OPERATION OF SCHEMES OF CONTROL.

"WHILST FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES OF THE SCHEMES OF CONTROL WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE WITHOUT THE CO-OPERATION OF THE RELEVANT COMPANY, THE METHOD OF MONITORING AND CHECKING ON THE ACCOUNTING METHODS OF THE BUS COMPANIES HAS ALWAYS BEEN IMPROVING AND I PERSONALLY BELIEVE THAT SUCH IMPROVEMENTS HAVE NOT BEEN GIVEN THE ATTENTION AND CREDIT THAT THEY DESERVE," SHE SAID.

MISS TAM NOTED THAT THE BILL ALSO PROPOSED AN AMENDMENT TO THE DEFINITION OF "OPERATING RECEIPTS" AS A RESULT OF WHICH INTEREST EARNED ON DEPOSITS FOR SELF-INSURANCE WOULD BE TREATED AS OPERATING RECEIPTS AND NO LONGER BE ACCRUED TO SHAREHOLDERS.

THE AD HOC GROUP SUPPORTED THIS AMENDMENT WHICH WAS TO THE BENEFIT OF THE CONSUMERS.

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PROVISIONS OF REFORMATORY SCHOOLS BILL SUPPORTED

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PROVISIONS IN THE REFORMATORY SCHOOLS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 ARE REALISTIC AND IN KEEPING WITH CHANGING TIMES, THE HON HUI YIN-FAT SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR HUI WAS SPEAKING IN THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL, WHICH SOUGHT TO REDUCE THE MAXIMUM DETENTION PERIOD FOR INMATES IN A REFORMATORY SCHOOL FROM FIVE TO THREE YEARS.

"THE REDUCTION OF THE DETENTION PERIOD FROM FIVE TO THREE YEARS NOT ONLY COINCIDES WITH PROVISIONS OF OTHER TRAINING CENTRES, BUT WOULD ALSO RELIEVE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS IMPOSED ON YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS BY THE LONG PERIOD OF DETENTION NOW IN FORCE," MR HUI SAID.

THE CHANGE FELL IN LINE WITH THE BASIC REHABILITATION CONCEPT.

HOWEVER, HE URGED THE ADMINISTRATION TO ENSURE THAT THE REVISED PERIOD OF DETENTION WOULD BRING A CORRESPONDING REVISED TRAINING CONTENT WHICH MET THE CHANGING NEEDS OF SOCIETY, ESPECIALLY IN RELATION TO THE EMPLOYABILITY OF TRAINEES.

MR HUI ALSO AGREED IT WAS NECESSARY TO CHANGE THE TERM "INCORRIGIBLE" INTO "UNSUITABLE FOR FURTHER TRAINING IN REFORMATORY SCHOOLS" AS PROPOSED BY THE BILL.

THE TERM CARRIED A NEGATIVE CONNOTATION AND WAS CONTRARY TO THE OBJECTIVE OF SETTING UP REFORMATORY SCHOOLS TO OFFER TRAINING BENEFICIAL TO YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS.

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BILL CONVEYS FREE TRADE MESSAGE

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THE PRINCIPLE OF FREE TRADE UPHELD BY HONG KONG HAS BEEN SPELT OUT EXPLICITLY IN THE BOILERS AND PRESSURE RECEIVERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, THE HON HO SAI-CHU SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR HO WAS SPEAKING IN THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL.

THE BILL SOUGHT TO REQUIRE ALL IMPORTED PRESSURE VESSELS TO MEET THE INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED ENGINEERING STANDARD INSTEAD OF USING THE BRITISH STANDARD SPECIFICATION AS THE ONLY YARDSTICK IN DETERMINING THE SUITABILITY OF THE EQUIPMENT.

MR HO

MR HO SAID THIS WOULD HOPEFULLY CONVEY THE FREE TRADE MESSAGE TO PROTECTIONISTS WHO CONTINUED TO SEEK UNREASONABLE RESTRICTIONS ON IMPORTS.

CLAUSE 6 OF THE BILL PROVIDED THAT A SINGLE AUTHORITY, THE BOILERS AND PRESSURE VESSELS AUTHORITY, BE CREATED TO TAKE UP THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ENSURING THE SAFETY OF THIS TYPE OF DANGEROUS EQUIPMENT.

"THIS ARRANGEMENT OF PUTTING THE CONTROL UNDER A SINGLE AUTHORITY HAS STREAMLINED THE PREVIOUS PROVISION OF APPOINTING TWO SEPARATE PUBLIC OFFICERS, NAMELY THE REGISTRAR OF BOILERS AND PRESSURE RECEIVERS AND THE PRINCIPAL SURVEYOR OF BOILERS AND PRESSURE RECEIVERS, TO BE THE STATUTORY AUTHORITIES IN SHARING THE SAME RESPONSIBILITY," MR HO SAID.

HE ALSO REFERRED TO AMENDMENTS TO SECTION 13 OF THE ORDINANCE WHICH EMPOWERED THE AUTHORITY TO ACCEPT RECOGNISED LOCAL INSPECTION BODIES IN THE ISSUE OF CERTIFICATES OF INSPECTION IN RESPECT OF BOILERS AND PRESSURE RECEIVERS.

AS HONG KONG'S DEMANDS FOR BOILERS AND PRESSURE RECEIVERS WERE ON THE INCREASE, THERE WOULD BE GREAT DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL IN THE LOCAL PRODUCTION OF THIS TYPE OF EQUIPMENT, WHICH MIGHT TURN OUT TO BE AN ASSET IN HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

"THE DEVELOPMENT IN THIS FIELD REFLECTS THAT TECHNOLOGICAL SKILLS IN THE PRODUCTION OF PRESSURE VESSELS AND EQUIPMENT IN HONG KONG HAVE IMPROVED REMARKABLY," HE SAID.

MR HO WELCOMED THE INCLUSION OF THERMAL OIL HEATERS FOR INDUSTRIAL USE IN THE DEFINITION OF "BOILERS" UNDER SECTION 2 OF THE ORDINANCE SO AS TO PUT THE USE OF THIS TYPE OF EQUIPMENT UNDER CONTROL AND ENSURE ITS OPERATIONAL SAFETY.

THERMAL OIL HEATERS CONSTITUTED DANGEROUS EQUIPMENT AND HAD CAUSED FATAL ACCIDENTS IN OVERSEAS COUNTRIES, HE SAID.

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IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE SAFEGUARDS EXTENDED FOR FURTHER YEAR

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CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE WHICH HELP THE GOVERNMENT DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION WERE EXTENDED BY RESOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

UNDER THE MOTION, MOVED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON GEOFFREY BARNES, SECTION 18(3) AND PARTS VIIA AND VIIB OF THE ORDINANCE WERE EXTENDED FOR A FURTHER YEAR, AND WOULD NOW EXPIRE ON DECEMBER 31 NEXT YEAR.

MR BARNES SAID HONG KONG COULD NOT AFFORD TO BE COMPLACENT, AND THERE WAS A CLEAR NEED TO RETAIN THE SAFEGUARDS.

HE EXPLAINED THAT SECTION 18(3) WAS FIRST ENACTED IN JANUARY 1979 TO HELP THE GOVERNMENT DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES.

"IT REMOVES THE LIMIT OF TWO MONTHS DURING WHICH AN IMMIGRATION OFFICER MAY REMOVE A PERSON REFUSED PERMISSION TO LAND IN HONG KONG, IF IT APPEARS TO THE DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION THAT THAT PERSON WAS PREVIOUSLY RESIDENT IN VIETNAM," HE SAID.

THIS SUBSECTION HAD BEEN RE-ENACTED ANNUALLY.

PARTS VIIA AND VIIB OF THE ORDINANCE WERE ENACTED IN AUGUST 1979 TO PROVIDE FOR MORE EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF TRAFFICKING IN UNLAWFUL IMMIGRATION, HE SAID.

UNDER THESE PROVISIONS, ANY PERSON WHO AIDED ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS TO ENTER HONG KONG COMMITTED AN OFFENCE.

"OFFENDERS ARE LIABLE ON CONVICTION TO A FINE UP TO \$5 MILLION AND IMPRISONMENT FOR LIFE, WHILE THE SHIPS AND OTHER PROPERTY INVOLVED ARE LIABLE TO FORFEITURE," HE SAID.

THESE TWO PARTS HAD ALSO BEEN RE-ENACTED ANNUALLY.

MR BARNES SAID THE NECESSITY FOR THE PROVISIONS WAS UNFORTUNATELY ONLY TOO CLEAR.

"OUR VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE PROBLEMS ARE STILL WITH US. THERE HAS BEEN A LARGE INFLUX OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE SINCE APRIL THIS YEAR," HE SAID.

"IN THE FIRST 11 MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, A TOTAL OF 17,802 VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE ARRIVED, COMPARED WITH 3,117 IN THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD IN 1987.

/"ALTHOUGH THE

"ALTHOUGH THE AVERAGE DAILY ARRIVALS HAVE DROPPED FROM 179 IN JULY TO EIGHT IN NOVEMBER, IT IS NOT CLEAR TO WHAT EXTENT THE SHARP DECLINE IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE NEW SCREENING POLICY INTRODUCED ON JUNE 16, 1988."

MR BARNES SAID ABOUT 2,800 REFUGEES WERE EXPECTED TO BE RESETTLED THIS YEAR.

