



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL: 5-233191

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

CONTENTS

PAGE NO.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING :

WORKS OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL COMMENDED	1
PLEDGE OF SUPPORT TO LEGCO'S NEW PRESIDENT	1
ROLE OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES IN HK AFFIRMED	2
GOVERNMENT HAS NO PLAN TO KILL LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY	4
SHRINKAGE ON AGRICULTURAL LAND EXPLAINED	6
GOVERNMENT URGED TO ASSIST DEEP SEA FISHING INDUSTRY ...	7
SUPPORT FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES URGED	9
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES NEED GREATER SUPPORT, ENCOURAGEMENT .	11
COMMITTEE TO STUDY AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADVOCATED ..	12
COMMITTEE TO REVIEW AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES POLICY URGED	13
FLOOD PROTECTION ACTION 'MEANS BUSINESS'	15
CALL FOR URGENT MEASURES TO TACKLE FLOODING	16
URGENT ACTION AGAINST NT FLOODING NEEDED	17
FLOOD CONTROL TEAM SHOULD BE SET UP	18
PHARMACY AND POISONS LIST UPDATED	19
DUTY RATES INCREASED TO MEET INFLATION	19
EXTENSION OF 30 000 NT LEASES PROPOSED	20
LEGISLATIVE EFFECTS TO TAX CONCESSIONS PROPOSED	21

/MOVE TO

MOVE TO REVISE BUSINESS REGISTRATION FEES	21
BILL TO RAISE VEHICLE FEES INTRODUCED	22
VISA AND TRAVEL DOCUMENT FEES INCREASES BRING \$20 MILLION	22
INDEPENDENT CORPORATION FOR OCEAN PARK	23
ESTATE DUTY BILL INTRODUCED	24
THREE AMENDMENTS PROPOSED TO DANGEROUS DRUGS ORDINANCE ..	24
BILL PROPOSES TO CONTROL OBNOXIOUS INDUSTRIES	26
IMPROVEMENTS TO LIFTS AND ESCALATORS SAFETY PROPOSED	28
KCRC REPORTS \$117 MILLION PROFIT	30
MTRC DEBT REPAYMENT FORECAST REALISTIC	31
RIGHT OF INFORMATION LAW RULED OUT	33
NO URGENCY IN DECIDING ON REPLACEMENT AIRPORT	34
POLICE FIRING UNDER STRINGENT GUIDELINES	36
PRIVATE STREET RESUMPTION SCHEME A SUCCESS	37
ASBESTOS REMOVAL SUBJECT TO REGULATORY CONTROL	38
CIVIL AVIATION POLICY EXPLAINED	39
PLACEMENT SERVICE OF DISABLED EMPLOYEES WORKING WELL	40
26 EX-SERVICEMEN APPLY FOR BRITISH CITIZENSHIP	41
HIGHWAY NOISE BARRIERS NOT SUITABLE TO HK	41
FLOODING CONTROL MEASURES TO BE BETTER CO-ORDINATED	42
ONE BILL PASSED	43
HK FARES WELL AFTER JOINT DECLARATION	44
SIGNIFICANCE OF ASIA-PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT STRESSED	46
PAY SCALE ADJUSTMENTS APPROVED	47
CONSULTANT STUDY ON CHEMICAL WASTE TREATMENT PLANT	48
EDUCATION BOARD MEMBERS VISIT TECHNICAL SCHOOL	49
COURSE FOR BANKING TRAINING OFFICERS OFFERED	49
NEW HOME FOR RARE ANIMALS AND BIRDS	50
DB COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS NOISE CONTROL BILL	51
KWAI TSING DISTRICT SUB-OFFICE ON THE MOVE	51
URBAN CLEARWAY RESTRICTIONS IN WAN CHAI	52
RESTRICTED ZONE ON TO KWA WAN ROAD	52

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

- 1 -

WORKS OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL COMMENDED
* * * * *

ACTIVITIES OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND ITS COMMITTEES MAKE A VITAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROCESS OF GOVERNMENT IN HONG KONG, THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

PRESIDING HIS FIRST COUNCIL MEETING SINCE HE TOOK UP OFFICE, SIR DAVID SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THE ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF WORKS MEMBERS DEVOTED TO THE ACTIVITIES NOT ONLY OF THE COUNCIL BUT ALSO OF ITS COMMITTEES AND OF OMELCO.

+ALL THESE ACTIVITIES MAKE A VITAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROCESS OF GOVERNMENT IN HONG KONG.+

HE ALSO THANKED MEMBERS FOR THEIR SERVICE OF THE COMMUNITY AND SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO WORKING WITH THEM AND PRESIDING OVER THEIR DEBATES.

- - - - 0 - - - -

PLEDGE OF SUPPORT TO LEGCO'S NEW PRESIDENT
* * * * *

SENIOR MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE HON LYDIA DUNN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PLEDGED, ON BEHALF OF MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL, FULL AND WHOLE-HEARTED SUPPORT TO SIR DAVID WILSON, WHO WAS PRESIDING OVER THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE HE TOOK OFFICE AS GOVERNOR.

SHE ALSO THANKED SIR DAVID FOR HIS WORDS OF GREETING DELIVERED AT THE BEGINNING OF TODAY'S SITTING AND EXTENDED TO HIM A VERY WARM WELCOME TO HONG KONG AND TO THE COUNCIL.

MISS DUNN SAID TO SIR DAVID THAT HE WOULD FIND SOME OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS LIVELY AND INTERESTING. THEY REFLECTED A WIDE RANGE OF VIEWS FROM DIFFERENT SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY.

+AND IT WILL BE CLEAR TO YOU THAT WE ALL OF US SHARE A COMMON OBJECTIVE: THAT OF THE WELL BEING AND GOOD GOVERNMENT OF THIS TERRITORY,+ SHE SAID.

+WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR GUIDANCE AND PLEDGE OUR FULL AND WHOLE-HEARTED SUPPORT TO YOU AS GOVERNOR AND AS PRESIDENT OF THIS COUNCIL,+ SHE ADDED.

SHE ALSO WISHED SIR DAVID AND LADY WILSON, WHO WAS AT THE PUBLIC GALLERY, A LONG, HAPPY AND SUCCESSFUL STAY IN HONG KONG.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/2

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

- 2 -

ROLE OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES IN HK AFFIRMED
* * * * *

THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF SUPPORTING HONG KONG'S PRIMARY INDUSTRIES WITHOUT DIRECT SUBSIDY HAS SERVED THE INDUSTRIES VERY WELL, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON JOHN YAXLEY, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE GOVERNMENT FULLY INTENDED THAT PRIMARY INDUSTRIES SHOULD CONTINUE TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE ECONOMY, MR YAXLEY ADDED.

WINDING UP THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON PRIMARY INDUSTRIES, MR YAXLEY SAID THE GOVERNMENT FULLY RECOGNISED THE CONTRIBUTION THAT FARMERS AND FISHERMEN MADE TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

MR YAXLEY SAID: +THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT GIVE DIRECT SUBSIDIES TO THE PRIMARY INDUSTRIES, NOR DOES IT SEEK TO PROTECT THEM FROM THE FREE OPERATION OF MARKET FORCES.

+INSTEAD, THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDES INFRASTRUCTURAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT NECESSARY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FARMING AND FISHERIES AND LEAVES THEM TO ADJUST TO MARKET FORCES.+

AS POINTED OUT, THE HON LAU WONG-FAT, MR YAXLEY SAID THE INDUSTRIES WERE MOVING TOWARDS HIGH QUALITY PRODUCTION WHILE MAINTAINING A SIGNIFICANT SHARE OF LOCAL FOOD SUPPLY.

THE INCOME GENERATED BY AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES IN 1985 WAS \$1.25 BILLION, MR YAXLEY SAID, ADDING THAT +THIS IS NO SMALL ACHIEVEMENT GIVEN THE RELATIVE SIZE OF THE PRIMARY SECTOR+.

THIS SECTOR CONTRIBUTED ABOUT ONE PER CENT TO THE GDP WHICH WAS NOT OUT OF LINE WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, DEVELOPED OR DEVELOPING, HE SAID.

ON A SUGGESTION BY THE HON WONG PO-YAN THAT FAMILY OPERATIONS SHOULD BE TURNED INTO ENTERPRISING CORPORATIONS TO PRODUCE HIGH VALUE PRODUCTS, MR YAXLEY REPLIED THAT THE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY WAS INDEED MOVING IN THIS DIRECTION.

IN 1986, THE FARM POPULATION WAS 26 000, AND ARABLE LAND AMOUNTED TO 9 450 HECTARES, WHICH RESPECTIVELY REPRESENTED A DECREASE OF 23 PER CENT AND 29 PER CENT OVER 1971, HE SAID.

+YET, THE VALUE OF LOCAL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION HAS INCREASED BY 31 PER CENT BETWEEN 1971 AND 1986, AND THE LOCAL SUPPLIES OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS CONTINUE TO REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT SHARE OF THE MARKET. THE MARKET SHARES BY LOCALLY PRODUCED VEGETABLES, POULTRY AND PIGS ARE RESPECTIVELY 34 PER CENT, 40 PER CENT AND 17 PER CENT.+

A RANGE OF TECHNICAL ADVICE AND FIELD SERVICES WAS BEING OFFERED TO THE FARMING INDUSTRY WHICH FOCUSED ON AREAS SUCH AS FARM MANAGEMENT, USE OF SPRINKLER IRRIGATION SYSTEM, ROTARY CULTIVATORS, DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS, ANIMAL HEALTH CARE AND EFFECTIVE USE OF PEST CONTROL DEVICES, MR YAXLEY SAID.

/A TOTAL

A TOTAL OF 1 034 LOANS VALUED AT \$13.8 MILLION WERE GRANTED FROM THREE LOAN FUNDS AVAILABLE TO PROVIDE WORKING CAPITAL FOR FARMERS.

THE USE OF MODERN TECHNIQUES AND EQUIPMENT LED TO A GREAT IMPROVEMENT IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY, AND THE AVERAGE YIELD OF VEGETABLES PER YEAR WAS NOW ABOUT 67 TONNES PER HECTARES OF CULTIVATED LAND AS COMPARED WITH 48 TONNES IN 1961.

ON SUGGESTIONS THAT ECONOMIC PLANTS AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES BE PERMITTED WITHIN COUNTRY PARKS, MR YAXLEY SAID THIS WAS INDEED THE CASE.

TURNING TO THE FISHERIES SECTOR, MR YAXLEY SAID IT CONTRIBUTED OVER HALF OF THE LOCAL CONSUMPTION WITH AN EXPORT OF 41 510 TONNES LAST YEAR.

THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDED TECHNOLOGICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL FISHERMEN IN THE FORM OF TRAINING COURSES, TECHNICAL ADVICE AND SERVICES.

HE SAID THE AIM WAS TO ASSIST THE INDUSTRY TO DIVERSIFY AND EXTEND FISHING GROUNDS, MODERNISE THE FLEET, UPGRADE POST-HARVEST TECHNOLOGY, IMPROVE FISH FARM MANAGEMENT AND MAINTAIN ORDERLY MARKETING.

IN 1986, A TOTAL OF 101 LOANS VALUED AT \$6.6 MILLION WERE ISSUED FROM THE LOAN FUNDS.

IN THE CAPTURE FISHING INDUSTRY, THERE WERE 4 700 VESSELS WITH SOME 23 700 FISHERMEN, YIELDING 205 476 TONNES OF FISH IN 1986, MR YAXLEY SAID.

+SINCE 1976, MARINE FISH PRODUCTION HAS INCREASED BY 36 PER CENT, NOTWITHSTANDING THE FACT THAT NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES HAVE BANNED OUR FISHERMEN FROM CERTAIN COASTAL WATERS.+

HONG KONG'S FISHING INDUSTRY WAS STILL SHORT OF THE CAPACITY TO ENGAGE IN DISTANT-SEA FISHING WHICH DEMANDED HEAVY CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL BACK-UP, MR YAXLEY ADDED.

HE SAID: +AT PRESENT, OUR DEMAND FOR FISH PRODUCE DOES NOT REQUIRE CATCHES WHICH WILL JUSTIFY LARGE-SCALE, DEEP SEA FISHING OPERATION.+

MR YAXLEY SAID HE AGREED WITH MR WONG PO-YAN THAT THIS TYPE OF FISHING HAD POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER WHAT FURTHER ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE PROVIDED.

ON AQUACULTURE, MR YAXLEY SAID THERE WERE AT PRESENT 28 DESIGNATED FISH CULTURE ZONES WITH A TOTAL AREA OF 158 HECTARES.

HE SAID: +THE PRODUCTIVITY OF THIS SECTOR HAS GREATLY IMPROVED. BETWEEN 1976 AND 1986, THE PRODUCTION PER HECTARES HAS INCREASED IN MONETARY TERMS BY 60 PER CENT.+

THE GOVERNMENT'S OBJECTIVE, MR YAXLEY WENT ON, WAS TO ENHANCE THE PRODUCTIVITY OF MARICULTURISTS THROUGH INCREASED TECHNICAL AND MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY.

HE SAID HE NOTED THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG'S CONCERN OVER RECENT STAFF CHANGES IN THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT, BUT SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAMME OF STREAMLINING THE DEPARTMENT'S OPERATIONS WOULD NOT RESULT IN ANY ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO THE PRIMARY INDUSTRIES.

THE DEPARTMENT WAS IN REGULAR CONSULTATION WITH BOTH THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES SECTORS, AND THERE WERE AT PRESENT A NUMBER OF COMMITTEES COMPRISING REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE INDUSTRIES TO ADVISE THE DEPARTMENT ON VARIOUS ISSUES.