THIS WAS A SMALL BUT WELCOME INCREASE COMPARED TO THE TOTAL RESETTLEMENT OF 2,212 IN 1987.

HOWEVER, THERE WOULD STILL BE OVER 15,000 REFUGEES REMAINING IN REFUGEE CENTRES AT THE END OF THE YEAR AND, IN ADDITION, SOME 9,600 VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE AWAITING SCREENING OR REPATRIATION IN THE DETENTION CENTRES.

"THE PRESENT INDICATIONS WERE THAT THE PROBLEMS OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND BOAT PEOPLE WILL REMAIN WITH US FOR SOME TIME TO COME UNTIL RESETTLEMENT CAN BE STEPPED UP FOR REFUGEES AND BOAT PEOPLE CAN BE REPATRIATED TO VIETNAM," HE SAID.

"FURTHERMORE, THERE HAVE BEEN RECENT SURGES OF ARRIVALS OF VIETNAMESE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS FROM CHINA.

"OF THE TOTAL OF 749 VIETNAMESE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS FROM CHINA NOW IN HONG KONG, 462 HAVE LEFT THEIR FARMS IN GUANGXI AND ARRIVED BY BOAT THIS MONTH.

"FOR SUCH PEOPLE THERE IS NO HOPE OF RESETTLEMENT OR INDEED ANY OTHER BENEFIT, IN COMING TO HONG KONG.

"THEY WILL BE RETURNED TO CHINA AS ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS."

MR BARNES SAID ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION FROM OTHER SOURCES IN CHINA ALSO REMAINED A PROBLEM.

IN THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, 10,302 CHINESE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WERE ARRESTED WHEN ATTEMPTING TO ENTER HONG KONG AND A FURTHER 2,044 WHO HAD EVADED SECURITY FORCES AT THE BORDER WERE ARRESTED SUBSEQUENTLY.

THIS COMPARED WITH 8,175 AND 1,663 RESPECTIVELY FOR THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD IN 1987.

"TO COUNTER THIS HIGH LEVEL OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION, THE PROSECUTION POLICY WAS STEPPED UP AND THE STIFF PENALTIES IMPOSED APPEAR TO HAVE HAD A DETERRENT EFFECT," HE SAID.

"FROM JUNE TO NOVEMBER, THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS AND EVADERS ARRESTED DROPPED TO 7,501 AS COMPARED TO 14,485 IN THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR."

/MR BARNES

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MR BARNES ADDED THAT LOOKING BACK OVER THE YEAR, HOWEVER, IT WAS CLEAR THAT DESPITE A DROP IN NUMBERS IN CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF ARRIVALS FROM VIETNAM AND CHINA WE COULD NOT AFFORD TO BE COMPLACENT, AND THERE WAS A CLEAR NEED TO RETAIN THE SAFEGUARDS.

THE POSITION WOULD BE REVIEWED AGAIN SHORTLY BEFORE THE NEW EXPIRY DATE.

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AG SETS RECORD STRAIGHT

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THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, MADE A STATEMENT TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON EARLIER REMARKS HE MADE TO THE COUNCIL.

MR MATHEWS EXPLAINED THAT ON NOVEMBER 23 HE ANSWERED A SERIES OF QUESTIONS ON THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL RELATING TO FOREIGN LAW FIRMS.

ONE OF THESE WAS FROM THE HON RONALD ARCULLI WHO ASKED A SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION, AS FOLLOWS:

'SIR, AT THE RISK OF INTRODUCING A BIT OF LEVITY INTO THE PROCEEDINGS, I THINK I ONLY PARTLY AGREE WITH WHAT MR LEE SAID ABOUT BOTH THE FRONT AND BACK DOORS BEING OPEN. WHAT THE LAW SOCIETY FEARS IS THE REVOLVING DOOR. BUT HAVING SAID THAT, BEARING IN MIND THE PROPOSAL THAT WAS REJECTED AS RECENTLY AS 29 JANUARY THIS YEAR BY A COMMITTEE SO HIGH-POWERED AS TO COMPRISE OF THE THEN CHIEF JUSTICE, THE THEN CHAIRMAN OF THE BAR, THE PRESIDENT OF THE LAW SOCIETY AND A MEMBER OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS AND A LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR, WILL THE GOVERNMENT PLEASE INFORM THIS COUNCIL:

- (A) WHETHER THE WORKING PARTY WAS IN FAVOUR OF THE PROPOSAL; WAS IT AS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT OUR LEGAL SYSTEM AS THE COMMITTEE WHICH WAS AGAINST THE PROPOSAL;
- (B) WHERE IT IS FELT THE COMMITTEE WENT WRONG;
- (C) WHETHER THE WORKING PARTY REPORTED IN WRITING; AND
- (D) IF SO, WHETHER SUCH REPORT WILL BE MADE PUBLIC?'

/MR MATHEWS

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MR. MATHEWS SAID TODAY:

"IN ANSWERING HIS QUESTION I UNDERSTOOD MR. ARCULLI TO BE REFERRING TO THE CHIEF JUSTICE'S COMMITTEE AND TO THE REPORT BY THAT COMMITTEE TO THE GOVERNOR. THIS LED ME INADVERTENTLY TO MISLEAD THIS COUNCIL BY REPLYING IN THE FOLLOWING TERMS - 'SIR, THE REPORT WAS, INDEED IN WRITING. IT WAS A REPORT TO YOU, SIR'.

"HAVING NOW SEEN THE HANSARD RECORD OF THAT DAY'S MEETING OF THE COUNCIL, I REALISE THAT I MISUNDERSTOOD THE QUESTION PUT TO ME.

"I SHOULD NOW LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PUT THE RECORD STRAIGHT.

"IF I HAD PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD THE THRUST OF MR. ARCULLI'S QUESTION THE ANSWER WOULD HAVE BEEN -

'THE CHIEF JUSTICE'S COMMITTEE REPORTED IN WRITING TO YOU, SIR. THE INTERNAL WORKING PARTY PRODUCED NO REPORT AS SUCH. THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS WERE CONTAINED IN MINUTES AND IN A PAPER PRESENTED TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. THERE ARE NO PLANS TO MAKE PUBLIC THOSE INTERNAL MINUTES OR THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL PAPER. THIS ACCORDS WITH THE USUAL PRACTICE OF GOVERNMENT.'

"I WOULD LIKE TO APOLOGISE TO YOU, SIR, AND TO THE MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL FOR HAVING INADVERTENTLY MISLED YOU."

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AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

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A RESOLUTION THAT CERTAIN AMENDMENTS BE MADE TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S STANDING ORDERS WAS APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE RESOLUTION, THE ACTING CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON. PIERS JACOBS, SAID THE MAIN PURPOSE WAS TO PROVIDE FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF BILINGUAL LEGISLATION.

HE SAID PARAGRAPH (A) OF THE RESOLUTION PROVIDED THAT THE ORDER PAPER SHOULD BE IN BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE IN ORDER TO REFLECT THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL AUTHENTICITY OF BOTH LANGUAGES.

PARAGRAPH (B) ENSURED THAT A NOTICE OF AMENDMENT TO A MOTION OR TO A BILL WAS IN ENGLISH IF THE MOTION OR THE BILL WAS IN ENGLISH, AND IN CHINESE IF THE MOTION OR THE BILL WAS IN CHINESE.

/PARAGRAPH (C)

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PARAGRAPH (C) PROVIDED FOR THE PRESENTATION OF BILINGUAL BILLS SO THAT THEY MIGHT BE ENACTED BILINGUALLY AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 4 OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE, WHICH WOULD SHORTLY BE BROUGHT INTO FORCE.

PARAGRAPH (D) SET OUT THE PROCEDURAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR BILLS WHICH WERE PRESENTED TO THE COUNCIL FOR ENACTMENT IN ONLY ONE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE UNDER SECTION 4(3) OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE.

PARAGRAPH (E) ENSURED THAT AMENDMENTS TO BILINGUAL BILLS TOOK ACCOUNT OF EACH TEXT AND DID NOT RESULT IN CONFLICT OR DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE MEANING OF THE RELEVANT CLAUSES IN BOTH LANGUAGES.

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PUBLIC HOUSING REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME ON SCHEDULE

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PRESENT INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE LABOUR SHORTAGE HAS NOT AFFECTED THE REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR ALL MARK I AND II ESTATES, INCLUDING THOSE IN CENTRAL KOWLOON, AND THE PROGRAMME CAN BE COMPLETED BY 1990 AS SCHEDULED.

THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY), IN REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON CHENG TAK-KIN.

MR LIAO SAID SATISFACTORY PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE IN THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FOUR ESTATES IN WANG TAU HOM, WONG TAI SIN, LOK FU AND TUNG TAU IN CENTRAL KOWLOON.

BETWEEN 1983 AND 1988, A TOTAL OF 49 BLOCKS HAD BEEN REDEVELOPED COMPARED TO 20 BLOCKS REDEVELOPED BETWEEN 1972 AND 1983.

CONSTRUCTION OF RECEPTION ACCOMMODATION FOR RESIDENTS IN THE REMAINING 34 BLOCKS IN CENTRAL KOWLOON WAS WELL IN HAND, HE ADDED.

MR LIAO POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS NOT THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S POLICY TO FORCE TENANTS AFFECTED BY REDEVELOPMENT OUT OF THEIR ORIGINAL DISTRICTS FOR REHOUSING.

ON THE CONTRARY, EVERY EFFORT WAS MADE TO ENSURE THAT THEY WERE GIVEN AN ACCEPTABLE RANGE OF CHOICE IN RECEPTION ACCOMMODATION.

RECENT EXPERIENCE SHOWED THAT ABOUT 15 PER CENT OF THOSE AFFECTED BY REDEVELOPMENT HAD OPTED FOR HOME OWNERSHIP FLATS, AND ABOUT 11 PER CENT, OF THEIR OWN VOLITION, HAD BEEN REHOUSED OUTSIDE THEIR ORIGINAL DISTRICTS.

THE OTHERS HAD BEEN REHOUSED IN THE VICINITY.

THERE SHOULD BE ADEQUATE RECEPTION ACCOMMODATION TO MEET THE ASPIRATIONS OF THOSE AFFECTED BY THE CLEARANCE OF THE REMAINING MARK I AND II BLOCKS IN CENTRAL KOWLOON, MR LIAO ADDED.

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INSTRUCTORS TO BE ALLOWED TO TEACH LICENCE HOLDERS

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THE GOVERNMENT IS TAKING STEPS TO AMEND REGULATIONS TO ENABLE DRIVING INSTRUCTORS TO GIVE LESSONS TO HOLDERS OF VALID DRIVING LICENCES.

THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG.

MR LEUNG SAID THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO ROAD TRAFFIC (DRIVING LICENCES) REGULATIONS WOULD BE INTRODUCED EARLY NEXT YEAR.

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COUNCILS HAVE MAIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR ROADSIDE GRASS CUTTING

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THE MAIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTENANCE OF ROADSIDE VERGES LIES WITH THE URBAN COUNCIL IN THE URBAN AREA AND THE REGIONAL COUNCIL IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR LIAO WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG WHO HAD ASKED ABOUT THE DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY AMONG GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS FOR ROADSIDE GRASS-CUTTING.

THE TWO COUNCILS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF ROADSIDE VEGETATION UP TO FIVE METRES FROM THE EDGE OF GAZETTED ROADS, MR LIAO SAID.

THERE WERE SOME EXCEPTIONS TO THIS. THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT HAD THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTAINING THE VERGES ALONG ROADS AND PATHWAYS WITHIN COUNTRY PARKS.

THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT DID THE SAME FOR ITS ACCESS ROADS.

"ALONG HIGH-SPEED ROADS, SUCH AS THE TUEN MUN AND TOLO HIGHWAYS, THE HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT UNDERTAKES THE TASK, INSTEAD OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL, PRIMARILY IN THE INTERESTS OF EFFICIENCY AND SAFETY," HE SAID.

REGARDING THE MAINTENANCE OF THE VERGES ALONG NON-GAZETTED PASSAGE WAYS, MR LIAO SAID THIS HAD LONG BEEN A PROBLEM.

MOST OF THESE PASSAGE WAYS WERE THE TRADITIONAL ACCESS PATHS TO VILLAGES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

/"BECAUSE OF

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"BECAUSE OF THE MIXTURE OF PRIVATE AND CROWN LAND WHICH ABUTS THESE PATHS, GOVERNMENT DOES NOT UNDERTAKE THE MAINTENANCE FOR FEAR OF TRESPASSING UPON PRIVATE PROPERTY," HE SAID.

IN EXTREME CASES OF OVERGROWTH, HOWEVER, ACTION HAD BEEN TAKEN TO AVOID COMPLETE OBSTRUCTION.

THIS WAS DONE BY THE DISTRICT BOARDS THROUGH MINOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDS, THE DISTRICT OFFICES THROUGH LOCAL PUBLIC WORKS FUNDS AS WELL AS BY THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICES THROUGH THEIR VOTE FOR CROWN LAND MANAGEMENT.

"BUT ROUTINE VERGE MAINTENANCE BY EITHER OF THESE AGENCIES IS NOT WITHIN THEIR JURISDICTION," MR LIAO ADDED.

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GOVERNMENT CAN VETO PARKING FEE INCREASE

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CONTRACT CONDITIONS FOR THE RUNNING OF GOVERNMENT MULTI-STOREY CARPARKS ALLOW THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT TO DIRECT THE MANAGEMENT OF GOVERNMENT CARPARKS TO CANCEL OR REDUCE ANY PROPOSED INCREASE IN PARKING FEES.

THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON JAMES MCGREGOR.

MR LEUNG SAID THAT IF IN THE COMMISSIONER'S JUDGEMENT THE USAGE OF A CARPARK WOULD BE SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED FOR A PROLONGED PERIOD BY SUCH AN INCREASE, THE COMMISSIONER WOULD EXERCISE HIS RIGHT OF OBJECTION.

IN CONSIDERING PROPOSED INCREASES, THE COMMISSIONER WOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE UTILISATION RATE AND THE FREQUENCY OF FEE INCREASES AT THE CARPARK, AND THE FEES OF OTHER COMPARABLE, COMMERCIAL CARPARKS IN THE VICINITY, HE ADDED.

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INWARD INVESTMENT IN 1987 WORTH NEARLY \$2 BILLION

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THE VALUE OF ALL INWARD INVESTMENT IN 1987 AMOUNTED TO JUST UNDER \$2 BILLION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THIS REPRESENTED A 19 PER CENT INCREASE OVER 1986, MR JACOBS SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON MARTIN BARROW.

THE VALUE WAS EXPRESSED IN TERMS OF GROSS ADDITIONS TO FIXED ASSETS WHICH INCLUDED THE PURCHASES OF MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT, LAND AND BUILDINGS, AND OTHER ASSETS.

"THE VALUE OF TOTAL OVERSEAS INVESTMENT AT ORIGINAL COST AT THE END OF 1987 WAS ABOUT \$21 BILLION," MR JACOBS SAID.

THIS REPRESENTED AN EIGHT PER CENT INCREASE OVER THE FIGURE AT THE END OF 1986, AND ALMOST DOUBLE THE FIGURE RECORDED IN SEPTEMBER, 1984, WHEN REGULAR SURVEYS WERE FIRST CONDUCTED BY THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT.

REFERRING TO THE STRATEGY ADOPTED ON THE TYPE OF INWARD INVESTMENT IN MANUFACTURING WHICH WAS BEING SOUGHT, MR JACOBS EXPLAINED THAT THE PROGRAMME HAD FOR SOME YEARS BEEN GEARED TO THE ACQUISITION OF TECHNOLOGY RATHER THAN THE CREATION OF EMPLOYMENT AND CAPITAL.

"HALF OF THE COMPANIES ASSISTED SO FAR THIS YEAR USE LABOUR-SAVING AUTOMATED SYSTEMS, INCLUDING UNMANNED PRODUCTION LINES AND ROBOTICS," HE SAID.

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TUNNELS TO GET RADIO RECEPTION FACILITIES

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL INSTALL RADIO RECEPTION FACILITIES IN THREE GOVERNMENT TUNNELS, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR LEUNG SAID THAT THE THREE TUNNELS IN WHICH SUCH FACILITIES WOULD BE INSTALLED WERE THE LION ROCK, ABERDEEN AND AIRPORT TUNNELS.

THE ESTIMATED COST OF INSTALLATION, EXCLUDING CIVIL WORK, WAS ABOUT \$11.3 MILLION.

A SUBMISSION WOULD BE MADE TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR FUNDS ONCE THE DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED WORKED OUT THE TOTAL COST, MR LEUNG ADDED IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON RITA FAN.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1988

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ACTION TAKEN TO CURB ILLEGAL RACING

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THE POLICE HAVE STEPPED UP ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL ROAD RACING DURING WEEKENDS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM DR DANIEL TSE, MR LEUNG SAID THE POLICE WERE AWARE OF THE AREAS WHERE ILLEGAL CAR RACING USUALLY TOOK PLACE.

"SPECIAL POLICE TASK FORCES ARE DEPLOYED TO THESE AREAS. ROAD BLOCKS AND RADAR SPEED CHECKS ARE USED TO DETECT OFFENDERS," HE SAID.

"VEHICLES FOUND TO HAVE BEEN MODIFIED ARE IMPOUNDED FOR INSPECTION BY MOTOR VEHICLE EXAMINERS.

"WHERE THERE IS INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE OF ROAD RACING, THE SUSPECTS MAY BE CHARGED FOR ALTERNATIVE OFFENCES SUCH AS RECKLESS DRIVING, CARELESS DRIVING OR SPEEDING IF THERE IS SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT SUCH CHARGES."

MR LEUNG SAID THERE WERE A TOTAL OF 14 PROSECUTIONS AGAINST ILLEGAL ROAD RACING LAST YEAR. THE FIGURE FOR THE FIRST 10 MONTHS OF THIS YEAR WAS 20.

ON THE NUMBER OF ACCIDENTS AND CASUALTIES CAUSED BY ILLEGAL RACING, HE SAID THE POLICE WERE UNABLE TO ASCERTAIN THEIR NUMBERS.

BECAUSE THE RACES TOOK PLACE LATE AT NIGHT, THE PERSONS INVOLVED IN ACCIDENTS WERE IN MOST CASES THE PARTICIPANTS AND THEY WOULD NOT ADMIT TO TAKING PART IN ILLEGAL CAR RACING, MR LEUNG ADDED.