A SUGGESTION BY MR WONG AND THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG THAT THERE SHOULD BE AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURAL ISSUES WOULD BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED BY THE ADMINISTRATION, MR YAXLEY SAID.

HE ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE MORE FORTHCOMING IN PRINT IN FUTURE ABOUT HONG KONG'S PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE TERRITORY'S WELFARE.

THE PERFORMANCE OF THE INDUSTRIES WAS IMPRESSIVE AND CREDIT MUST GO TO THE HARD WORK OF THE FARMERS AND FISHERMEN, AND THEIR FLEXIBILITY IN ADAPTING TO CHANGING NEEDS, MR YAXLEY CONCLUDED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

GOVERNMENT HAS NO PLAN TO KILL LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY
* * * * *

THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MR JOHN CHAMBERS, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NO PLANS TO DESTROY THE LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY OF HONG KONG AND THE OBJECT OF THE PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL WASTE CONTROL SCHEME WAS TO MAKE A RADICAL IMPROVEMENT IN THE QUALITY OF WATERCOURSES AND COASTAL WATERS.

+WE HAVE NO OBJECTION TO PIGS AND CHICKENS BEING KEPT IN SUITABLE AREAS, PROVIDED PROPER MEASURES ARE TAKEN TO DISPOSE OF THE WASTES THEY PRODUCE,+ HE SAID, IN WINDING UP THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON PRIMARY INDUSTRIES IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR CHAMBERS SAID THAT LIVESTOCK FARMING WAS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTITUTED A SERIOUS PUBLIC HEALTH HAZARD IN BUILT-UP AREAS.

/HE POINTED

HE POINTED OUT THAT POLLUTION FROM ANIMAL WASTE WAS A MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM IN HONG KONG.

+IT POSES SERIOUS HEALTH RISKS WHERE POLLUTED WATER IS FOR IRRIGATION OR WHERE SHELL FISHERIES AND PUBLIC BEACHES BECOME CONTAMINATED. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT ANIMAL WASTES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ABOUT 70 PER CENT OF ALL STREAM POLLUTION IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND 50 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL ORGANIC POLLUTION ENTERING THE SEA,+ HE SAID.

HE ALSO NOTED THAT POLLUTION BY ANIMAL WASTES HAD LED TO A SIGNIFICANT DECLINE IN THE QUALITY OF THE COASTAL WATERS, PARTICULARLY IN TOLO HARBOUR, AND IT IMPOSED HIGH COSTS ON THE COMMUNITY IN TERMS OF THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL SEWAGE TREATMENT FACILITIES AND THE REDUCTION OF POTABLE WATER SUPPLIES.

THE PROPOSED SCHEME WILL PROHIBIT THE KEEPING OF LIVESTOCK ON HONG KONG ISLAND, KOWLOON AND IN THE NEW TOWNS- WHILE THE KEEPING OF LIVESTOCK IN THE REMAINING AREAS WHICH INCLUDE MOST OF THE NEW TERRITORIES WILL BE SUBJECT TO CONTROL.

+IN THESE AREAS, LIVESTOCK KEEPERS WILL HAVE TO COMPLY WITH REGULATIONS WHICH WILL COVER THE COLLECTION, STORAGE, TREATMENT, TRANSPORTATION AND DISPOSAL OF LIVESTOCK WASTE,+ MR CHAMBERS ADDED.

HE ALSO STATED THAT THE CONTROL SCHEME WAS THE SUBJECT OF EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION WITH DISTRICT BOARDS AND WITH THE FARMERS THEMSELVES BEFORE IT WAS AGREED BY THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL LAST AUGUST.

+ALL LIVESTOCK-KEEPERS WHO HAVE BEEN OPERATING IN THE AREA WHERE PIGS AND POULTRY ARE TO BE BANNED AND ALSO THOSE IN THE CONTROLLED AREAS WHO GO OUT OF BUSINESS BECAUSE THE NEW REGULATIONS MAKE IT UNECONOMIC FOR THEM TO CONTINUE, WILL RECEIVE COMPENSATION,+ HE SAID.

ORIGINALLY IT WAS PROPOSED THAT THE COMPENSATION RATES SHOULD BE THE SAME AS THOSE FOR DEVELOPMENT CLEARANCES, BUT FOLLOWING A DISCUSSION IN THE FINANCE COMMITTEE THIS HAD NOW BEEN RECONSIDERED AND THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE PUTTING A REVISED PROPOSAL, WITH MORE GENEROUS RATES, TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE LATER THIS MONTH.

MR CHAMBERS SAID CONCERN HAD BEEN EXPRESSED THAT THE PROPOSED CONTROL STANDARDS WERE TOO STRINGENT AND THAT IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR LIVESTOCK FARMERS TO COMPLY WITH.

+IT IS HOWEVER THE VIEW OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT THAT ANY LESS STRINGENT STANDARDS WOULD NOT ACHIEVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN THE WATERCOURSES OF THE NEW TERRITORIES,+ HE NOTED.

IN ORDER TO HELP THE FARMERS COMPLY WITH THE PROPOSED STANDARDS, DEMONSTRATION FARMS WILL BE SET UP BY THE EPD TO SHOW FARMERS HOW THE VARIOUS TREATMENT FACILITIES WORK.

THE DEPARTMENT WILL ALSO PROVIDE ADVICE ON ACCEPTABLE TECHNIQUES FOR WASTE TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL AND WILL ORGANISE COLLECTION SERVICES, WHICH WILL BE SUBSIDISED FROM PUBLIC FUNDS IN THE INITIAL STAGES.

MR CHAMBERS SAID THESE ASPECTS WERE BEING DISCUSSED IN THE AD HOC GROUP AND MEMBERS WOULD HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE LEGISLATION WHEN THE AMENDMENT TO THE WASTE DISPOSAL ORDINANCE CAME BEFORE THE COUNCIL.

- - - - - 0 - - - - -

SHRINKAGE ON AGRICULTURAL LAND EXPLAINED
* * * * *

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, OUTLINED TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THE CAUSES FOR THE PROGRESSIVE SHRINKAGE IN THE AREA OF AGRICULTURAL LAND IN EFFECTIVE USE OVER THE YEARS DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON PRIMARY INDUSTRIES.

HE SAID THAT AS OF 1986, THE AMOUNT OF ARABLE LAND LYING FALLOW WAS 4 070 HECTARES, OR 43 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL 9 450 HECTARES OF ARABLE LAND. THIS POSITION HAS REMAINED MORE OR LESS STABLE SINCE 1977.

+WHILE SOME OF THE LAND WAS ABANDONED LONG AGO BECAUSE IT WAS UNECONOMIC (BEING TOO SMALL, TOO REMOTE, OR AFFECTED BY INADEQUATE WATER SUPPLY OR POOR DRAINAGE), MUCH OF THE REDUCTION IN RECENT YEARS OCCURRED BECAUSE LAND WAS TAKEN UP FOR DEVELOPMENT BY EITHER THE PUBLIC OR THE PRIVATE SECTORS,+ MR BARNES SAID.

MUCH ARABLE LAND WAS LEFT FALLOW IN EXPECTATION, NOT ALWAYS JUSTIFIED, OF ITS BEING DEVELOPED IN THE NEAR FUTURE, HE ADDED.

ANOTHER REASON FOR THE DECREASE IN PRODUCTIVE FARM LAND, MR BARNES SAID, WAS THAT THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE DID NOT AT PRESENT GIVE POWERS TO THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD TO ZONE LAND FOR RURAL USES IN SUPPORT OF AGRICULTURE, AND A RECENT JUDICIAL INTERPRETATION OF THE BLOCK CROWN LEASE HAD MADE ANY PROTECTION UNDER THE LEASE OF PRIVATE AGRICULTURAL LAND FOR ITS INTENDED FUNCTION EXTREMELY DIFFICULT.

+SO GOOD FARM LAND IS BEING CONVERTED TO STORAGE, CAR DUMPS AND OTHER MONSTROSITIES, WHICH ARE SEEN AS MORE PROFITABLE USES THAN FARMING WITH LITTLE OR NO INTERFERENCE FROM GOVERNMENT. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES NEITHER GOVERNMENT NOR PRIVATE ENTERPRISE HAS THE INCENTIVE OR INDEED THE SECURITY TO INVEST IN AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE,+ MR BARNES ADDED.

COMMENTING ON THE CONCEPT OF DESIGNATING AGRICULTURAL PRIORITY AREAS AS ADVOCATED BY MR TAI CHIN-WAH, MR BARNES SAID IT WAS AN EXPLORATORY STEP TOWARDS REVERSING THE TENDENCY TO CONVERT GOOD FARM LAND INTO OTHER USES.

+THE INTENTION IS THAT AREAS IDENTIFIED BY THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES SHOULD BE DESIGNATED IN GOVERNMENT NON-STATUTORY SUB-REGIONAL PLANNING STATEMENTS AS BEING PLANNED FOR AGRICULTURE.

+GENERALLY SPEAKING THESE ARE AREAS WHERE LITTLE LAND HAS BEEN CONVERTED TO OTHER USES AND WHERE AGRICULTURE IS STILL FLOURISHING.

+SOME OF THESE PLANNING STATEMENTS ARE, AND ALL WILL BE, DISCUSSED IN DISTRICT BOARDS, AND IT IS HOPED THAT THIS DISCUSSION WILL HELP GOVERNMENT TO DECIDE WHETHER THE OBJECTIVE TO ENCOURAGE AGRICULTURE IS WORTH PURSUING ACTIVELY AND CARRYING FORWARD TO, SAY, STATUTORY PROTECTION ON THE LINES OF COUNTRY PARK OR TOWN PLANNING LEGISLATION, INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND OTHER ASSISTANCE TO ENCOURAGE PRODUCTION,+ HE SAID.

REFERRING TO THE PROBLEM OF THE BUILDING OF DOMESTIC HOUSES ON FARM LAND, MR BARNES SAID SO MANY PEOPLE LIVED ON OR AROUND FARM LANDS THAT IT WAS OFTEN DIFFICULT TO SORT OUT THE FARMERS FROM THE REST. MOREOVER THE OLD FARMER'S HOUSE RELATING TO A PIECE OF FARM LAND WAS OFTEN OCCUPIED BY SOMEONE ELSE.

+HOWEVER, THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES HAS RECOGNISED THAT THERE SOMEIMTES IS A PROBLEM AND IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT, IS TRYING OUT SCHEMES IN TWO AREAS FOR PERMITTING GENUINE FARMERS TO BUILD PROPER DOMESTIC ACCOMMODATION ON THEIR LAND.+

+IF IT IS SHOWN THAT THIS IS A REAL STIMULUS TO OUR AGRICULTURE AND THAT IT WORKS IN OTHER RESPECTS, THE GENERAL APPLICATION OF THE SCHEME SHOULD BE SUPPORTED,+ MR BARNES SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

GOVERNMENT URGED TO ASSIST DEEP SEA FISHING INDUSTRY
* * * * *

THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE GREATER ASSISTANCE TO HONG KONG'S DEEP SEA FISHING INDUSTRY, THE HON WONG PO-YAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON PRIMARY INDUSTRIES, MR WONG SAID THAT WITH TECHNOLOGICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT, HONG KONG'S FISHING FLEET HAD ACHIEVED SIGNIFICANT MODERNISATION IN RECENT YEARS.

+AS A RESULT, OUR FISHERMEN HAVE BETTER NAVIGATION AIDS, ENGINES AND STORAGE EQUIPMENT WHICH ENABLE THEM TO EXPLORE NEW FISHING GROUNDS FURTHER AWAY FROM BASE IN GREATER SPEED AND SAFETY,+ HE SAID.

BUT DESPITE THE CONTINUING IMPROVEMENT OF THE LOCAL FISHING INDUSTRY, ITS POTENTIALS HAD NOT YET BEEN FULLY EXPLOITED, HE ADDED.

HE SAID THAT SINCE LOCAL FISHERMEN WERE NOW BETTER TRAINED AND EDUCATED AND MORE EXPERIENCED WITH FISHING OVERSEAS, THEY SHOULD FORM A FIRM FOUNDATION FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.

GIVEN ADDITIONAL TRAINING IN THE USE OF SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT AND IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF LONG-RANGE SAILING, THIS CORE OF PROFESSIONALS COULD BECOME THE PIONEERS OF A NEW INDUSTRY.

MR WONG SAID THAT HONG KONG SHOULD AIM AT LARGE SCALE CATCHES FOR EXPORT.

+TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY AND COMPETITIVENESS, OUR FISHING FLEETS SHOULD DEVELOP GRADUALLY INTO A SELF-CONTAINED PRODUCTION LINE TURNING THEIR CATCHES INTO TINNED GOODS OR DEEP FROZEN PRODUCTS FOR THE OVERSEAS MARKET,+ HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT SUCH OPERATIONS WOULD INEVITABLY REQUIRE HEAVY CAPITAL INVESTMENT. THIS NEW AND UNEXPLORED INDUSTRY PROVIDED A FRESH OPPORTUNITY FOR INVESTORS, HE ADDED.

TO PROVIDE AN INITIAL IMPETUS, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER PROVIDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF LOW-INTEREST LOANS TO STIMULATE PARTICIPATION BY INVESTORS.

+IT WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL IF GOVERNMENT COULD PROVIDE TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE TO THE FISHING COMMUNITY ON THE OPERATIONAL AND MARKETING ASPECTS OF THEIR TRADE,+ HE SAID.