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STRICT RULES ON DISPOSAL OF OLD MILITARY ITEMS

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STRICT REGULATIONS EXIST TO COVER THE DISPOSAL OF OBSOLETE MILITARY EQUIPMENT, BOTH WITHIN THE MILITARY ORGANISATIONS THEMSELVES AND AS LAID DOWN BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT.

THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON GEOFFREY BARNES, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON POON CHI-FAI.

MR BARNES WAS REFERRING TO AN INCIDENT ON NOVEMBER 9 WHEN MILITARY ITEMS WHICH HAD BEEN WASHED ASHORE WERE DISCOVERED BY A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC ON A BEACH IN SOUTH-EASTERN LAMMA ISLAND.

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"THIS IS THE FIRST AND ONLY TIME SUCH AN INCIDENT HAS TAKEN PLACE," HE SAID, ATTRIBUTING THE ALMOST ZERO OCCURRENCE TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE STRICT REGULATIONS.

THERE WAS NO REASON TO SUSPECT THAT IT WOULD DO SO AGAIN.

MR BARNES SAID THE FORCES, HOWEVER, HAD REVIEWED THOROUGHLY THEIR PROCEDURES FOR DUMPING UNWANTED STORES AND HAD IMPROVED THEIR SUPERVISORY PRACTICES TO ENSURE THAT THERE WAS NO RECURRENCE.

RECOUNTING THE ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER THE INCIDENT WAS REPORTED, MR BARNES SAID A MILITARY SEARCH WAS UNDERTAKEN ON NOVEMBER 10, DURING WHICH ITEMS, INCLUDING SMALL EXPLOSIVE DETECTORS CONTAINING SULPHURIC ACID, WERE DISCOVERED.

HE SAID THE ITEMS HAD BEEN DUMPED ILLEGALLY AT SEA, THUS CONTRAVENING BOTH MILITARY AND HONG KONG GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS.

IT WAS THOUGHT THAT THIS DUMPING WAS CARRIED OUT BY JUNIOR MILITARY PERSONNEL.

"IN ANY CASE, AN INVESTIGATION IS NOW BEING UNDERTAKEN BY THE ROYAL MILITARY POLICE TO IDENTIFY THE PERSON OR PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS MISDEMEANOUR," MR BARNES SAID.

"ANY PERSON THUS IDENTIFIED WILL BE SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS."

MR BARNES NOTED THAT OVER THE 10 DAYS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT, THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES CONTINUED THEIR SEARCH OF LAMMA AND THE SURROUNDING AREA, INCLUDING THE PO TOI ISLANDS AND THE STANLEY AND CHUNG HOM KOK PENINSULAS.

"NO FURTHER EQUIPMENT WAS FOUND DURING THE SEARCH AND IT WAS CONCLUDED THAT ONLY ONE AREA ON LAMMA ISLAND HAD BEEN AFFECTED AND THAT THE AREA HAD ITSELF BEEN FULLY CLEARED," MR BARNES SAID.

"IN ANY CASE, THE CONFIGURATION OF WINDS AND TIDES PREVAILING AT THE TIME WHEN THE ITEMS WERE DUMPED WOULD MAKE IT MOST UNLIKELY THAT ANY ITEMS WOULD HAVE BEEN CARRIED ELSEWHERE."

THE POLICE WERE INFORMED OF THE INCIDENT ON NOVEMBER 10 AND TOOK IMMEDIATE STEPS TO ISSUE WARNINGS TO THE PUBLIC, INCLUDING PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE EQUIPMENT, AND WARNINGS WERE ALSO ISSUED THROUGH THE MEDIA, MR BARNES CONTINUED.

RESIDENTS OF LAMMA ISLAND WERE ADVISED NOT TO TOUCH THE ITEMS, IF FOUND, BUT TO REPORT THEIR LOCATION TO THE POLICE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BUT NO FURTHER DISCOVERIES WERE REPORTED.

"THE FORCES WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION, HOWEVER, AND TO CARRY OUT PERIODIC SEARCHES OF LIKELY AREAS," MR BARNES SAID.

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DESCRIBING THE MILITARY ITEMS DISCOVERED, MR BARNES SAID NONE OF THE ITEMS FOUND BY THE MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC WAS HAZARDOUS IN ANY WAY.

AMONG THE ITEMS FOUND BY THE MILITARY SEARCH ON NOVEMBER 10 WERE SIX SMALL EXPLOSIVE DETECTORS, EACH COMPRISING A TOUGH GLASS AMPOULE CONTAINING ABOUT ONE QUARTER OF A TEASPOONFUL OF SULPHURIC ACID.

THE GLASS AMPOULE WAS CONTAINED INSIDE A RIGID PLASTIC CONTAINER, WHICH IN TURN WAS HELD INSIDE A POLYTHENE SACHET.

THE SACHET WAS ITSELF INSIDE A RIGID PLASTIC SCREWTOP TUBE ABOUT ONE AND A HALF INCHES IN DIAMETER AND EIGHT INCHES IN LENGTH.

IN THE LID OF THE TUBE WAS A SMALL BOTTLE FILLED WITH AN ALKALINE SUBSTANCE, WHICH ACTED AS A SAFETY MECHANISM TO COUNTERACT THE EFFECTS OF THE ACID SHOULD ANY BE SPILLED.

EACH OUTER CONTAINER WAS CLEARLY MARKED WITH A HAZARD WARNING.

MR BARNES SAID THERE WAS NO DANGER TO THE PUBLIC IF THE ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT WERE NOT TAMPERED WITH.

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STEPS FOR DEALING WITH SCHOOL 'DROPOUTS' OUTLINED

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ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH SCHOOL DROPOUT CASES ARE KEPT UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN ARE PLACED IN SCHOOLS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON RON BRIDGE, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ROSANNA TAM.

MR BRIDGE PRESENTED STATISTICS ON STUDENTS UNDER 15 STUDYING IN SECONDARY 3 OR BELOW WHO HAD WITHDRAWN FROM SCHOOL IN THE PAST THREE YEARS.

IN 1987-88, THE NUMBER OF GENUINE DROPOUT CASES IN SECONDARY 1 TO 3 WAS 698, OUT OF A TOTAL OF 5,564 INVESTIGATIONS, WHILE THE ENROLMENT FOR THE YEAR STOOD AT 257,886.

THE CORRESPONDING FIGURES IN 1986-87 WERE 492, 4,241 AND 256,428; AND IN 1985-86 THEY WERE 318, 3,340 AND 248,700.

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IN PRIMARY 1 TO 6, THE NUMBER OF GENUINE DROPOUT CASES IN 1987-88 WAS 96, OUT OF A TOTAL OF 3,400 INVESTIGATIONS, WHILE THE ENROLMENT FOR THE YEAR STOOD AT 538,782.

IN 1986-87, THE FIGURES WERE 109, 3,977 AND 536,347, WHILE IN 1985-86 THEY WERE 125, 5,059 AND 539,278.

"SCHOOL DROPOUTS ARE IDENTIFIED THROUGH REPORTS FROM SCHOOLS OF REFERRALS," MR BRIDGE SAID.

"SCHOOLS ARE ADVISED THROUGH AN ANNUAL CIRCULAR TO REPORT TO THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT DETAILS OF ALL CHILDREN UNDER 15 STUDYING IN SECONDARY 3 OR BELOW WHO HAVE NOT ATTENDED SCHOOL FOR MORE THAN 14 DAYS AND TO REPORT THE ADMISSION OF ALL NEW PUPILS WITHIN 10 DAYS."

SUCH INFORMATION WAS MATCHED BY COMPUTER, THUS ENABLING DROPOUTS TO BE READILY IDENTIFIED.

A SMALL NUMBER OF NON-ATTENDANCE CASES WERE ALSO REFERRED FROM OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, HE ADDED.

"EVERY NON-ATTENDANCE CASE IS INVESTIGATED BY A STUDENT GUIDANCE OFFICER OF THE NON-ATTENDANCE CASES TEAM OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT," MR BRIDGE SAID.

THE OFFICER WOULD CONTACT THE FAMILY CONCERNED BY LETTER AND TELEPHONE, FOLLOWED WHERE NECESSARY BY HOME VISITS, TO ASCERTAIN THE REASONS FOR THE CHILD'S ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL.

THE OFFICER WOULD ALSO EXPLAIN TO THE PARENTS THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT THE CHILD ATTENDED SCHOOL; PARENTS MIGHT ALSO BE INVITED TO ATTEND INTERVIEWS.

"ONLY A SMALL PROPORTION OF ALL CASES INVESTIGATED ARE GENUINE DROPOUT CASES," MR BRIDGE SAID.

"MOST CASES INVOLVE CHILDREN WHO HAVE EITHER GONE TO ANOTHER SCHOOL WHICH DID NOT REPORT THEIR ADMISSION, OR WHO ARE SUCCESSFULLY PLACED IN ANOTHER SCHOOL WITHOUT DELAY WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE STUDENT GUIDANCE OFFICER."

A SMALL NUMBER OF CASES DID NOT REQUIRE FURTHER ACTION BECAUSE THE CHILDREN HAD EITHER GONE OVERSEAS FOR STUDY, EMIGRATED, BEEN ADMITTED TO OTHER APPROPRIATE INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS PROBATION HOMES, OR REGISTERED UNDER AN APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME, HE ADDED.

AS REGARDS GENUINE DROPOUT CASES, MR BRIDGE SAID THE ASSISTANCE OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE SOUGHT, WHEN THE CHILD'S NON-ATTENDANCE WAS A RESULT OF COMPLICATED FAMILY PROBLEMS, SUCH AS FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES.

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IN CASES OF LEARNING OR BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES, THE CHILD WOULD BE REFERRED TO THE SPECIAL EDUCATION SECTION.

OFFICERS OF THE SCHOOLS DIVISION WOULD ALSO HELP IN PLACING SUCH CHILDREN IN SUITABLE SCHOOLS, HE SAID.

"WHERE NON-ATTENDANCE IS DUE TO PARENTAL INDIFFERENCE, NEGLIGENCE OR HOSTILITY, ORAL OR WRITTEN WARNINGS ARE GIVEN," MR BRIDGE SAID.

IF, DESPITE WARNINGS, THE CHILD CONTINUED NOT TO ATTEND SCHOOL, AN ATTENDANCE ORDER WAS SERVED ON THE PARENT.

THE PARENT MIGHT APPLY TO THE BOARD OF REVIEW FOR A REVIEW OF THE ATTENDANCE ORDER; BUT IF THE PARENT IGNORED THE ATTENDANCE ORDER, THE CASE MIGHT BE BROUGHT TO COURT, HE SAID.

"MOST GENUINE DROPOUT CASES ARE SETTLED WITHIN THREE TO SIX MONTHS. IN A SMALL NUMBER OF COMPLICATED CASES, A LONGER TIME MAY BE REQUIRED," MR BRIDGE NOTED.

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AIR-CONDITIONING SYSTEM PLANNED FOR WARDS

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IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A BETTER HEALTH CARE ENVIRONMENT, THE GOVERNMENT HAS SUPPORTED A REQUEST FROM THE CARITAS MEDICAL CENTRE FOR PROVISION OF A CENTRAL AIR-CONDITIONING SYSTEM FOR 10 OF ITS WARDS.

THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON T.H. CHAU, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON RONALD CHOW.

MR CHOW HAD SAID THAT SOME OF THE WARDS IN CARITAS HOSPITAL WERE OFTEN AFFECTED BY SMOKE EMITTED FROM FACTORIES IN THE AREA.

MR CHAU POINTED OUT THAT OF THE EIGHT HOSPITAL BLOCKS WHICH COMPRISED THE CARITAS MEDICAL CENTRE, ONE, THE WAI MING BLOCK, WAS LOCATED CLOSE TO A NUMBER OF INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS.

"THE 10 WARDS IN THIS BLOCK DO NOT, AT PRESENT, HAVE ANY FORM OF AIR-CONDITIONING, WITH THE RESULT THAT EMISSIONS FROM NEARBY FACTORIES CAN ENTER THE WARDS THROUGH THE WINDOWS," HE SAID.

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE, THE CENTRAL AIR-CONDITIONING SYSTEM WOULD BE INSTALLED IN THE 1989-90 FINANCIAL YEAR.

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CIVIL SERVICE HOUSING BENEFITS UNDER REVIEW

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THE ACTING CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE PROVISION OF CIVIL SERVICE HOUSING BENEFITS IS CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW.

"A FINANCIAL CONSULTANT HAS BEEN COMMISSIONED TO EVALUATE THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF A RANGE OF OPTIONS TO PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE HOUSING BENEFITS," MR JACOBS SAID IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON POON CHI-FAI.

THE CONSULTANCY WAS NEAR COMPLETION AND ITS FINDINGS WOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH THE STAFF SIDE BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATION DEVELOPED ANY SPECIFIC PROPOSALS, HE SAID.

THE ADVICE OF THE STANDING COMMISSION ON CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE WOULD ALSO BE SOUGHT IN DUE COURSE.

"AT THIS STAGE IT IS NOT YET POSSIBLE FOR ME TO BE PRECISE ABOUT THE TIMING OR INDEED THE NATURE OF ANY POSSIBLE CHANGES TO CIVIL SERVICE HOUSING BENEFITS," MR JACOBS SAID.

EXPLAINING THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRIVATE TENANCY ALLOWANCE, MR JACOBS SAID WHEN AN OFFICER HAD SUBMITTED HIS APPLICATION, THE ADVICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF RATING AND VALUATION WAS REQUIRED TO DETERMINE THE REASONABLE RENT OF THE PROPERTY.

THE VALUATION REQUIREMENT WAS DESIGNED TO INDUCE OFFICERS TO TRY TO NEGOTIATE A REASONABLE RENT THAT REFLECTED THE PROPERTY'S TRUE MARKET VALUE.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RATING AND VALUATION HAD IN HAND SUFFICIENTLY UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION REGARDING THE PREVAILING MARKET RENTAL BECAUSE LANDLORDS MUST SERVE NOTICE OF NEW LETTINGS/RENEWALS WITHIN ONE MONTH OF SIGNING A TENANCY AGREEMENT, MR JACOBS SAID.

"DURING THE SIX-MONTH PERIOD FROM MAY TO OCTOBER 1988, 830 PRIVATE TENANCY ALLOWANCE APPLICATIONS WERE REFERRED TO THE COMMISSIONER OF RATING AND VALUATION FOR ADVICE.

"THE RENT QUOTED IN 714 APPLICATIONS, OR 86 PER CENT, WAS CONSIDERED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF RATING AND VALUATION AS REASONABLE," MR JACOBS SAID.

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FEWER CHILDREN HURT CYCLING ON ROADS

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THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN INJURED WHILE RIDING BICYCLES ON PUBLIC ROADS IS IN GENERAL DECREASING, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR LEUNG POINTED OUT THAT DURING THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, THE NUMBER OF INJURED CHILDREN AGED UNDER 14 WAS 59 OR 6.5 PER MONTH, COMPARED WITH 110 RECORDED IN THE WHOLE OF 1987 OR 9.1 PER MONTH.

THE YEARLY TOTALS RECORDED IN 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986 WERE 262, 139, 103 AND 138 RESPECTIVELY, MR LEUNG ADDED IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP.

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'TIDYING-UP' EXERCISES OUTSIDE GPO

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ACTIVE CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO CLEARANCE OPERATIONS IN THE MAIN PEDESTRIAN FOOTBRIDGE ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE GENERAL POST OFFICE IN CENTRAL TO CURB ENVIRONMENTAL NUISANCES CAUSED BY STREET SLEEPERS.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS INFORMED OF THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON T.H. CHAU.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON JAMES MCGREGOR, MR CHAU SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY IN MINIMISING THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH STREET SLEEPING WAS FORMULATED AT THE SOCIAL WELFARE AS WELL AS THE STREET MANAGEMENT LEVEL.

FROM THE SOCIAL WELFARE POINT OF VIEW, MR CHAU SAID IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO USE PERSUASION AND COUNSELLING TO ENCOURAGE STREET SLEEPERS TO MAKE USE OF THE VARIOUS SERVICES AND FORMS OF ACCOMMODATION WHICH COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THEM.

"IT IS ONLY WHEN SUCH PERSONS APPEAR TO BE IN NEED OF IMMEDIATE CARE AND CONTROL OR MAY POSE A DANGER TO THEMSELVES OR OTHERS THAT DIRECT INTERVENTION IS CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE," HE SAID.

MR CHAU POINTED OUT THAT SOME 41 TIDYING-UP EXERCISES HAD BEEN CONDUCTED AT THE LOCATION IN QUESTION OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS.

/"BUT UNFORTUNATELY

"BUT UNFORTUNATELY THE SUCCESS OF THESE HAS TENDED TO BE SOMEWHAT SHORTLIVED AND THEY HAVE FAILED TO HAVE ANY LONG-TERM IMPACT," HE SAID.

MR CHAU ADDED THAT THE CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICT OFFICE OF THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION, ALONG WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS, HAD ALSO EXPLORED THE POSSIBILITY OF INSTALLING LARGE STREET "FURNITURE" AT THE LOCATION.

IT WOULD BE SITED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO MAKE STREET SLEEPING PHYSICALLY DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE.

"HOWEVER, FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS INCLUDING LOADING CONSTRAINTS ON THE WALKWAY, IT HAS NOT BEEN FEASIBLE TO PURSUE THIS PROPOSAL TO DATE," HE SAID.

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION HONG KONG'S IMAGE IN THE EYES OF TOURISTS, MR CHAU AGREED THAT THIS WALKWAY WAS CURRENTLY SOMETHING OF AN EYESORE.

HE ASSURED MEMBERS THAT ACTIVE CONSIDERATION WOULD THEREFORE BE GIVEN TO FURTHER CLEARANCES IN THE AREA.

"IN PARALLEL, I HAVE ASKED THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE TO STEP UP HER COUNSELLING EFFORTS IN RESPECT OF THOSE STREET SLEEPERS AT THE LOCATION IN QUESTION," HE ADDED.

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NINE BILLS PASSED
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NINE BILLS WERE PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THESE WERE THE DISTRICT BOARDS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1988, REGIONAL COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, URBAN COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, PENSION BENEFITS (JUDICIAL OFFICERS) BILL 1988, PENSION BENEFITS (REFUSAL TO GRANT, SUSPENSION, REDUCTION AND CANCELLATION) BILL 1988, BOILERS AND PRESSURE RECEIVERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, PUBLIC BUS SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1988 AND REFORMATORY SCHOOLS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988.