TURNING TO AGRICULTURE, MR WONG SAID IT WAS HIS FIRM BELIEF THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO TURN FAMILY OPERATIONS INTO ENTERPRISING CORPORATIONS TO PRODUCE HIGH VALUE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

+I ALSO CONSIDER IT ESSENTIAL THAT MODERN TECHNOLOGY SHOULD BE EMPLOYED TO YIELD BETTER QUALITY AND PRODUCTIVITY,+ HE SAID.

MR WONG THEREFORE AGREED ENTIRELY WITH OTHER AGRICULTURAL EXPERTS THAT A CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO LOOK INTO POSSIBLE WAYS OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

- 9 -

SUPPORT FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES URGED
* * * * *

THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG TODAY (WEDNESDAY) CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO GIVE STRONG SUPPORT TO PRIMARY INDUSTRIES IN HONG KONG.

SPEAKING DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON PRIMARY INDUSTRIES IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR CHEUNG SAID THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SHOW A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND MAKE MORE SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENT IN BUILDING AND PROVIDING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE PRIMARY INDUSTRIES.

+ONLY BY DOING SO, CAN LOCAL PRIMARY INDUSTRIES BE CLOSELY LINKED WITH OUR LIVELIHOOD AND ECONOMY, AND CONTINUE TO MAKE GREAT CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS ENHANCING THE PROSPERITY AND STABILITY OF HONG KONG,+ HE SAID.

MR CHEUNG SAID CURRENTLY THERE WERE ABOUT 14 000 FAMILIES OR ABOUT 58 000 PERSONS STILL ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURAL AND FISHING INDUSTRIES IN HONG KONG.

DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, THE LIVELIHOOD OF ABOUT 200 000 TO 300 000 PEOPLE DEPENDED ON PRIMARY INDUSTRIES, HE SAID.

WITH REGARD TO ECONOMIC BENEFITS, MR CHEUNG SAID THE TOTAL PRODUCTS FROM AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES WERE VALUED AT \$3 000 MILLION, WHICH DEFINITELY CONTRIBUTED POSITIVELY TO THE ECONOMIC GROWTH OF HONG KONG.

BESIDES, AGRICULTURAL AND FISHING INDUSTRIES PLAYED A VERY IMPORTANT PART IN HELPING HONG KONG MAINTAIN A BASIC DEGREE OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY, HE ADDED.

HE NOTED THAT EXCESSIVE RELIANCE ON THE IMPORT OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS WOULD LEAD TO THE STIFLING AND DECLINE OF THE AGRICULTURAL AND FISHING INDUSTRIES.

+SHOULD WE NEED THEIR SUPPORT AT OTHER TIMES, WE MAY FIND IT HARD TO REORGANISE AND INVIGORATE THEM TO COPE WITH THE CHANGING DEMANDS,+ HE SAID.

MR CHEUNG CONSIDERED THAT A FAR-SIGHTED GOVERNMENT SHOULD FORMULATE A GOOD POLICY ON +FOOD+, WHICH WAS ONE OF THE FOUR MOST BASIC NECESSITIES OF LIFE.

+ALL ALONG, THE GOVERNMENT HAS SHOWN GREAT FORESIGHT IN THE PROVISION OF WATER SUPPLY AND HAS MANAGED TO OVERCOME ALL DIFFICULTIES IN THIS REGARD.

+RESERVOIRS ARE BUILT SO THAT THE TERRITORY CAN BE SELF-SUFFICIENT IN WATER SUPPLY.

+IF THE GOVERNMENT CAN APPLY SUCH PERSEVERING EFFORTS TO DEVELOP THE PRIMARY INDUSTRIES, GREAT PROGRESS WILL SURELY BE MADE VERY SOON,+ HE SAID.

/TURNING TO

TURNING TO THOSE ENGAGED IN THE AGRICULTURAL AND FISHING INDUSTRIES IN HONG KONG, MR CHEUNG SAID MANY WERE HARD-WORKING WITH AN ENTERPRISING SPIRIT.

+THEY ARE WILLING TO INVEST THEIR MONEY AND DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO FURTHER DEVELOPING THEIR TRADES.

+WHAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS TO DO IS TO GIVE THEM A PUSH BY PROVIDING THEM WITH SOME ASSISTANCE THROUGH ITS LAND POLICIES AND TO GIVE THEM SOME TECHNICAL ADVICE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MEASURES WHICH THEY SHOULD ADOPT,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID HE FIRMLY BELIEVED THAT AGRICULTURAL AND FISHING INDUSTRIES HAD GREAT POTENTIAL TO BECOME ANOTHER LUCRATIVE EXPORT TRADE EARNING FOREIGN EXCHANGE FOR HONG KONG.

MR CHEUNG SAID IF THE CUT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION OF THE AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT WAS MADE BECAUSE IT WAS CONSIDERED THAT THE PRIMARY INDUSTRIES HAD BECOME LESS IMPORTANT, THE GOVERNMENT WAS PUTTING THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE, AND THE LOSS WOULD EVENTUALLY OUTWEIGH THE GAIN.

HE THEN REMINDED THE GOVERNMENT THAT A POLICY THAT WAS CORRECT AND MET THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE SHOULD BE FAR-SIGHTED AND INNOVATORY.

+A FAR-SIGHTED GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE ABLE TO FORESEE THE FUTURE, PREDICT THE NEEDS OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND MAKE EARLY ARRANGEMENTS IN ORDER TO CREATE A BETTER FUTURE FOR THE COMMUNITY- IT SHOULD NOT REMAIN PASSIVE, MAKING ADJUSTMENT FOR ITS OWN SAKE AND BEING LED BY THE SO-CALLED 'TREND',+ HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT +POLICY+ AND +TREND+ WERE IN FACT INTERRELATED. THE EXISTING GOVERNMENT HAD THE MERIT OF BEING ABLE TO CHANGE THE +TREND+ BY MEANS OF POLICIES. THE MODERNISATION +POLICY+ OF THE PRIMARY INDUSTRIES SHOULD KEEP ABREAST WITH THE MODERNISATION +TREND+ IN HONG KONG AND THE TWO SHOULD NOT REPEL ONE ANOTHER.

MR CHEUNG ADMITTED THAT THERE WERE MANY PROBLEMS FACING PRIMARY INDUSTRIES IN HONG KONG, WHICH INCLUDED COMPETITION FROM IMPORTED PRODUCTS, DECREASE IN ARABLE LANDS, LACK OF MEN TO TAKE UP FARMING, FISHERMEN GOING ASHORE TO SEEK NEW JOBS, DIFFICULTIES CONCERNING CASH FLOW AND THE DISPOSAL OF ANIMAL WASTES.

NEVERTHELESS, HE SAID, AS AGRICULTURAL AND FISHING INDUSTRIES HAD POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT AND THERE WAS A NEED FOR THEM TO DEVELOP FURTHER, IT WAS PROPER THAT THESE INDUSTRIES SHOULD HAVE STRONG SUPPORT FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

- 11 -

**PRIMARY INDUSTRIES NEED GREATER SUPPORT, ENCOURAGEMENT

THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD GIVE GREATER ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT TO LOCAL PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND ABANDON ITS OUTDATED POLICY OF NON-INTERVENTION, THE HON TAI CHIN-WAH SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON PRIMARY INDUSTRIES IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR TAI STRESSED THAT THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL PRIMARY INDUSTRIES SHOULD NOT BE UNDER-ESTIMATED NOR NEGLECTED AND THAT THEIR CONTINUED EXISTENCE WAS ESSENTIAL.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE POLICY TOWARDS PRIMARY INDUSTRIES, ESPECIALLY AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, SHOULD BE REVISED SO THAT SUCH INDUSTRIES COULD REMAIN ECONOMICALLY VIABLE COMPARED WITH FOREIGN IMPORTS AND ACHIEVE A GREATER DEGREE OF STABILISATION IN THE SUPPLY OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

MR TAI SAID THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE A STEADY SUPPLY OF BOTH LOCAL AND IMPORTED FOODSTUFF LEFT MUCH TO BE DESIRED.

HE NOTED THAT IMPORTED FOODSTUFF AT PRESENT DOMINATED THE MARKET AND IT THEREBY SHOWED THAT THE DEPARTMENT WAS NOT PERFORMING ITS PRIMARY TASK OF ASSISTING AND PROMOTING LOCAL AGRICULTURE.

IN ORDER TO PROMOTE LOCAL AGRICULTURE, MR TAI SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER SELECTING CERTAIN AREAS TO BE DESIGNATED AS AGRICULTURAL PRIORITY AREAS WITHIN WHICH INFRASTRUCTURES WOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE FARMERS TO MAINTAIN A VIABLE LIVELIHOOD.

HE SAID THE ADOPTION OF SUCH A PLAN SHOULD DO MUCH TO HELP STABILISE THE MARKET SUPPLY AND THE PRICE OF FOODSTUFF.

MR TAI POINTED OUT THAT ONLY 3 000 HECTARES OF THE 7 000 HECTARES OF ARABLE LAND WERE UNDER CULTIVATION AT THE MOMENT AND URGED THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT TO DEPLOY MORE STAFF TO EDUCATE FARMERS IN APPLYING NEW TECHNOLOGY TO CULTIVATE FALLOW LAND SO AS TO ENCOURAGE AND EXPAND LOCAL AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY.

HE SAID AGRICULTURE AND FISHERY INDUSTRIES SHOULD EMPLOY ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY SO AS TO REDUCE LABOUR COSTS AND ACHIEVE GREATER EFFICIENCY.

+THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN INTRODUCING NEW TECHNOLOGY TO OUR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES,+ HE ADDED.

TURNING TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS CAUSED BY MANURE FROM PIG AND POULTRY FARMS, MR TAI WELCOMED THE GOVERNMENT'S INCREASED DETERMINATION TO COMBAT SUCH NUISANCE AND HEALTH HAZARDS, BUT WARNED THAT SEVERE POLLUTION CONTROL MEASURES WOULD ENDANGER THE LIVELIHOOD OF NEARLY 26 000 PEOPLE WHO EARN THEIR LIVING BY REARING ANIMALS.

+THEREFORE, I APPEAL TO THE COUNCIL TO DELIBERATE CAREFULLY OVER THE HARDSHIP OF THOSE WHO WILL BE AFFECTED AND SEARCH FOR A BETTER COMPROMISE BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL NUISANCES AND THE LIVELIHOOD OF 26 000 FARMERS,+ HE SAID.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

- 12 -

COMMITTEE TO STUDY AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADVOCATED
* * * * *

THE GOVERNMENT WAS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) URGED TO SET UP AN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE IN HONG KONG.

THE CALL WAS MADE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BY THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON PRIMARY INDUSTRIES.

MR TAM SAID THERE WAS NO REASON WHY AGRICULTURE AS AN INDUSTRY SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO FADE OUT AND IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT REGARD IT AS A +TWILIGHT INDUSTRY+ IN THE FIRST PLACE.

+ACCORDING TO SOME COMMENTATORS, THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY IN HONG KONG IS UNDERGOING A PERIOD OF CHANGE AND IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURE, THE INTRODUCTION OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF APPLYING BIOLOGICAL ENGINEERING TECHNIQUES, AND THE WAY IN WHICH THE LOCAL INDUSTRY CAN BE MADE TO COMPLEMENT RATHER THAN COMPETE WITH AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA.

+THESE ARE PROBLEMS WHICH I FEEL DESERVE OUR CAREFUL SCRUTINY AND SOME HARD THINKING,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID HE DID NOT AGREE WITH THE GOVERNMENT THAT AGRICULTURE WAS OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE TO THE ECONOMY OF HONG KONG- THAT FARMLAND MUST GIVE WAY TO OTHER DEVELOPMENTS AND THAT HONG KONG COULD INCREASE ITS RELIANCE ON CHINA ON THE PROVISION OF FISHERY AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

ON THE FIRST POINT, HE SAID THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY PLAYED A PART IN LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BY HELPING TO MODERATE PRICES, STABILISING THE MARKET AND PRODUCE THE INCENTIVE FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE QUALITY OF AGRICULTURAL IMPORTS.

IN ADDITION, STAFF OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT HAD CONFIRMED THAT THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY AND RELATED TRADES, SUCH AS THE SUPPLY OF ANIMAL FEED AND MEDICINE AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES PROVIDED DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND A MEANS OF LIVING FOR NEARLY 200 000 PEOPLE IN HONG KONG.

HE QUESTIONED HOW WE COULD CATER FOR THE LIVELIHOOD OF THESE PEOPLE IF THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY ACTUALLY FELL INTO DECLINE.

IN ALL EVENTS, THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY TO OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED, HE SAID.

TURNING TO THE SECOND POINT, HE SAID THAT DESPITE GOVERNMENT'S FREQUENT ASSERTION ABOUT THE SHORTAGE OF LAND FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE, THERE WERE STATISTICS TO INDICATE THAT FALLOW LAND HAD INCREASED FROM 1 100 HECTARES IN 1954 TO 4 070 HECTARES.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

- 13 -

+FOR THE PURPOSE OF A BETTER ENVIRONMENT, I BELIEVE THAT IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE SHOULD AIM AT A BALANCED DEVELOPMENT IN THE PLANNING AND APPLICATION OF LAND USE.

+APART FROM PROVIDING ENOUGH LAND FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT, SUITABLE AREAS SHOULD BE SET ASIDE FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES.+

MR TAM SAID THAT BACK IN 1979, THE LAND DEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEE HAD PROPOSED IN A PAPER ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL LAND THAT THERE SHOULD BE A CONSOLIDATED AND BALANCED DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL, AGRICULTURAL AND RESIDENTIAL LAND.

REGARDING THE THIRD POINT, MR TAM SAID IT SEEMED TO HIM THAT AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN HONG KONG WAS LOOKED AT BY THE GOVERNMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF COMPETITION WITH THE IMPORT OF FARM PRODUCTS FROM CHINA.

THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED THAT WITH THE HIGH VALUE OF LAND IN HONG KONG AND THE LACK OF SPACE FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE LONG TERM, IT WOULD BE MORE SENSIBLE TO RELY ON CHINA FOR SUPPLYING THE BULK OF THE NEED IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

CONSEQUENTLY, THE EXISTENCE AND CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCAL AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY WAS THOUGHT TO BE UNNECESSARY.

MR TAM SAID THIS WAS A BIASED ARGUMENT AS IT OVERLOOKED THE SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION OF OUR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY IN SUPPLYING THE TERRITORY WITH AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS WHICH, IN TERMS OF FRESHNESS AND QUALITY, WERE SUPERIOR TO ALL IMPORTED PRODUCTS AND, AS SUCH, COULD HARDLY BE REPLACED.

----- 0 -----

COMMITTEE TO REVIEW AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES POLICY URGED

THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD APPOINT AS A MATTER OF URGENCY A POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO COMPREHENSIVELY REVIEW THE EXISTING AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERIES POLICY, THE HON ANDREW WONG SUGGESTED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID THIS WOULD ALLOW THE SECTOR TO DEVELOP ON A FREE AND FAIR BASIS INTO REALMS OF HIGH TECHNOLOGY, AND TO MONITOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EXISTING OR ANY NEW POLICY IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR OF OUR ECONOMY.

SPEAKING DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON PRIMARY INDUSTRIES, MR WONG SAID HE PERSONALLY AGREED THAT AN ARTIFICIAL POLICY TO MAINTAIN AN EXISTING MARKET SHARE OF LOCAL PRODUCTS WAS NO LONGER NECESSARY NOR DESIRABLE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST AS CONCLUDED BY A VALUE FOR MONEY STUDY CONDUCTED IN 1985.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

- 14 -

HOWEVER, HE FELT THAT A POLICY CHANGE AS MAJOR AS THIS SHOULD NOT BE MADE BEHIND CLOSED DOORS AND CALLED FOR THE SETTING UP OF A POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE.

MR WONG POINTED OUT THAT THE SIGNIFICANT PRODUCTION RATES AND PERCENTAGES IN VEGETABLES, PIGS, POULTRY AND MARINE FISH WERE NOT DUE TO A RIGID AND PROTECTIONIST MARKET SHARE ALLOCATED TO LOCAL PRODUCERS.

HE STRESSED THAT THESE LOCAL PRODUCTS COMPETED IN THE OPEN MARKET WITH IMPORTS AND THE PRODUCTION RATES AND PERCENTAGES WERE THEREFORE REAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF LOCAL PRODUCERS.

REFERRING TO GOVERNMENT'S SUBSIDIES TO THE INDUSTRIES, MR WONG SAID THEY WERE VERY MEAGRE.

HE NOTED THAT IN THE 1987-88 ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE, AN AMOUNT OF \$78.8 MILLION HAD BEEN APPROVED FOR THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT FOR ALL REGULATORY EXPENDITURE EXCLUDING COUNTRY PARK EXPENDITURE, WHILE THE CORRESPONDING ACTUAL FIGURE FOR 1985-86 WAS \$75.2 MILLION.

BY COMPARISON, HE POINTED OUT THAT THE SUBVENTIONS TO THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AND THE PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL FOR THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD WOULD BE \$232 MILLION AND \$56.7 MILLION RESPECTIVELY, WHILE THE CORRESPONDING ACTUAL FIGURE FOR 1985-86 WERE \$211.8 MILLION AND \$36.9 MILLION RESPECTIVELY.

MR WONG ALSO ATTACHED AS AN APPENDIX TO HIS SPEECH HIS VIEWS ON MARICULTURE IN HONG KONG.

HE POINTED OUT THAT STEADY PROGRESS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARICULTURE HAD BEEN ACHIEVED IN RECENT YEARS AND SAID ITS EXISTENCE AND VALUE SHOULD BE RECOGNISED.

HE SAID HE HOPED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER ADOPTING FAIR AND REASONABLE PROTECTIVE MEASURES FOR THE INDUSTRY IN VIEW OF ITS POTENTIAL TO DEVELOP FURTHER.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/15

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

- 15 -

FLOOD PROTECTION ACTION 'MEANS BUSINESS'

* * * * *

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT GOVERNMENT'S FLOOD PROTECTION ACTION +MEANS BUSINESS+ AND HE HAS APPOINTED THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL ENGINEERING SERVICES (DCES) AS GOVERNMENT'S MAIN CO-ORDINATOR IN RELATION TO ALL PREVENTION AND REMEDIAL ACTION AGAINST FLOODING.

WINDING UP THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON FLOODING IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR BARNES SAID HE HAD ALSO RECENTLY REVIEWED BRIEFLY THE RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES OF THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS WHICH HAD RESPONSIBILITY FOR FLOOD CONTROL, AND CONCLUDED THAT THESE PROGRAMMES WERE VERY COMPREHENSIVE AND THAT ALL PARTS OF THE MACHINE WERE WORKING VERY WELL.

+APART FROM THE FACT THAT WITH SUCH A WEALTH OF UNPLANNED ACTIVITY IN SUCH AN ENORMOUSLY VULNERABLE AREA THE PHYSICAL PROBLEMS OF FLOOD PREVENTION ARE THEMSELVES VERY FORMIDABLE- THE MAIN AREA TO POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENT SEEMS TO BE THAT OF CO-ORDINATION AND OF OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY,+ HE SAID.

MR BARNES SAID THAT DCES WOULD AS A MATTER OF URGENCY REVIEW ALL MEASURES TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTION WITH DRAINAGE AND FLOODS AND ALL KNOWN BLACK-SPOTS WITH A VIEW TO TAKING THE BEST ACTION TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM.

HE SAID WITH A LAND-FALL OF ONLY 11 METRES OVER THE 9.5 KILOMETRES WHICH SEPARATED PAT HEUNG FROM THE MOUTH OF THE YUEN LONG RIVER, AND A MASS OF UNCONTROLLED ACTIVITY CHANGING THE INTERVENING LANDSCAPE DAY BY DAY THE NORTH-WEST NEW TERRITORIES WAS LITTLE SHORT OF A DRAINAGE ENGINEER'S NIGHTMARE.

+THERE ARE HOWEVER FOUR CATEGORY B ITEMS CONCERNED WITH FLOOD CONTROL IN YUEN LONG DISTRICT, AND THE DIRECTOR WILL HAVE TO LOOK AT THESE BOTH IN RELATION TO THE IMPENDING DEVELOPMENT OF TIN SHUI WAI TO WHICH THREE OF THEM ARE RELATED AND THE GENERAL PROBLEMS OF THE AREA.

+SIMPLER LOCAL IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING WATER-COURSES WILL ALSO BE LOOKED AT,+ MR BARNES SAID.

+WE ARE TOTALLY AGREED THAT IT IS TIME TO PLAN MORE SYSTEMATICALLY FOR WORKS ON A CONSIDERABLY LARGER SCALE TO IMPROVE PARTICULARLY THE ACCESS TO AND SANITATION IN THE VILLAGES AND RURAL AREAS.

+THIS YEAR'S ESTIMATES PROVIDED FOR CONSIDERABLY INCREASED SPENDING ON THESE IMPROVEMENTS, INCLUDING FOR THE FIRST TIME A PROVISION FOR MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING WORKS, AND WE ARE PLANNING A FAR MORE COMPREHENSIVE AND SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO THEM.+

ON THE QUESTION OF PAYMENTS TO FARMERS UNDER THE COMMUNITY RELIEF TRUST FUND, MR BARNES SAID IT WAS TRUE THAT THESE WERE REGARDED AS EX-GRATIA PAYMENTS AND WERE NOT INTENDED TO COMPENSATE THE LOSS, BUT RATHER TO ASSIST FARMERS AT A CRITICAL TIME.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

- 16 -

CALL FOR URGENT MEASURES TO TACKLE FLOODING
* * * * *

THERE IS A PRESSING NEED FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE URGENT REMEDIAL MEASURES TO TACKLE THE PROBLEMS OF FLOODING IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, PARTICULARLY IN RURAL AREAS, THE HON TAI CHIN-WAH SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR TAI MADE THE CALL WHEN MOVING A MOTION FOR AN ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON FLOODING IN THE NEW TERRITORIES IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE SAID THE DAMAGE TO THE FARMING COMMUNITIES AND INDUSTRIES CAUSED BY FLOODING DURING THE MODERATE DOWNPOURS LAST MONTH WAS SEVERE AND VERY EXTENSIVE.

WITH THE BEGINNING OF THE RAINY SEASON AND THE APPROACH OF THE TYPHOON SEASON, HONG KONG COULD ANTICIPATE SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE BEING CAUSED BY FLOODING AS WELL AS DANGER TO LIFE, HE ADDED.

MR TAI POINTED OUT THAT FLOODING HAD LONG BEEN A PROBLEM IN THE RURAL AND LOW-LYING AREAS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES.

HE SAID OVER THE PAST YEAR, THERE HAD BEEN FREQUENT FLOODING IN PAT HEUNG, TIN SHUM, LAU FAU SHA, HA TSUEN AND THE NORTHERN PART OF THE NEW TERRITORIES DURING THE RAINY SEASON, BUT LITTLE HAD BEEN DONE BY THE GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION.

AS A RESULT OF AN INCREASING IMBALANCE IN THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS IN FAVOUR OF NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENT AND LESS AVAILABLE FOR RURAL RESIDENTS, NOT ONLY THE LIVING STANDARDS AND CONDITIONS OF THE RURAL RESIDENTS HAD NOT BEEN MAINTAINED, BUT IN MANY CASES HAD DETERIORATED OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, HE NOTED.

MR TAI ALSO POINTED OUT THAT WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT, MUCH EXPERTISE THAT WAS PREVIOUSLY CONCERNED WITH ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE WATER COURSES AND RIVERS HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED OUT OF THE LANDS DEPARTMENT AND THE CIVIL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT, RESULTING IN UNCERTAINTY AND SOME CONFUSION AS TO WHERE ACTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES LIE IN REGARD TO RECTIFYING THIS SITUATION.

+IN ORDER TO REMOVE THIS UNCERTAINTY AND ALLAY THE WORRIES AND FEARS OF THE RURAL RESIDENTS IN THE AFFECTED AREA THREATENED BY TORRENTIAL RAINS, IMMEDIATE AND EFFECTIVE MEASURES SHOULD NOW BE TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO DEAL WITH THE FLOODING PROBLEM,+ HE SAID.

IN REGARD TO THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT, MR TAI SAID THE EXISTING PRACTICE WAS THAT A SMALL INTEREST LOAN WOULD BE ADVANCED TO FARMER AFFECTED BY FLOODS AND A HANDOUT OF APPROXIMATELY \$1 000 WOULD BE MADE TO LIVE-STOCK FARMERS.

HE FELT IF THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS PRACTICE WAS TO ASSIST OR PROVIDE RELIEF TO AFFECTED FARMERS, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD REVIEW THE PRESENT AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE AS IT WAS TOO LIMITED AND TRULY INADEQUATE.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

- 17 -

URGENT ACTION AGAINST NT FLOODING NEEDED

* * * * *

SENIOR MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE HON LYDIA DUNN, CRITICISED THE GOVERNMENT FOR DOING TOO LITTLE AND TOO LATE IN FLOOD PREVENTION IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, RESULTING IN CRIPPLING LOSS FOR FARMERS WHENEVER RAINSTORM OCCURS.

SPEAKING DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON FLOODING IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, MISS DUNN SAID:

+IT IS NOT ONLY THE MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD THAT IS THREATENED BY FLOOD BUT THE HOMES OF THE FARMERS AND OTHERS WHO LIVE IN THE RURAL AREAS.

+OUR FARMERS ARE STILL RESPONSIBLE FOR PRODUCING SOME 34 PER CENT OF OUR VEGETABLES, 39 PER CENT OF OUR POULTRY AND 11 PER CENT OF OUR FRESH-WATER FISH. FLOODING NOT ONLY CREATES FOR THEM CRIPPLING LOSS, BUT ENDS UP PINCHING THE PURSES OF OUR HOUSEWIVES.+

MISS DUNN SAID A NUMBER OF COMPLAINT CASES THAT HAD COME TO THE ATTENTION OF OMELCO HAD DRAWN COUNCILLORS TO SOME OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH THE GOVERNMENT COULD, AND MUST, ADDRESS IN ORDER TO ALLEVIATE THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY FLOODING.

THE FIRST WAS THE NEED FOR SPEEDY ACTION.

+AFTER THE FLOODS SUBSIDE, WE HAVE FOUND THAT IT OFTEN TAKES MONTHS OF LENGTHY DISCUSSION AND INVESTIGATION BEFORE THE RELEVANT GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT IS WILLING TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY AND LOOK INTO THE PROBLEM.

+ANOTHER FEW MONTHS PASS WHILE REMEDIAL ACTION IS CONSIDERED, AND BEFORE WE KNOW IT THE RAINY SEASON IS UPON US AGAIN,+ SHE SAID.

THE SECOND PROBLEM IS THE APPARENT LACK OF EFFECTIVE CO-ORDINATION, SHE SAID.