THE COUNCIL ALSO APPROVED A MOTION THAT SECTION 18(3) AND PARTS VIIA AND VIIB OF THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE -- WHICH HELP THE GOVERNMENT DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION -- BE EXTENDED TO DECEMBER 31 NEXT YEAR.

IN ADDITION, THE COUNCIL PASSED A MOTION, MOVED BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THAT CERTAIN AMENDMENTS BE MADE TO THE COUNCIL'S STANDING ORDERS.

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PLANS FOR HUNG HOM FREIGHT YARD SHELVED
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THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAS DECIDED THAT THE FREIGHT YARD EXPANSION PROJECT ON HUNG HOM RECLAMATION SHOULD NOT BE PURSUED.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SAID THAT A GOVERNMENT CONSULTANT STUDY INDICATES THAT THE FREIGHT YARD PROJECT ON AN 18 HECTARE SITE WOULD NOT BE FINANCIALLY VIABLE AND THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO HONG KONG GENERATED BY THE PROJECT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO OFFSET THE COST OF DEVELOPING THE FREIGHT YARD.

IN AN EARLIER STUDY COMMISSIONED BY THE KOWLOON CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION, CONSULTANTS ALSO CAST DOUBT ON THE FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF THE PROJECT.

ACCORDING TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTANTS' STUDY, WITH AN ESTIMATED COST OF LAND AND CONSTRUCTION AMOUNTING TO NEARLY \$2.9 BILLION, THE OPERATION OF THE YARD COULD NOT BE FINANCIALLY VIABLE EVEN WITH 24-HOUR OPERATION OF THE FREIGHT HANDLING FACILITIES.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT, BY NOT PROCEEDING WITH THE PROJECT, FREIGHT TRANSPORT TO AND FROM CHINA WILL PROBABLY MAKE GREATER USE OF SEA AND ROAD TRANSPORT THAN RAIL IN FUTURE.

WITH THE CURRENT BUILDING PROGRAMME AND THOSE UNDER ACTIVE PLANNING, HONG KONG'S ROAD NETWORK WILL BE ABLE TO COPE WITH FREIGHT TRAFFIC UP TO THE YEAR 2001.

"FREIGHT TO AND FROM CHINA SHOULD NOT SUFFER ANY DISRUPTION BECAUSE OF THIS DECISION," HE SAID.

ON THE ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF NOT GOING AHEAD WITH THE FREIGHT YARD DEVELOPMENT, THE STUDY SHOWS THAT THE PROJECT WOULD NOT YIELD A NET ECONOMIC BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY.

"FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE ECONOMY AS A WHOLE, IT MAKES LITTLE DIFFERENCE WHETHER THE FREIGHT IS CARRIED BY RAIL OR BY OTHER COMPETING MODES OF TRANSPORT," THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

ACCORDING TO CONSULTANTS' ASSESSMENT IT IS FEASIBLE AND MORE COST EFFECTIVE FOR SEA AND ROAD TRANSPORT TO BE USED TO MEET THE PROJECTED FREIGHT TRAFFIC WITH CHINA.

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FUNDS APPROVED FOR BOOSTING LOCALISATION IN LEGAL DEPT

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL SPEND \$30.4 MILLION FROM NOW TO 1991-1992 TO BOOST LOCALISATION IN THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS.

THIS FOLLOWS THE FINANCE COMMITTEE'S ACCEPTANCE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A "DOUBLE-LADDER" PROMOTION SCHEME FOR LOCAL CROWN COUNSEL (CC) TO SENIOR CROWN COUNSEL (SCC).

THE "DOUBLE-LADDER" IS A MEANS BY WHICH LOCAL CC, WHO WOULD OTHERWISE NOT BE CONSIDERED READY FOR PROMOTION TO SCC BUT WHO HAVE IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL TO RISE WITHIN THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS, CAN REACH THE SCC POST EARLIER.

THESE COUNSEL WOULD THEN GAIN THE BENEFITS OF THE HIGHER RANK INCLUDING HOUSING WHICH THEY AT PRESENT DO NOT ENJOY.

"IT IS EXPECTED THAT ON OR AFTER REACHING THIS LADDER, COUNSEL SELECTED WILL BEGIN TO TAKE ON THE FUNCTIONAL DUTIES OF THAT RANK, AND DO SO INCREASINGLY AS TIME PROGRESSES UP TO THE POINT AT WHICH THEY MAY LEAVE THE LADDER BY PROMOTION, WHICH WILL PROBABLY BE AFTER THREE YEARS IN MOST CASES," A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE SCHEME WAS RECOMMENDED BY AN INTER-DEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP CHAIRED BY THE SOLICITOR GENERAL, MR FRANK STOCK, SET UP IN 1986 TO EXPLORE THE BEST MEANS OF ACHIEVING LOCALISATION IN THE DEPARTMENT.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS IS ONE OF THE FEW GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS WITH A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF OVERSEAS OFFICERS.

IN 1987-88, THE OVERALL BALANCE BETWEEN LOCAL AND OVERSEAS COUNSEL STOOD AT 40:60.

THE WORKING GROUP ADVISED THAT FURTHER MEASURES TOWARDS LOCALISATION WERE JUSTIFIED.

AFTER EXAMINING A NUMBER OF PROPOSALS, IT RECOMMENDED THAT THE "DOUBLE-LADDER" SCHEME WAS A VIABLE OPTION GIVEN THE TARGET OF 50 PER CENT LOCALISATION OF LOCAL COUNSEL AT THE SCC LEVEL BY 1992.

AT PRESENT, ONLY 18 OUT OF A TOTAL STRENGTH OF 91 SCC ARE EMPLOYED ON LOCAL TERMS OF SERVICE.

IN THE FIRST YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION ABOUT 13 "DOUBLE-LADDER" POSTS ARE LIKELY TO BE CREATED, AND ABOUT EIGHT EACH YEAR THEREAFTER, SUBJECT TO A MAXIMUM OF 30 ON THE LADDER AT ANY ONE TIME, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

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ON THE REASONS FOR THE PREDOMINANCE OF OVERSEAS OFFICERS IN THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS, THE WORKING GROUP FOUND THAT WHILE THERE IS A CONSTANT INTAKE OF LOCAL COUNSEL AT THE ENTRY RANK - MAINLY THROUGH THE GOVERNMENT LEGAL TRAINING SCHEME - IT IS DIFFICULT TO RETAIN THEM BEYOND AN INITIAL PERIOD OF SERVICE.

THIS IS LARGELY BECAUSE PAY AND BENEFITS FOR LAWYERS AT ALL LEVELS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE COMPARE UNFAVOURABLY WITH REWARDS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

SECONDLY, DISAPPOINTMENT ARISES WHEN JUNIOR LOCAL COUNSEL FAIL IN COMPETITION FOR PROMOTION BECAUSE OF THE GREATER EXPERIENCE OF OVERSEAS COUNSEL.

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FUNDS FOR BUILDING MARINE POLLUTION INVESTIGATION VESSEL

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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED A SUM OF \$8.8 MILLION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PURPOSE-DESIGNED VESSEL TO CARRY OUT PROPERLY AND SAFELY MARINE POLLUTION MONITORING AND INVESTIGATION ACTIVITIES.

THIS PURPOSE-DESIGNED VESSEL WOULD REPLACE THE EXISTING 28-YEAR-OLD GENERAL-PURPOSE VESSEL WHICH WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT (EPD) IN 1986.

AT PRESENT, THE EPD CARRIES OUT A COMPREHENSIVE MARINE MONITORING PROGRAMME WHICH COVERS SAMPLING AT 73 AMBIENT WATER QUALITY MONITORING STATIONS, 53 BOTTOM SEDIMENT STATIONS, 13 TYPHOON SHELTER STATIONS AND 60 BEACH WATER QUALITY MONITORING STATIONS.

THE DEPARTMENT IS ALSO INVOLVED IN A NUMBER OF MARINE INVESTIGATIONS SUCH AS SURVEILLANCE OF RED TIDES AND SURVEYS OF FLOATING REFUSE.

OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, IT IS LIKELY THAT ALL THE TERRITORIAL WATERS OF HONG KONG WILL BE DECLARED WATER CONTROL ZONES.

THIS WILL LEAD TO A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN THE WORKLOAD OF THE MARINE POLLUTION INVESTIGATION VESSEL AS THE EXISTING MONITORING INVESTIGATIONS PROGRAMME WILL NEED TO BE EXPANDED AND INTENSIFIED TO COVER THE NEW ZONES.

THE REPLACEMENT VESSEL WILL BE EQUIPPED WITH FULL OFFSHORE CAPABILITY, A SCIENCE LABORATORY FOR IN-SITU ANALYSES OF WATER SAMPLES, COLD STORAGE FACILITIES FOR WATER AND BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES, FACILITIES FOR OVERNIGHT SURVEYS AND WINCH AND DERRICK SYSTEMS.

THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE VESSEL IS EXPECTED TO START IN 1989-90, ENABLING IT TO BE COMMISSIONED IN MID-1991.