SHE CITED A RECENT COMPLAINT CASE INVOLVING BLOCKED STREAMS IN FANLING CAUSED BY INDISCRIMINATE DUMPING IN WHICH THE RELEVANT DEPARTMENTS TOOK MONTHS TO DECIDE ON THE RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT REMEDIAL WORKS.

AT THE END, THE COORDINATING DEPARTMENT WHICH HAD NEITHER THE STAFF RESOURCES NOR TECHNICAL EXPERTISE FOR THE REMEDIAL WORKS REQUIRED, HAD TO RELY ON PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME FOR A SOLUTION. THIS MEANT FURTHER MONTHS OF DELAY AND IS JUST NOT GOOD ENOUGH, SHE SAID.

WHILE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS WERE POURED INTO DEVELOPING THE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR NEW TOWNS AND ENSURING A HIGH STANDARD OF SERVICES AND FACILITIES TO ATTRACT NEWCOMERS, VERY LITTLE WAS DONE, IN COMPARISON, FOR THOSE LIVING IN THE NON-URBAN PARTS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES.

SHE SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT SEEM TO HAVE ANY OVERALL POLICY OR PLAN TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEW RURAL POPULATION IN PROPERLY LAID OUT VILLAGES.

/THE ABSENCE

THE ABSENCE OF PROPER PLANNING HAD MEANT THAT THE RURAL POPULATION HAD TO BE ACCOMMODATED IN A MUCH MORE HAPHAZARD FASHION THAN WAS DESIRABLE. THOUSANDS LIVED IN HOMES THAT WERE SUBJECT TO FLOODING, SHE ADDED.

MISS DUNN HOPED THAT THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE WOULD GENERATE AN INITIATIVE THAT WOULD FIRST, AND QUICKLY, LEAD TO AN ABATEMENT OF FLOODING RISKS. IT SHOULD THEN TACKLE ALL THE OTHER PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE NEGLECT OF DEVELOPMENT REALITIES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

- - - - - 0 - - - - -

FLOOD CONTROL TEAM SHOULD BE SET UP
* * * * *

THE HON LAU WONG-FAT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO SET UP A FLOOD CONTROL TEAM TO PREVENT MAN-MADE FLOODING IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON FLOODING IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR LAU SUGGESTED THAT CONTRACTORS SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE DRAINAGE WORK IN THE SURROUNDING AREAS BEFORE COMMENCING WORK AT A CONSTRUCTION SITE.

HE SAID THAT ON COMPLETION OF THE DRAINAGE WORK, THE FLOOD CONTROL TEAM SHOULD CONDUCT AN INSPECTION AND ONLY THEN SHOULD CONSTRUCTION WORK BE ALLOWED TO PROCEED.

+THE FLOOD CONTROL TEAM MAY ALSO BE MADE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE DRAINAGE SYSTEM OF ROADS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES,+ HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FLOOD CONTROL TEAM WOULD INEVITABLY INVOLVE ADDITIONAL CAPITAL OUTLAY FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

+HOWEVER, WOULD IT NOT BE MORE ADVISABLE TO ALLOCATE MORE FUNDS FOR DEVISING PREVENTIVE MEASURES THAN TO FORK OUT SUMS OF MONEY IN COMPENSATION AFTER EACH FLOODING?+ HE QUESTIONED.

HE SAID THIS WAS THE ONLY WAY TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM OF MAN-MADE FLOODING IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND TO PROVIDE MORE EFFECTIVE PROTECTION TO PEOPLE'S LIFE AND PROPERTY.

HE SAID THAT WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TERRITORIES AND THE CONTINUED EXPANSION OF THE NEW TOWNS, VAST AREAS OF LAND IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WERE BEING DEVELOPED IN CONNECTION WITH VARIOUS PROJECTS.

AS A RESULT OF WORK AT CONSTRUCTION SITES, ELEVATION OF EMBANKMENTS WHEN CONSTRUCTING ROADS AND STORING BUILDING MATERIALS, THE DRAINAGE SYSTEM WAS INADVERTENTLY ALTERED OR BLOCKED.

THIS HAD LED TO FLOODING IN LOW-LYING AREAS WHENEVER THERE WAS HEAVY RAINFALL DURING THE WET SEASON. THE SITUATION WAS PARTICULARLY SERIOUS IN THE NORTHERN AND NORTHWESTERN PARTS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES.

+EVERY YEAR, FLOODING RESULTING FROM HEAVY RAINFALL CAUSES INESTIMATABLE LOSSES TO CROPS AND LIVESTOCK IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, AFFECTING THE LIVELIHOOD OF FARMERS,+ HE NOTED.

- - - - - 0 - - - - -

PHARMACY AND POISONS LIST UPDATED
* * * * *

THE PROPOSED PHARMACY AND POISONS (AMENDMENT)(NO. 2) REGULATIONS 1987 AND THE POISON LIST (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1987 REFLECT THE LATEST UPDATING OF THE LIST AND SCHEDULES BY THE PHARMACY AND POISONS BOARD, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

+THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS ALSO EXTEND THE EXISTING POISON CLASSIFICATION OF QUININE AND ITS SALTS TO DERIVATIVES OF QUININE AND THEIR SALTS, SINCE THESE SUBSTANCES HAD THE SAME PHARMACOLOGICAL PROPERTIES AS THE PARENT COMPOUND,+ HE SAID.

HE ALSO EXPLAINED THAT UNDER SECTION 29 OF THE PHARMACY AND POISONS ORDINANCE (CAP. 138), THE PHARMACY AND POISONS BOARD WAS EMPOWERED TO MAKE REGULATIONS PROVIDING FOR THE CONTROL OF PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS AND POISONS, SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THE LIST OF POISONS UNDER CONTROL AND THE VARIOUS SCHEDULES OF PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS UNDER THE PHARMACY AND POISONS REGULATIONS WERE UPDATED BY THE BOARD FROM TIME TO TIME WHEN NEW PRODUCTS REQUIRING CONTROL APPEARED ON THE MARKET, MR CHAMBERS SAID.

- - - - - 0 - - - - -

DUTY RATES INCREASED TO MEET INFLATION
* * * * *

THE MAIN PRINCIPLE UNDERLYING THE INCREASES IN EXISTING DUTIES IS TO MAINTAIN THE DUTY RATES IN REAL TERMS, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON JOHN YAXLEY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING A MOTION ON THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES ORDINANCE, MR YAXLEY SAID THE INCREASED DUTIES CAME INTO EFFECT ON FEBRUARY 25, 1987 PURSUANT TO THE PUBLIC REVENUE PROTECTION ORDER SIGNED BY THE ACTING GOVERNOR.

+THE PROPOSALS ARE EXPECTED TO PRODUCE ADDITIONAL REVENUE OF \$165 MILLION IN 1987-88 : \$60 MILLION FROM HYDROCARBON OIL, \$50 MILLION FOR INTOXICATING LIQUOR AND IMPORTED ALCOHOL, AND \$55 MILLION FROM TOBACCO,+ HE ADDED.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

- 20 -

EXTENSION OF 30 000 NT LEASES PROPOSED
* * * *

THE ONLY PRACTICABLE WAY OF EXTENDING 30 000 LEASES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND NEW KOWLOON WHICH EXPIRE BEFORE JUNE 30, 1997 IS BY LEGISLATION, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE NEW TERRITORIES LEASES (EXTENSION) BILL, MR BARNES SAID THE BILL WAS ESSENTIALLY ABOUT TWO THINGS, BOTH COVERED BY ANNEX III OF THE JOINT DECLARATION.

THE FIRST WAS THE STATUTORY EXTENSION OF MOST NEW TERRITORIES LEASES. UNDER CLAUSE 6, ALL LEASES, EXCEPT SHORT-TERM TENANCIES AND LEASES FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES, WOULD BE AUTOMATICALLY EXTENDED WITHOUT A REQUIREMENT FOR PAYMENT OF PREMIUM.

HE SAID SOME OF THE LEASES WHICH WOULD BE EXTENDED CONTAINED SPECIAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION IF THE LAND WAS RESUMED BY GOVERNMENT. IF THE PRESENT FORMULA FOR CALCULATING COMPENSATION WERE RETAINED THE LESSEE WOULD RECEIVE CONSIDERABLY MORE THAN ORIGINALLY INTENDED.

HE EXPLAINED THE FORMULA WHICH WOULD ENSURE THAT COMPENSATION CONTINUED TO BE PAYABLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ORIGINAL PRINCIPLE.

MR BARNES SAID THE SECOND MAIN ISSUE WAS SHORT-TERM TENANCIES AND LEASES FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES WHICH WERE SPECIFICALLY EXCEPTED FROM THE PROVISIONS REGARDING RENEWAL IN PARAGRAPH 2 OF ANNEX III OF JOINT DECLARATION.

+THE BILL WILL NOT, OF COURSE, EXTEND THESE,+ HE SAID. SHORT-TERM TENANCIES WERE DEFINED IN THE BILL AS LEASES WHICH WERE ORIGINALLY GRANTED FOR NOT MORE THAN SEVEN YEARS.

+WHEN THESE LEASES FALL DUE THEY WILL BE DEALT WITH ON THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL MERITS, AS AT PRESENT, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT PERMANENT DEVELOPMENT PLANS,+ MR BARNES SAID.

ON LEASES FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES, WHICH HE SAID WERE USUALLY GRANTED BY PRIVATE TREATY FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES, A COMMON FEATURE WAS THAT MOST CONTAINED A PERMANENT PROHIBITION AGAINST ASSIGNMENT AND WOULD NOT BE AUTOMATICALLY RENEWED.

TO AVOID ANY UNCERTAINTY OF TITLE TO LAND A CLAUSE IN THE BILL REQUIRED THE REGISTRAR GENERAL (LAND OFFICER) TO INDICATE LEASES FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES BY MAKING A NOTE TO THAT EFFECT ON THE LAND OFFICE REGISTER.

HE SAID THERE WERE 842 LEASES FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES AND EACH WOULD BE EXAMINED BEFORE A DECISION WAS TAKEN ON WHETHER TO EXTEND IT.

+HOWEVER, MOST LEASES FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES WILL BE EXTENDED, PROVIDED THE LAND IS STILL BEING USED FOR THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH IT WAS ORIGINALLY GRANTED AND IS NOT REQUIRED FOR A PUBLIC PURPOSE,+ HE SAID.

MR BARNES SAID AN EXPLANATORY PAMPHLET OUTLINING NOT ONLY THE EFFECT OF THE BILL BUT ALSO HOW LEASES FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES WOULD BE DEALT WITH ADMINISTRATIVELY HAD BEEN PUBLISHED FOR GENERAL INFORMATION.

LEGISLATIVE EFFECTS TO TAX CONCESSIONS PROPOSED
* * * * *

A BILL GIVING LEGISLATIVE EFFECTS TO FOUR CONCESSIONS IN PERSONAL TAXATION, TWO IN PROFITS TAX AND ONE IN PROPERTY TAX AND INTEREST TAX WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON JOHN YAXLEY, POINTED OUT THAT CLAUSE 8 OF THE BILL REDUCED THE STANDARD TAX RATE FOR BOTH PERSONAL TAXATION AND PROPERTY TAX AND INTEREST TAX FROM 17 PER CENT TO 16.5 PER CENT.

PROVISION FOR THE REDUCTION OF THE RATE OF TAX ON THE PROFITS OF CORPORATIONS FROM 18.5 PER CENT TO 18 PER CENT WAS CONTAINED IN CLAUSE 2 AND 7, HE ADDED.

THE AMENDMENTS TOOK EFFECT FROM THE YEAR OF ASSESSMENT ON APRIL 1, 1987.

AS REGARDS THE REFORM MEASURE, MR YAXLEY SAID PROPOSED AMENDMENTS WOULD APPLY TO ARRANGEMENTS ENTERED INTO AFTER THE GOVERNMENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON FEBRUARY 25, 1987.

+PAST ARRANGEMENTS WILL NOT BE AFFECTED,+ HE ADDED.

MR YAXLEY POINTED OUT THAT THE TIME APPORTIONMENT ASSESSMENT OF SALARIES TAX SET OUT IN CLAUSE 11 OF THE BILL WAS A TRANSITIONAL PROVISION.

+FURTHER CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN BY THE ADMINISTRATION AND APPROPRIATE AMENDING LEGISLATION WILL BE INTRODUCED,+ HE EXPLAINED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

----- 0 -----

MOVE TO REVISE BUSINESS REGISTRATION FEES
* * * * *

THE BUSINESS REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL WHICH PROVIDES FOR THE INCREASE IN THE ANNUAL BUSINESS REGISTRATION FEE WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON JOHN YAXLEY, SAID THAT THE AMENDMENT WAS SET OUT IN CLAUSE 2 OF THE BILL AND WAS DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH 118 OF THE 1987 BUDGET SPEECH.

THE BILL CAME INTO EFFECT ON APRIL 1, 1987 FOLLOWING THE SIGNING OF AN ORDER BY THE ACTING GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID AKERS-JONES, UNDER THE PUBLIC REVENUE PROTECTION ORDINANCE.

THE ADDITIONAL REVENUE YIELD RAISED BY THE REVISED FEE FOR 1987 IS ESTIMATED TO BE \$20 MILLION.

DEBATE ON THE BILL HAS BEEN ADJOURNED.

BILL TO RAISE VEHICLE FEES INTRODUCED

A BILL SEEKING TO INCREASE FEES FOR THE ANNUAL REGISTRATION OF MOTOR VEHICLES, PROVISIONAL AND FULL DRIVING LICENCES AND DRIVING TESTS, WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC (DRIVING LICENCES REGULATIONS AND REGISTRATION AND LICENSING OF VEHICLES REGULATIONS)(AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON JOHN YAXLEY, SAID THE REVISED FEES WERE SET OUT IN CLAUSES 2 AND 3 OF THE BILL WHICH AMENDED THE SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE ROAD TRAFFIC (DRIVING LICENCES) REGULATIONS AND THE SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE ROAD TRAFFIC (REGISTRATION AND LICENSING OF VEHICLES) REGULATIONS RESPECTIVELY.

THEY HAD COME INTO EFFECT ON FEBRUARY 25 AS A RESULT OF AN ORDER SIGNED BY THE ACTING GOVERNOR UNDER THE PUBLIC REVENUE PROTECTION ORDINANCE.

AS PART OF THE BUDGET PROPOSALS THE ADDITIONAL REVENUE YIELD FROM THE INCREASED FEES FOR 1987-88 WAS ESTIMATED TO BE \$45 MILLION.

DEBATE ON THE BILL HAS BEEN ADJOURNED.

----- 0 -----

VISA AND TRAVEL DOCUMENT FEES INCREASES BRING \$20 MILLION

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 WAS TO PROVIDE FOR THE INCREASES IN VISA AND TRAVEL DOCUMENT FEES, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON JOHN YAXLEY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE REVISED FEES, WHICH WILL ADD AN ESTIMATED \$20 MILLION TO THE GOVERNMENT REVENUE FOR 1987-88, ARE CONTAINED IN CLAUSE 2 OF THE BILL, HE ADDED, MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL.

THE BILL AMENDS THE SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS AND CAME INTO EFFECT ON FEBRUARY 25, 1987 AS A RESULT OF AN ORDER UNDER THE PUBLIC REVENUE PROTECTION ORDINANCE AS PART OF THE BUDGET PROPOSAL.

DEBATE ON THE BILL HAS BEEN ADJOURNED.

----- 0 -----

INDEPENDENT CORPORATION FOR OCEAN PARK
* * * * *

AN INDEPENDENT STATUTORY CORPORATION WOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO OVERSEE THE OPERATION OF THE OCEAN PARK, THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE OCEAN PARK CORPORATION BILL, MR LIAO SAID THE BASIC OBJECTIVE OF THE BILL WAS TO PROVIDE FOR THE DISENGAGEMENT OF THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB FROM THE OCEAN PARK LIMITED.

+THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB HAS PROPOSED TO DIVEST ITSELF OF THE OCEAN PARK LIMITED WITH A CASH ENDOWMENT OF \$200 MILLION.

+THE ENDOWMENT WILL BE PAID INTO A STATUTORY FUND, THE OCEAN PARK TRUST FUND, WHICH WILL BE ADMINISTERED BY A BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE OCEAN PARK CORPORATION, COMPRISING A CHAIRMAN, A DEPUTY CHAIRMAN AND FIVE OTHER MEMBERS, TO BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR,+ MR LIAO SAID.

THE BOARD WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING AND DEVELOPING OCEAN PARK AS A PUBLIC RECREATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL PARK AND EMPOWERED TO INVEST MONEYS OF THE FUND, AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE TRUSTEE ORDINANCE, HE ADDED.

+AN INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE FUTURE FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF OCEAN PARK FOR THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD UP TO JUNE 30, 1991 WAS UNDERTAKEN BY CONSULTANTS APPOINTED BY GOVERNMENT IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR.

+THE CONSULTANTS CONFIRMED THAT OCEAN PARK WOULD BE ABLE TO SUPPORT ITS PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND TO MAINTAIN A POSITIVE CASH BALANCE AT THE END OF EACH FINANCIAL YEAR, PROVIDED THAT THE EXISTING ATTENDANCE LEVELS COULD BE SUSTAINED AND ASSUMING A MINIMUM OF EIGHT PER CENT RETURN ON INVESTMENTS OF THE FUND,+ MR LIAO SAID.

THE OCEAN PARK CORPORATION ORDINANCE WOULD COME INTO OPERATION ON A DATE TO BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR SO AS TO COINCIDE WITH APPOINTMENT OF THE BOARD OF THE OCEAN PARK AND THE RECEIPT OF THE CASH ENDOWMENT FROM THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB, MR LIAO SAID.

----- () -----

ESTATE DUTY BILL INTRODUCED
* * * * *

A BILL SEEKING TO GIVE LEGISLATIVE EFFECT TO THE PROPOSAL IN THIS YEAR'S BUDGET TO PROVIDE FOR TWO CONCESSIONS RELATING TO ESTATE DUTY WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE ESTATE DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON JOHN YAXLEY, SAID THE AMENDMENTS APPLIED IN RELATION TO THE ESTATES OF PERSONS DYING ON OR AFTER APRIL 1, 1987 AND THE ESTIMATED COST TO THE REVENUE WAS \$25 MILLION PER ANNUM.

+TO REDUCE THE INFLATIONARY ELEMENT INHERENT IN THE RISE IN ASSET VALUE IN RECENT YEARS, CLAUSE 6 ADDS A NEW SEVENTEENTH SCHEDULE REDUCING THE RATES OF DUTY PAYABLE ON ESTATES VALUED BELOW \$5 MILLION,+ MR YAXLEY SAID.

+THE EFFECT OF CLAUSE 3 OF THE BILL IS THAT PROPERTY, WHICH NOTIONALLY PASSES ON DEATH FOR THE PURPOSES OF ASSESSING ESTATE DUTY, WILL NOT INCLUDE GIFTS INTER VIVOS MADE BY THE DECEASED WHICH, IN THE CASE OF ANY ONE DONEE, DID NOT EXCEED IN THE AGGREGATE \$100 000,+ HE SAID.

THE EXISTING EXEMPTION APPLIED TO GIFTS NOT EXCEEDING \$50 000, HE ADDED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

THREE AMENDMENTS PROPOSED TO DANGEROUS DRUGS ORDINANCE
* * * * *

THREE AMENDMENTS TO THE DANGEROUS DRUGS ORDINANCE WERE INTRODUCED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE AMENDMENTS SEEK TO INTRODUCE CERTAIN PRESUMPTIVE LEVELS IN RESPECT OF ANY FORM OF FOUR SPECIFIED DANGEROUS DRUGS SO THAT A PERSON FOUND IN POSSESSION OF MORE THAN THESE LEVELS MAY BE PRESUMED TO HAVE HAD THE DRUGS IN HIS POSSESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF TRAFFICKING; TO PROVIDE THAT A PERSON FOUND IN DIVAN OR ESCAPING FROM ONE IS PRESUMED TO KNOW THE NATURE OF THE DRUG HE HAS BEEN TAKING; AND TO SET OUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE COURTS NEED NOT CONSIDER A DRUG ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTRE REPORT.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE DANGEROUS DRUGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT THE REASON FOR AMENDING THE PRESUMPTIVE LEVELS WAS THAT IN CASES OF POSSESSION OF DRUGS FOR UNLAWFUL TRAFFICKING, THE LAW AT PRESENT DID NOT LAY DOWN ANY PRESUMPTIVE LEVELS FOR CERTAIN DANGEROUS DRUGS FOUND OTHER THAN IN TABLET OR CAPSULE FORM.

/SPECIFICALLY, THERE

- 25 -

SPECIFICALLY, THERE WERE NO PRESUMPTIVE LEVELS FOR COCAINE, AMPHETAMINE, METHAQUALONE AND QUINALBARBITONE, ALL OF WHICH COULD EXIST IN POWDER FORM, HE SAID.

+THIS AMENDMENT WILL ENABLE THE PROSECUTION TO ESTABLISH MORE EASILY THAT A DEFENDANT WAS IN POSSESSION OF THESE DRUGS FOR THE PURPOSE OF TRAFFICKING.+

AS THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT WAS AIMED ENTIRELY AT THE ILLICIT SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION OF DANGEROUS DRUGS, MR JEAFFRESON SAID, +A PERSON WHO IS IN POSSESSION OF A DANGEROUS DRUG IN ANY QUANTITY, AND IN ANY FORM, LAWFULLY SUPPLIED OR PRESCRIBED BY A REGISTERED MEDICAL PRACTITIONER IS EXEMPTED UNDER THE LAW.+

ON THE PRESUMPTION REGARDING DRUGS CONSUMED IN DIVANS, MR JEAFFRESON SAID AS THE LAW NOW STOOD, +ANY PERSON FOUND IN OR ESCAPING FROM A DIVAN SHALL, UNTIL THE CONTRARY IS PROVED, BE PRESUMED TO HAVE BEEN SMOKING, INHALING, INGESTING OR INJECTING A DANGEROUS DRUG THEREIN+, BUT THE PROSECUTION MUST PROVE THAT THE PERSON KNEW THAT THE DRUG INVOLVED WAS A DANGEROUS ONE.

HE SAID THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT SOUGHT TO INCORPORATE AN ADDITIONAL PROVISION OF PRESUMPTION SO THAT A PERSON FOUND IN A DIVAN SHOULD NOT ONLY BE PRESUMED TO HAVE BEEN USING A DANGEROUS DRUG THERE BUT ALSO TO HAVE KNOWN THE NATURE OF THE DRUG.

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT THE COURTS AT PRESENT MUST CONSIDER A DRUG ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTRE REPORT PREPARED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES BEFORE IMPOSING ANY CUSTODIAL SENTENCE ON A PERSON CONVICTED OF AN OFFENCE INVOLVING SIMPLE POSSESSION OF DANGEROUS DRUGS OR EQUIPMENT FOR TAKING DANGEROUS DRUGS.

THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS WOULD PROVIDE THAT THE COURTS NEED NOT CONSIDER SUITABILITY REPORTS WHEN, IN THE SAME PROCEEDINGS, THE OFFENDER WAS ALSO CONVICTED OF ANOTHER MORE SERIOUS OFFENCE AND WAS SENTENCED TO IMPRISONMENT FOR MORE THAN NINE MONTHS FOR THAT OFFENCE; OR WHEN THE OFFENDER WAS ALREADY IN PRISON SERVING A SENTENCE OF MORE THAN NINE MONTHS.

A PERIOD OF NINE MONTHS HAD BEEN SPECIFIED IN THE BILL TO CONFORM WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE DRUG ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTRES ORDINANCE WHICH STIPULATED THAT IF A PERSON IN RESPECT OF WHOM A DETENTION ORDER WAS IN FORCE WAS SENTENCED TO IMPRISONMENT FOR A TERM OF MORE THAN NINE MONTHS, THE FIRST-MENTIONED DETENTION ORDER SHOULD CEASE TO HAVE EFFECT, HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

- 26 -

BILL PROPOSES TO CONTROL OBNOXIOUS INDUSTRIES
* * * * *

DRAFT REGULATIONS INCLUDING MEASURES TO PREVENT THE DISCHARGE OF NOXIOUS OR OFFENSIVE EMISSIONS, LICENSING REQUIREMENTS FOR PREMISES USED FOR SPECIFIED PROCESSES, AND A PUBLIC RIGHT OF OBJECTION TO APPLICATIONS FOR LICENCES WERE INTRODUCED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE AIR POLLUTION CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, MR CHAMBERS SAID UNDER THE DRAFT REGULATIONS, PREMISES CURRENTLY USED FOR SPECIFIED PROCESSES WOULD BE EXEMPT FROM LICENSING REQUIREMENTS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE PLANTS LISTED IN THE THIRD SCHEDULE, ALL OF WHICH HAVE AIR POLLUTION CONTROL FEATURES INCORPORATED INTO THEIR DESIGN AND WHICH WILL THEREFORE BE ABLE TO MEET THE LICENSING STANDARDS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE AIR POLLUTION CONTROL ORDINANCE WAS ENACTED IN 1983 TO REPLACE THE FORMER CLEAN AIR ORDINANCE, AND TO ENABLE THE INTRODUCTION OF MEASURES TO CONTROL ALL AIR POLLUTANTS EMITTED FROM STATIONARY SOURCES, INCLUDING A WIDE RANGE OF TOXIC EMISSIONS.

+BESIDES MAKING PROVISION FOR THE ABATEMENT OF NUISANCES CAUSED BY AIR POLLUTION AND THE BANNING OF UNSUITABLE FUELS AND MATERIALS, THE ORDINANCE PROVIDES FOR THE MAKING OF REGULATIONS TO CONTROL 23 CLASSES OF INDUSTRY, KNOWN AS +SPECIFIED PROCESSES+ WHICH ARE LISTED IN THE FIRST SCHEDULE,+ MR CHAMBERS SAID.

+IN THE PROCESS OF PREPARING DRAFT REGULATIONS TO CONTROL THESE SPECIFIED PROCESSES, IT BECAME APPARENT THAT CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE REQUIRED AMENDMENT IN ORDER TO AMPLIFY OR CLARIFY ITS PROVISIONS.+

+CLAUSES 2(A) AND (B)(1) AMENDS SECTION 14 OF THE ORDINANCE TO REQUIRE THAT ONLY CERTAIN DETAILS OF APPLICATIONS FOR LICENCES SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION RATHER THAN THE FULL TEXT OF APPLICATIONS, SO THAT COMMERCIAL SECRETS WILL BE PROTECTED,+ HE ADDED.

MR CHAMBERS SAID CLAUSE 2(B)(11) AND CLAUSE 3 PROVIDED THAT HEALTH RISKS SHOULD CONSTITUTE LEGITIMATE GROUND FOR AN OBJECTION TO THE GRANT OF A LICENCE FOR A PARTICULAR EMISSION.