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LICENSING AUTHORITY FOR GUESTHOUSES

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LEGISLATION TO SET UP A LICENSING AUTHORITY FOR GUESTHOUSES WOULD BE PRESENTED TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WITHIN THE CURRENT SESSION, THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR HONG KONG AND KOWLOON, MR DAVID LAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR LAN APPEALED TO GUEST HOUSE OPERATORS TO EXERCISE SELF-DISCIPLINE IN RESPECT OF THEIR OPERATIONS.

SPEAKING TO THE PRESS AFTER VISITING THREE GUESTHOUSES IN TSIM SHA TSUI AND HUNG HOM, MR LAN SAID THAT THE LICENSING AUTHORITY WOULD BE SET UP WITHIN THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION WITH STAFF SECONDED FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS SUCH AS FIRE SERVICES AND BUILDINGS AND LANDS.

AN INTER-DEPARTMENTAL PLANNING COMMITTEE HAD BEEN SET UP UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE CNTA TO WORK OUT DETAILS OF A LICENSING SYSTEM FOR GUESTHOUSES.

"THE PLANNING COMMITTEE WILL HAVE COMPLETED ITS DELIBERATIONS BY JANUARY 1989. THE ADVICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WILL THEN BE SOUGHT.

"THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE BUILDING MANAGEMENT, AS WELL AS THE DISTRICT BOARDS AND INTERESTED ORGANISATIONS, WILL BE CONSULTED ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS," HE ADDED.

MR LAN SAID THAT ONE OF THE MAIN TASKS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE WAS TO DEFINE THE PROPOSED LICENSING AUTHORITY'S SCOPE OF CONTROL.

"CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO INCLUDE HOTELS AND HOLIDAY BUNGALOWS ETC. I MUST STRESS THAT THE FINAL DECISION WILL REST WITH THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WHEN A DETAILED SYSTEM IS SUBMITTED TO IT FOR APPROVAL," HE NOTED.

MR LAN POINTED OUT THAT MEANWHILE THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT HAD WAS TAKING INTERIM MEASURES IN RESPECT OF GUESTHOUSES.

HE ADDED : "AT THE END OF LAST MONTH, THE DEPARTMENT INSPECTED ABOUT 520 GUESTHOUSES AND OTHER SIMILAR ACCOMMODATION.

"THE DEPARTMENT HAD ALSO ADVISED OPERATORS TO IMPROVE FIRE SAFETY MEASURES, SUCH AS PUTTING UP EXIT SIGNS, INSTALLING FIRE EXTINGUISHERS AND SMOKE DETECTERS."

DURING THE INSPECTION, 350 STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS AND 320 INTERNAL LAYOUT CHANGES WERE FOUND IN SUCH ESTABLISHMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN REFERRED TO THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION.

MR LAN ALSO APPEALED TO GUESTHOUSE OPERATORS TO TAKE ALL NECESSARY STEPS TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE GUESTS STAYING IN THEIR PREMISES.

/HE SAID :

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HE SAID : "I MUST STRESS THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT TRYING TO MAKE LIFE DIFFICULT FOR GUESTHOUSE OPERATORS. WHAT WE INTEND TO DO IS TO ENSURE THAT THESE ESTABLISHMENTS OPERATE PROPERLY.

"THE GOVERNMENT ALSO REALISES THAT GUESTHOUSES ARE MEETING A GENUINE NEED AND PLAYING A USEFUL ROLE TOWARDS HONG KONG'S RAPIDLY-DEVELOPING TOURIST INDUSTRY.

"HOWEVER, A BADLY-RUN GUESTHOUSE MIGHT PRODUCE UNDESIRABLE RESULTS, THUS DAMAGING HONG KONG'S IMAGE LOCALLY AND OVERSEAS," MR LAN SAID.

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TA KWU LING RURAL CENTRE PLAN TO BE DISCUSSED
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THE NORTH DISTRICT BOARD WILL MEET TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO DISCUSS A REVISED DRAFT LAYOUT PLAN OF THE TA KWU LING RURAL CENTRE IN WHICH FACILITIES WILL BE INCORPORATED TO MEET THE NEEDS AND FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF RESIDENTS.

THE FACILITIES WILL INCLUDE A GOVERNMENT BUILDING WITH A MULTI-PURPOSE HALL AND A CLINIC, A RESTAURANT, A BANK, A SUPERMARKET, VILLAGE TYPE HOUSING, CAR PARKS, A CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND AND SITTING OUT AND AMENITY AREAS.

MEMBERS WILL ALSO BE ASKED TO ENDORSE A DRAFT LAYOUT PLAN FOR THE AREA WEST OF LUEN WO HUI AND NORTH OF FANLING WAI VILLAGE.

VIEWS WILL BE SOUGHT ON A SET OF REVISED GUIDELINES FOR THE GRANTING OF LICENCES FOR AMUSEMENT GAME CENTRES.

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY (ENTERTAINMENT) OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION BRANCH, MR DAVID WEBB, AND THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (ADMINISTRATION AND LICENSING) OF THE TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING AUTHORITY, MRS ANNETTE TANG WILL ATTEND THE MEETING TO BRIEF BOARD MEMBERS.

IN ADDITION, MEMBERS WILL COMMENT ON WHETHER NEW TERRITORIES TAXIS SHOULD BE PERMITTED TO SERVE MA ON SHAN.

OTHER ITEMS ON THE AGENDA INCLUDE REPORTS FROM THE NORTH DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, NORTH DISTRICT FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE AND THE NORTH DISTRICT COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE NORTH DISTRICT BOARD MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE NORTH DISTRICT OFFICE, JOCKEY CLUB ROAD, FANLING. IT WILL BEGIN AT 9.30 AM.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1988

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LECTURES FOR TUEN MUN COMMUNITY LEADERS

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OFFICE-BEARERS OF MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES, YIN NGAI SOCIETIES, OWNERS' INCORPORATIONS, OFFICES OF DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS AS WELL AS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS IN THE TUEN MUN ARE INVITED TO TAKE PART IN A SERIES OF LECTURES TAILOR-MADE FOR THEM NEXT JANUARY.

ORGANISED BY THE DISTRICT OFFICE AS PART OF THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TRAINING SCHEME, THE LECTURES ARE AIMED AT INCREASING LEADERSHIP SKILL, ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY BUILDING AND ENHANCING PARTICIPANTS' KNOWLEDGE IN THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS OF THE DISTRICT.

BY ATTENDING THE LECTURES, PARTICIPANTS WILL ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE OF THE STRUCTURE OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, HOW TO APPLY FOR DISTRICT BOARD FUNDS, TECHNIQUES IN CHAIRING MEETINGS, SKILL IN DELIVERING PUBLIC SPEECHES AND MANAGEMENT OF MULTI-STORY BUILDINGS.

SPEAKERS WILL INCLUDE PROFESSIONALS, COMMUNITY LEADERS AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

THE LECTURES WILL TAKE PLACE FROM 8 PM TO 10 PM EVERY TUESDAY AND FRIDAY FROM JANUARY 3 TO 27 IN THE TUEN MUN TOWN HALL LECTURE HALL.

EACH PARTICIPANT WILL HAVE TO PAY A FEE OF \$20 WHICH ALSO COVERS A ONE-DAY TOUR OF TUEN MUN NEW TOWN AND A LUNCH BUFFET ON FEBRUARY 26.

APPLICATION FORMS FOR THE SCHEME ARE NOW AVAILABLE FROM ROOM 211, TUEN MUN DISTRICT OFFICE, SECOND FLOOR, GOVERNMENT OFFICES BUILDING, NO. 1, TUEN HI ROAD, TUEN MUN. THE DEADLINE IS ON DECEMBER 23 (FRIDAY).

ENQUIRIES CAN BE MADE ON 0-4513044 OR 0-4513048.

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SHAM SHUI PO LOT UP FOR TENDER

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THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT IS OFFERING TO LET BY TENDER A GOVERNMENT LOT IN SHAM SHUI PO.

THE 3,400-SQUARE-METRE LOT AT TUNG CHAU STREET IS FOR A FEE-PAYING PUBLIC CAR PARK FOR PRIVATE MOTOR CARS, TAXIS AND LIGHT VANS CURRENTLY LICENSED UNDER THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE.

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THE LEASE IS FOR 18 MONTHS AND RENEWABLE MONTHLY THEREAFTER.

TENDERS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED NOT LATER THAN 12 NOON ON DECEMBER 30.

FORM OF TENDER, TENDER NOTICE AND CONDITIONS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM AND TENDER PLAN INSPECTED AT, THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, KOWLOON WEST, 10TH FLOOR, YAU MA TEI CAR PARK BUILDING, 250 SHANGHAI STREET, KOWLOON AND THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT, 14TH FLOOR, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG.

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ILLEGAL STRUCTURES FACE DEMOLITION

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THE BUILDING AUTHORITY INTENDS TO CLOSE AND DEMOLISH ILLEGAL STRUCTURES AT TWO SEPARATE LOCATIONS IN KOWLOON.

NOTICES OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR CLOSURE ORDERS WERE POSTED AT THE STRUCTURES TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ONE OF THE STRUCTURES IS AT FLAT C, FIRST FLOOR, KONG YIU BUILDING, 320-322 MA TAU WAI ROAD.

THE BUILDING AUTHORITY IS OF THE OPINION THAT THE STRUCTURE SHOULD BE CLOSED IN ORDER THAT IT CAN BE DEMOLISHED WITHOUT DANGER TO THE OCCUPIERS OR TO THE PUBLIC.