+AT PRESENT THE ONLY GROUNDS FOR OBJECTION ARE THAT THE PROCESS WOULD INHIBIT THE ATTAINMENT OR MAINTENANCE OF AIR QUALITY OBJECTIVES DECLARED UNDER THE ORDINANCE,+ MR CHAMBERS SAID.

HE SAID CLAUSES 4, 11 AND 15(A) PROVIDED FOR ANNUAL CHARGES TO MEET THE COST OF SURVEILLANCE FOR LICENSED AND EXEMPTED PREMISES, IN ADDITION TO THE ADMINISTRATION COSTS OF THE LICENSING SYSTEM. THIS PROVISION WILL BRING THIS ORDINANCE INTO LINE WITH THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ORDINANCE.

MR CHAMBERS NOTED THAT THERE WAS AT PRESENT SOME CONFUSION ABOUT THE REQUIREMENT FOR PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND INSPECTION PROCEDURES IN RESPECT OF APPLICATIONS FOR RENEWAL OF LICENCES.

+CLAUSES 5(B) AND 8(A) AND (C) MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THESE REQUIREMENTS WILL ONLY APPLY WHEN THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE SO DIRECTS,+ HE ADDED.

CLAUSE 5(C) DELETED THE REQUIREMENT IN SUB-SECTION 16(4) OF THE ORDINANCE FOR THE AUTHORITY TO RENEW OR REFUSE TO RENEW A LICENCE 21 DAYS BEFORE ITS EXPIRY.

+PROVISIONS HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN THE DRAFT REGULATIONS TO AVOID DISRUPTION TO OPERATIONS BECAUSE OF A DELAY IN LICENCE RENEWAL,+ HE SAID.

MR CHAMBERS SAID CLAUSES 6, 13 AND 14 WOULD PERMIT THE TRANSFER OF LICENCES, WHICH WAS NOT POSSIBLE UNDER THE ORDINANCE AT PRESENT, WHILE CLAUSES 6, 7 AND 12 PROVIDED PENALTIES FOR THE SUPPLY OF FALSE INFORMATION AND FOR CONTRAVENING THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF A LICENCE OR EXEMPTION.

+THERE IS PROVISION IN CLAUSE 15(B) FOR PENALTIES FOR CONTINUING CONTRAVENTIONS, WHICH ALSO DO NOT EXIST AT PRESENT.

+CLAUSES 9 AND 10 STIPULATE THAT ONLY THE PERSON WHOSE LICENCE IS CANCELLED OR VARIED OR THE OWNER OF THE PREMISES WHOSE EXEMPTION IS CANCELLED OR VARIED MAY LODGE CLAIMS FOR COMPENSATION,+ HE SAID.

MR CHAMBERS ALSO SAID THE DEFINITION OF +IRON AND STEEL WORKS+ IN THE FIRST SCHEDULE TO THE ORDINANCE WAS EXPANDED TO BRING IT INTO LINE WITH DEFINITIONS OF OTHER METALLURGICAL WORKS. A GAS PRODUCTION PLANT AT TAI PO IS ADDED TO THE THIRD SCHEDULE, WHICH IS A LIST OF PLANTS EXCLUDED FROM EXEMPTION.

+THE ORDINANCE PROVIDES THAT WHEN A LICENCE OR EXEMPTION IS CANCELLED OR VARIED IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST COMPENSATION SHALL BE PAYABLE,+ MR CHAMBERS SAID.

+CLAIMANTS WHO ARE UNABLE TO AGREE WITH THE AUTHORITY ON THE COMPENSATION TO BE PAID MAY HAVE THEIR CLAIMS REFERRED TO A TRIBUNAL SPECIALLY APPOINTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FOURTH SCHEDULE.+

HE SAID IT WAS CONSIDERED MORE APPROPRIATE FOR SUCH CASES TO BE DEALT WITH BY THE LANDS TRIBUNAL AND CLAUSES 18 AND 19 EFFECTED THIS CHANGE.

MR CHAMBERS SAID THESE DRAFT REGULATIONS HAD UNDERGONE EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION WITH INDUSTRY. HE URGED THE OPERATORS AFFECTED TO STUDY THEM CAREFULLY AND ANY COMMENTS AND ENQUIRIES SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

IMPROVEMENTS TO LIFTS AND ESCALATORS SAFETY PROPOSED
* * * * *

THE USE AND SOPHISTICATION OF LIFTS AND ESCALATORS HAS INCREASED GREATLY SINCE LEGISLATION WAS ENACTED IN 1960 AND THERE IS A NEED TO EXPAND THE SCOPE OF THE ORDINANCE TO IMPROVE AND UPDATE PROCEDURES AND STANDARDS.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WHEN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE LIFTS AND ESCALATORS (SAFETY) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987.

HE SAID THE SCOPE OF THE ORDINANCE NEEDED WIDENING TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT PASSENGER CONVEYORS AND SERVICE LIFTS IN NON-INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS.

PASSENGER CONVEYORS DIFFERED FROM ESCALATORS. THEY HAD ALREADY BEEN INSTALLED IN EMPIRE CENTRE AND HARBOUR CITY AND THEIR USE WAS LIKELY TO INCREASE. IT WAS THEREFORE PROPOSED THAT THE DEFINITION OF ESCALATOR BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE PASSENGER CONVEYORS.

ALL SERVICE LIFTS IN FACTORIES WERE SUBJECT TO THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKING (GOODS LIFTS) REGULATIONS WHICH DID NOT APPLY TO SERVICE LIFTS IN NON-INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS, SUCH AS RESTAURANTS. IT WAS PROPOSED THAT A NEW PART BE ADDED TO THE ORDINANCE TO EXTEND SAFETY PROVISIONS TO NON-INDUSTRIAL SERVICE LIFTS.

MR BARNES SAID QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF STAFF INVOLVED IN THE INSTALLATION, MAINTENANCE, REPAIR AND INSPECTION OF LIFTS AND ESCALATORS WERE CRUCIAL TO SAFETY.

THE EXISTING ORDINANCE DID NOT STIPULATE THE QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED FOR INCLUSION IN THE REGISTER OF LIFT AND ESCALATOR ENGINEERS WHICH WERE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE DIRECTOR OF ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES.

IT WAS PROPOSED THAT THE ORDINANCE SHOULD BE AMENDED TO STIPULATE THAT QUALIFICATIONS SHOULD BE A HIGHER DIPLOMA OR HIGHER CERTIFICATE IN MECHANICAL, ELECTRICAL OR ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING OR EQUIVALENT; AND THAT EXPERIENCE SHOULD COMPRISE AT LEAST TWO YEARS' RELEVANT APPRENTICESHIP PLUS AT LEAST THREE YEARS' SUBSEQUENT WORK ON LIFTS OR ESCALATORS.

MR BARNES ALSO SAID, THERE WERE CURRENTLY NO QUALIFICATION OR EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR LIFT AND ESCALATOR WORKERS WHICH HAD BEEN A CONTRIBUTORY FACTOR IN A NUMBER OF ACCIDENTS.

TO RECTIFY THIS, IT WAS PROPOSED THAT A NEW SECTION BE ADDED TO THE ORDINANCE WHICH SPECIFIED QUALIFICATIONS OR EXPERIENCE FOR LIFT AND ESCALATOR WORKERS AND THAT ONLY REGISTERED LIFT OR ESCALATOR ENGINEERS, COMPETENT EXPERIENCED LIFT OR ESCALATOR WORKERS, OR WORKERS DIRECTLY SUPERVISED BY EITHER OF THE FORMER TWO CATEGORIES BE PERMITTED TO CARRY OUT LIFT OR ESCALATOR WORKS.

MR BARNES SAID IMPROVEMENTS IN LIFT AND ESCALATOR SAFETY LARGELY RELIED ON ANALYSIS OF ACCIDENTS ON EXISTING LIFTS AND ESCALATORS.

IT WAS PROPOSED THAT A NEW SECTION BE ADDED TO THE ORDINANCE REQUIRING ANY OCCURRENCE WHICH HAD CAUSED DEATH OR PERSONAL INJURY, OR WHERE THERE HAD BEEN A MAJOR MECHANICAL OR SAFETY DEVICE FAILURE, TO BE REPORTED TO THE DIRECTOR OF ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES.

ANOTHER MEASURE TO IMPROVE SAFETY WAS THE PROPOSAL TO MAKE IT AN OFFENCE FOR ANY UNAUTHORISED PERSON TO ENDANGER HIMSELF OR OTHERS BY INTERFERING WITH ANY PART OF LIFT OR ESCALATOR INSTALLATIONS.

THE OPPORTUNITY WAS ALSO TAKEN TO IMPROVE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND ARRANGEMENTS.

MR BARNES SAID LIFT AND ESCALATOR CONTRACTORS WERE NOW REGISTERED BY THE BUILDING AUTHORITY UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE ON THE ADVICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES.

AFTER REGISTRATION, THE ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT HAD FREQUENT CONTACT WITH THE CONTRACTORS, WHEREAS THE BUILDING AUTHORITY HAD VERY LITTLE.

IN ORDER TO MAKE THE REGISTRATION AND CONTROL OF THESE CONTRACTORS MORE DIRECT AND EFFECTIVE, IT WAS PROPOSED TO TRANSFER THIS FUNCTION FROM THE BUILDING AUTHORITY TO THE DIRECTOR OF ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES, HE SAID.

HE SAID CONSTRUCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR LIFTS AND ESCALATORS WERE PRESENTLY CONTAINED IN THE BUILDING (LIFTS) REGULATIONS AND BUILDING (ESCALATORS) REGULATIONS MADE UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE.

TO RATIONALISE ADMINISTRATION, IT WAS PROPOSED THAT AT A LATER STAGE PROVISIONS FROM THESE REGULATIONS OF AN ELECTRICAL OR MECHANICAL NATURE BE TRANSFERRED TO A NEW SET OF REGULATIONS TO BE MADE UNDER THE LIFTS AND ESCALATORS (SAFETY) ORDINANCE. IT WAS THEREFORE PROPOSED THAT A NEW SECTION BE ADDED TO EMPOWER THE GOVERNOR TO MAKE THESE REGULATIONS.

+SEVERAL OTHER MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE PROPOSED IN THE BILL ALL OF WHICH SERVE TO IMPROVE STANDARDS, SAFETY OR TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE ORDINANCE,+ MR BARNES SAID.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

- 30 -

KCRC REPORTS \$117 MILLION PROFIT
* * *

NET PROFIT OF THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION FOR THE YEAR WAS \$117 MILLION, REPRESENTING A 113 PER CENT INCREASE TO 1985, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON JOHN YAXLEY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE \$1 BILLION DEBT DUE TO THE GOVERNMENT AT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CORPORATION WAS COMPLETELY REPAID FOLLOWING THE REPAYMENT OF THE REMAINING \$500 MILLION IN 1986, MR YAXLEY SAID IN TABLING THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1986.

TOTAL REVENUE AMOUNTED TO \$734 MILLION AND TOTAL CURRENT AND NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES WERE \$535.8 MILLION AND \$155.2 MILLION RESPECTIVELY.

MR YAXLEY NOTED THAT THE CORPORATION HAD ACHIEVED SIGNIFICANT GROWTH IN ALL AREAS OF ACTIVITY DURING LAST YEAR.

TOTAL DOMESTIC PASSENGER TRAFFIC GREW BY 12.2 PER CENT TO 114.2 MILLION PASSENGER TRIPS.

CROSS-BORDER TRAVEL THROUGH LO WU REACHED 19 MILLION PASSENGER MOVEMENTS, WHICH REPRESENTED 82 PER CENT OF ALL CROSS-BORDER TRAVEL FOR THE YEAR.

FREIGHT CARRIED TO AND FROM CHINA CONTINUED TO GROW BY 51 PER CENT AND 31 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY.

+TO MEET THE GROWING DEMANDS AND CHANGING NEEDS OF THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC, THE CORPORATION HAS ORDERED 25 SETS OF NEW ELECTRIC MULTIPLE UNITS, WITH THE FIRST SET EXPECTED TO BE READY FOR SERVICE IN AUGUST THIS YEAR,+ MR YAXLEY SAID.

+THESE EXTRA UNITS, TOGETHER WITH THE MODIFICATION OF THE CURRENT FLEET OF 60 SETS, WILL INCREASE THE PASSENGER-CARRYING CAPACITY OF THE RAILWAY BY ABOUT 75 PER CENT.+

REFERRING TO THE CORPORATION'S FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF ITS RAILWAY FACILITIES DURING THE PAST YEAR, MR YAXLEY SAID IT HAD MADE SOUND PROGRESS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEM IN THE WESTERN NEW TERRITORIES.

+THE LRT IS NOW TAKING SHAPE IN TUEN MUN AND PREPARATORY WORK IS WELL ADVANCED IN YUEN LONG. PHASE ONE IS SCHEDULED TO BE COMMISSIONED IN AUGUST 1988,+ HE SAID.

THE CORPORATION HAD ALSO COMPLETED STUDIES TO APPRAISE FUTURE ROUTES TO COMPLETE THE SYSTEM IN THE REGION. MR YAXLEY SAID THE POSSIBILITY OF EXTENDING THE LRT TO THE URBAN AREAS AND OTHER PARTS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES WAS CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE GOVERNMENT.

/NOTING THAT

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

- 31 -

NOTING THAT FEEDER BUS SERVICES TO THE LRT WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE CORPORATION AND 25 DOUBLE DECKERS HAVE BEEN ORDERED, MR YAXLEY SAID THESE WOULD COMMENCE OPERATIONS IN THE LATTER PART OF THIS YEAR.