IT IS INTENDED THAT A CLOSURE ORDER BE SOUGHT FROM THE HONG KONG DISTRICT COURT AT 9.30 AM ON MARCH 15 NEXT YEAR.

THE CLOSURE IS PART OF AN EXERCISE TO ENFORCE ORDER ISSUED UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE ON DECEMBER 10, LAST YEAR REQUIRING THE DEMOLITION OF THE STRUCTURES.

THE OTHER ILLEGAL STRUCTURE IS ON THE FLAT ROOF ADJACENT TO FLAT B, SECOND FLOOR, 9 HAU FOOK STREET.

IT IS INTENDED THAT CLOSURE ORDER ON THE STRUCTURE BE APPLIED FROM THE HONG KONG DISTRICT COURT AT 9.45 AM ON JANUARY 12 NEXT YEAR.

THE CLOSURE IS TO ENFORCE AN ORDER ISSUED UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE IN MAY LAST YEAR REQUIRING THE DEMOLITION OF THE STRUCTURE WITH WHICH THE OWNER HAD FAILED TO COMPLY.

DEMOLITION WORKS ON THE ILLEGAL STRUCTURES WILL BE CARRIED OUT ONCE CLOSURE ORDERS ARE OBTAINED.

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FACTORY FINED FOR USING NON-PERMITTED PRESERVATIVE

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THE MUNICIPAL SERVICES BRANCH TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WARNED FOOD MANUFACTURERS NOT TO SELL FOOD CONTAINING NON-PERMITTED PRESERVATIVES AS THEY WOULD BE LIABLE TO A MAXIMUM FINE OF \$25,000 PLUS SIX MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT.

THIS FOLLOWS A COURT CASE IN FANLING MAGISTRACY RECENTLY IN WHICH A FOOD FACTORY IN YUEN LONG WAS FINED A TOTAL OF \$33,000 FOR SELLING SOY SAUCE CONTAINING A NON-PERMITTED PRESERVATIVE CALLED '2-NAPHTHOL'.

THIS IS A CHEMICAL SUBSTANCE USED LARGELY IN SYNTHETIC RUBBER INDUSTRY AND SOMETIMES IN MANUFACTURE OF DYES AND PERFUMES. IT IS UNFIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION.

FOOD INSPECTORS OF THE MUNICIPAL SERVICES BRANCH VISITED THE PREMISES OF THE FACTORY AT PAK FA TSUEN IN PING SHAN, YUEN LONG AND TOOK SAMPLES OF BOTH THIN AND THICK SOY SAUCE ON JUNE 9 AND JULY 14 FOR CHEMICAL ANALYSIS.

RESULTS OF THE CHEMICAL ANALYSIS SHOWED THAT ALL SAMPLES TAKEN HAD CONTAINED THE NON-PERMITTED PRESERVATIVE '2-NAPHTHOL'.

THE FACTORY WAS THEN PROSECUTED UNDER REGULATION 3 (1) OF THE PRESERVATIVES IN FOOD REGULATIONS MADE UNDER SECTION 55 OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES ORDINANCE (CHAPTER 132).

THE FACTORY WAS ALSO ORDERED TO PAY \$800 IN TOTAL COST OF ANALYSIS AND \$13.50 FOR THE SAMPLING.

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INTERRUPTIONS TO FRESH AND SALT WATER SUPPLY

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A SPOKESMAN FOR THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ANNOUNCED THAT THE WATER SUPPLY TO THE FOLLOWING DISTRICTS WILL BE INTERRUPTED BECAUSE OF WATER WORKS:

- * THE FRESH WATER SUPPLY TO YAU YUE WAN, AP CHAI WAN AND HANG HAU TOWN, WILL BE TURNED OFF FROM 10 AM TO 4 PM ON FRIDAY (DECEMBER 16).
- * THE SALT WATER SUPPLY TO ALL PREMISES AT THE FOLLOWING PLACES WILL BE TURNED OFF FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY TO 10 AM THE NEXT DAY - CHAI WAN ROAD, WAN TSUI ROAD, FEI TSUI ROAD, SUI MAN ROAD, LIN SHING ROAD, WING TAI ROAD, CHEUNG MAN ROAD, LOK MAN ROAD, HONG MAN STREET, CHEUNG LEE STREET, KUT SHING STREET, LEE CHUNG STREET, NING FOO STREET, YEE FUNG STREET, YEE SHING STREET, YEE SHUN STREET, WAH HA STREET, SAN HA STREET, SHEUNG ON STREET, KA YIP STREET, FUNG YIP STREET, SUN YIP STREET, ON YIP STREET, SUN ON STREET, WING PING STREET, HONG PING STREET, KAM YUEN LANE AND HENG FA CHUEN.

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PUBLIC LIGHT BUS BAN IN KWUN TONG
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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (DECEMBER 17), NO PUBLIC LIGHT BUS WILL BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE SECTION OF NGAU TAU KOK FOURTH STREET CUL-DE-SAC, KWUN TONG, FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH THE UNNAMED ROAD LEADING TO NGAU TAU KOK ROAD.

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TEMPORARY URBAN CLEARWAYS ON HK ISLAND
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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT TWO ROAD SECTIONS ON HONG KONG ISLAND WILL BE DESIGNATED URBAN CLEARWAYS FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (DECEMBER 17) FOR ROADWORKS.

THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF ELECTRIC ROAD IN EASTERN DISTRICT FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH MERCURY STREET TO A POINT ABOUT 88 METRES NORTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION WILL BECOME A 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY URBAN CLEARWAY FOR ABOUT TWO WEEKS.

AT THE SAME TIME, SHEK PAI WAN ROAD IN SOUTHERN DISTRICT FROM A POINT ABOUT 30 METRES EAST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH TIN WAN STREET TO A POINT ABOUT 70 METRES EAST OF THE SAME JUNCTION WILL BE MADE AN URBAN CLEARWAY ROUND-THE-CLOCK FOR ABOUT THREE WEEKS.

NO VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS WITHIN THE RESTRICTED AREAS.

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LEFT-TURN BAN IN SHAM SHUI PO
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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT TO FACILITATE DRAINAGE WORKS, ALL VEHICLES OVER 5.5 TONNES GROSS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO TURN LEFT FROM WESTBOUND KWONG LEE ROAD TO FAT TSEUNG STREET, SHAM SHUI PO, FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (DECEMBER 16) FOR ABOUT FOUR MONTHS.

AFFECTED DRIVERS ARE ADVISED TO TRAVEL VIA KWONG LEE ROAD, CHEUNG FAT STREET, PO ON ROAD AND FAT TSEUNG STREET.

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TEMPORARY URBAN CLEARWAYS ON HK ISLAND

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (DECEMBER 16), THREE ROAD SECTIONS ON HONG KONG ISLAND WILL BE DESIGNATED DAILY URBAN CLEARWAYS FOR ROADWORKS.

THE FOLLOWING ROAD SECTIONS WILL BECOME URBAN CLEARWAYS FOR ABOUT EIGHT WEEKS:

- * THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF GILMAN STREET BETWEEN CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL AND DES VOEUX ROAD CENTRAL DURING PEAK HOURS (I.E. 7 AM - 10 AM AND 4 PM - 7 PM); AND
- * CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL WESTBOUND BETWEEN GILMAN STREET AND WING WO STREET FROM 7 AM TO 7 PM.

IN ADDITION, JAVA ROAD FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH TIN CHIU STREET TO A POINT ABOUT 70 METRES WEST OF THE SAME JUNCTION WILL BE MADE AN URBAN CLEARWAY ROUND-THE-CLOCK FOR ABOUT FOUR WEEKS.

NO VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS WITHIN THE RESTRICTED AREAS.

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TEMPORARY TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN WESTERN

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT TO FACILITATE TRAM TRACK CONNECTION WORKS, TEMPORARY TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN WESTERN DISTRICT FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (DECEMBER 16) FOR ABOUT SIX WEEKS.

THE FOLLOWING ROAD SECTIONS WILL BE DESIGNATED DAILY URBAN CLEARWAYS ROUND-THE-CLOCK :

- * THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF EASTERN STREET FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH CONNAUGHT ROAD WEST TO A POINT ABOUT 30 METRES TO THE SOUTH; AND
- * THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF EASTERN STREET FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH QUEEN'S ROAD WEST TO A POINT ABOUT 15 METRES TO THE NORTH.

THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF EASTERN STREET FROM A POINT ABOUT 30 METRES SOUTH OF ITS JUNCTION WITH CONNAUGHT ROAD WEST TO A POINT ABOUT 15 METRES NORTH OF ITS JUNCTION WITH QUEEN'S ROAD WEST WILL BECOME A 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY URBAN CLEARWAY.

NO VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS WITHIN THE RESTRICTED AREAS.

AT THE SAME TIME, ALL VEHICLES OVER SEVEN METRES LONG WILL BE BANNED FROM CHIU KWONG STREET BETWEEN CONNAUGHT ROAD WEST AND DES VOEUX ROAD WEST FOR ABOUT SIX WEEKS.

THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF THIS SECTION OF CHIU KWONG STREET WILL ALSO BE MADE AN URBAN CLEARWAY ROUND-THE-CLOCK FOR ABOUT TWO WEEKS.

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