THE EXPANSION OF THE RAILWAY FREIGHT TERMINAL ON THE HUNG HOM BAY RECLAMATION WAS BEING STUDIED BY THE CORPORATION.

+THIS DEVELOPMENT IS IMPORTANT IF THE PROJECTED INCREASE IN RAIL FREIGHT ANTICIPATED FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF DOUBLE-TRACKING FROM BEIJING THROUGH TO SHENZHEN IN 1988 IS TO BE MET,+ HE ADDED.

MR YAXLEY CONCLUDED THAT, THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION HAD CLEARLY ESTABLISHED ITSELF AS AN EFFICIENT OPERATOR OF ONE OF HONG KONG'S MAJOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEMS, AND HAD RUN THE FULLY ELECTRIFIED KCR EFFICIENTLY AND PROFITABLY.

HE CONGRATULATED THE BOARD, MANAGEMENT AND STAFF ON THEIR EXCELLENT RESULTS.

- - - - 0 - - - -

MTRC DEBT REPAYMENT FORECAST REALISTIC
* * * * *

A TOTAL OF 532 MILLION PASSENGERS WERE CARRIED BY THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY IN 1986, WHICH IS AN INCREASE OF 15 PER CENT OVER THE 463 MILLION CARRIED IN 1985, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON JOHN YAXLEY SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

TABLING THE ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS OF THE MTRC FOR 1986, MR YAXLEY SAID THE CORPORATION'S TOTAL REVENUE, DERIVED MAINLY FROM FARES, ROSE BY MORE THAN 21 PER CENT FROM \$1.4 BILLION TO \$1.86 BILLION AND ITS PROFIT BEFORE INTEREST AND FINANCE CHARGES INCREASED BY 27 PER CENT FROM \$372 MILLION TO \$472 MILLION.

+THESE FIGURES DEMONSTRATE THAT COSTS WERE CONTROLLED EFFECTIVELY,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT THE FINAL SECTION OF THE ISLAND LINE WAS OPENED TO THE PUBLIC ON MAY 23, 1986.

+THE PRINCIPAL SOURCE OF FINANCE FOR THE CORPORATION'S INVESTMENT OF \$24 600 MILLION IN ITS THREE RAILWAY LINES HAS BEEN LOANS WHICH AGGREGATED \$19 200 MILLION AT DECEMBER 31, 1986.+

WITH COMPLETION OF CONSTRUCTION, INTEREST ON THESE LOANS BECAME FULLY CHARGEABLE TO THE CORPORATION'S PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT IN 1986.

/+THESE CHARGES

+THESE CHARGES AMOUNTED TO HK\$1 408 MILLION, COMPARED WITH HK\$1 106 MILLION IN 1985, AND CAUSED THE CORPORATION TO SUFFER A LOSS AFTER INTEREST AND FINANCE CHARGES OF HK\$936 MILLION IN COMPARISON WITH A LOSS OF HK\$788 MILLION A YEAR EARLIER.

+THAT LOSS WAS OFFSET TO A MATERIAL EXTENT BY A PROFIT OF HK\$482 MILLION REALISED DURING THE YEAR ON PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT, SO THAT THE FINAL LOSS FOR THE YEAR WAS HK\$470 MILLION, A CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT ON THE LOSS OF HK\$788 MILLION SUFFERED IN 1985,+ MR YAXLEY ADDED.

HE SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE CORPORATION WOULD CONTINUE TO DEMONSTRATE ITS INHERENT PROFITABILITY IN FUTURE YEARS.

+BUT, FOR SOME YEARS TO COME, ITS HEAVY BURDEN OF DEBT AND THE INTEREST CHARGES ON THAT DEBT WILL MEAN THAT LOSSES AFTER INTEREST WILL CONTINUE, ALTHOUGH THEY WILL BE REDUCED TO A USEFUL DEGREE BY PROFITS ON PROPERTY DEVELOPMENTS WHICH ARE EXPECTED TO BE REALISED AS DEVELOPMENTS ON THE ISLAND ARE COMPLETED.+ HE ADDED.

MR YAXLEY SAID THE CORPORATION'S CAPITAL STRUCTURE, AND THE SHARE CAPITAL AND DEBT COMPONENTS OF THAT STRUCTURE, WAS EXHAUSTIVELY ANALYSED BY THE CORPORATION AND BY GOVERNMENT WITH THE AID OF INDEPENDENT MERCHANT BANKING FIRMS TWO YEARS AGO.

+AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THAT ANALYSIS AND AFTER REVIEW BY THIS COUNCIL, IT WAS DECIDED TO INCREASE THE CORPORATION'S AUTHORISED SHARE CAPITAL, TO ISSUE SHARES WITH A NOMINAL VALUE OF HK\$5 000 MILLION TO THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY INCORPORATED IN PARTLY PAID FORM AND TO PAY UP HK\$2 500 MILLION ON THOSE PARTLY PAID SHARES IN TWO TRANCHES.+

THE FIRST TRANCHE OF HK\$1 500 MILLION WAS PAID IN CASH TO THE CORPORATION ON DECEMBER 31, 1985 AND, IN TERMS OF THE COMMITMENT APPROVED BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE, THE SECOND TRANCHE OF HK\$1 000 MILLION WILL BE PAID TO THE CORPORATION IN CASH BY APRIL 1988, HE SAID.

+ON THE BASIS OF CURRENT FORECASTS AND ESTIMATES, THE BOARD OF THE CORPORATION AND I HOPE THAT IT WILL NOT PROVE NECESSARY TO REQUEST THIS COUNCIL'S FINANCE COMMITTEE TO APPROVE PAYMENT OF THE REMAINING SUM OF HK\$2 500 MILLION.

+BUT I MUST CAUTION THAT ALL FORECASTS ARE FRAIL,+ HE STRESSED.

+THOSE TO WHICH I HAVE REFERRED ASSUME REASONABLE STABILITY IN THE WORLD'S CAPITAL MARKETS, AND HENCE IN INTEREST RATES, FOR THREE TO FIVE YEARS AND THEY ASSUME ALSO THAT THE MTRC WILL NOT BUILD EXTENSIONS TO ITS SYSTEM, APART FROM THE EASTERN HARBOUR CROSSING WHICH IS BEING FINANCED BY AN INNOVATIVE MEANS ANALOGOUS TO A LONG-TERM LEASE.

+WITH THE ABOVE RESERVATION, I AM SATISFIED THAT THE CORPORATION'S CAPITAL STRUCTURE IS APPROPRIATE TO ITS VERY LARGE, VERY LONG-TERM CHARACTERISTICS AND I BELIEVE THAT ITS FORECAST OF REPAYMENT OF ITS DEBTS BY ABOUT THE END OF THE CENTURY IS REALISTIC IN THE LIGHT OF THE ASSUMPTIONS UPON WHICH THE FORECAST RESTS.+

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE CORPORATION'S FINANCES AND ITS DEBT WERE WELL MANAGED AND IT HAD ESTABLISHED A GOOD STANDING WITH THE HONG KONG AND INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL COMMUNITY.

HE THANKED THE BOARD, MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION FOR THE VERY EFFICIENT AND RESPONSIBLE MANNER IN WHICH THEY HAVE MANAGED THE CORPORATION.

- - - - - 0 - - - - -

RIGHT OF INFORMATION LAW RULED OUT

* * * * *

HONG KONG WILL BE BETTER SERVED BY BUILDING ON ITS OWN SYSTEM OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC AND BY DEVELOPING A MORE ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID FORD SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON CONRAD LAM AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR FORD SAID THAT OVER THE YEARS, HONG KONG HAD DEVELOPED A SYSTEM WHICH INVOLVED A STRONG ELEMENT OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION IN THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT.

+AS ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN THIS PROCESS IS TO ENSURE THAT INFORMATION IS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC THROUGH A WIDE VARIETY OF OUTLETS.

+IN ADDITION, THE GOVERNMENT RESPONDS TO A CONSTANT STREAM OF REQUESTS FROM THE PUBLIC FOR INFORMATION AND THE MEDIA,+ HE SAID.

MR FORD SAID THAT THE THREE-TIER SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT, THE DISTRICT BOARDS, THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS, THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND THE WIDESPREAD NETWORK OF ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMITTEES PROVIDED FURTHER CHANNELS OF INFORMATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC.

+MANY OF THEIR MEETINGS ARE NOW HELD IN PUBLIC AND COMMITTEES AND BOARDS WHICH STILL MEET IN CAMERA USUALLY MAKE KNOWN THEIR DELIBERATIONS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE MEETING THROUGH PRESS CONFERENCES.+

SO THERE COULD BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG WERE WELL SERVED IN TERMS OF THEIR ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT INFORMATION, HE SAID.

/MR FORD,

MR FORD, HOWEVER, POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS ROOM FOR FURTHER MOVES TOWARDS OPEN GOVERNMENT.

+SOME MORE BOARDS AND COMMITTEES COULD CONSIDER OPENING THEIR MEETINGS TO THE PUBLIC, SOME GOVERNMENT OFFICERS COULD MORE READILY RESPOND TO REQUESTS FROM THE MEDIA THAN THEY DO AT PRESENT.

+I BELIEVE THAT THE GRADING OF GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS COULD BE MORE REGULARLY REVIEWED TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE NOT OVER-CLASSIFIED.

+THIS SHOULD RESULT IN GOVERNMENT INFORMATION BEING MADE MORE FREELY AVAILABLE,+ HE SAID.

BUT MR FORD ALSO SAID THAT HE HAD YET TO BE CONVINCED THAT TO LEGISLATE TO PROVIDE A RIGHT TO INFORMATION WAS NECESSARILY THE RIGHT WAY TO PROCEED.

+EXPERIENCE IN AUSTRALIA AND UNITED STATES, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS SHOWN THAT FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LEGISLATION IS DIFFICULT TO OPERATE IN PRACTICE AND COSTLY TO IMPLEMENT.

+IN THESE COUNTRIES IT HAS BEEN FOUND THAT THE RIGHT ACCESS TO INFORMATION CANNOT BE ABSOLUTE- THERE MUST BE SPECIFIED EXEMPTIONS FOR THE PROTECTION OF ESSENTIAL PUBLIC AND COMMERCIAL INTERESTS AND TO ENSURE THE PROPER CONDUCT OF BUSINESS BY THE GOVERNMENT,+ HE SAID.

MR FORD ADDED THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IN CANADA HAS LED CIVIL SERVANTS TO BE RELUCTANT TO PUT THEIR VIEWS ON PAPER AT ALL.

+WHEREAS THAT MAY SAVE THE GOVERNMENT A GREAT DEAL OF PAPER I DO NOT BELIEVE IT IS CONDUCIVE TO THE BUSINESS OF GOOD GOVERNMENT,+ HE SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

NO URGENCY IN DECIDING ON REPLACEMENT AIRPORT
* * * * *

IT IS UNLIKELY THAT A DECISION ON A REPLACEMENT AIRPORT NEEDS TO BE TAKEN BEFORE 1990-91, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON JOHN YAXLEY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON CONRAD LAM.

+THE GOVERNMENT AGREES THAT IN THE LONGER TERM, HONG KONG WILL REQUIRE A NEW AIRPORT BUT THE QUESTION OF TIMING IS CRUCIAL,+ HE SAID.

/MR YAXLEY

MR YAXLEY EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO EXAMINE THE ULTIMATE CAPACITY OF KAI TAK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY WORK COULD BE DONE TO EXTEND ITS USEFUL LIFE.

+PRESENT INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE RUNWAY CAPACITY AT KAI TAK WILL NOT COME UNDER STRAIN UNTIL 1995, REACHING SATURATION POINT PROBABLY AROUND 2005,+ HE SAID.

+OBVIOUSLY IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF THE COMMUNITY TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF THE MAJOR INVESTMENT WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE IN THE KAI TAK.+

HOWEVER, MR YAXLEY ALSO ADDED THAT IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO BRING FORWARD THIS TIMETABLE IF FREIGHT AND PASSENGER TRAFFIC AT KAI TAK INCREASED FASTER THAN CURRENT TRENDS INDICATED.

A STEERING COMMITTEE, CHAIRED BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY, WAS ESTABLISHED IN JANUARY THIS YEAR TO EXAMINE THE WESTERN HARBOUR-LANTAU STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL PREPARED BY THE HOPEWELL HOLDINGS CONSORTIUM, HE SAID.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE INCLUDED THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE DEPUTY FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND THE POLITICAL ADVISER.

IN THE VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT, THE PROPOSAL CONCERNED MEDIUM TERM DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND THUS, IT MUST BE LOOKED AT AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF GOVERNMENT'S OVERALL STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AIRPORT, THE PORTS AND ROAD DEVELOPMENTS, HE SAID.

A TEAM UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE LANDS AND WORKS BRANCH HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED TO WORK WITH THE CONSORTIUM'S PLANNERS TO DETERMINE HOW THE VARIOUS COMPONENTS OF THE PROPOSAL COULD FIT INTO THE GOVERNMENT'S OVERALL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY.

+THIS CO-OPERATIVE EFFORT SHOULD RESULT IN THE IDENTIFICATION OF PREFERRED OPTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT'S INTENDED LONG TERM DEVELOPMENTS,+ MR YAXLEY SAID.

CONCERNING THE MANPOWER IMPLICATIONS ARISING FROM THIS PROJECT, HE SAID THAT GOVERNMENT PLANNERS WOULD PAY CAREFUL ATTENTION TO SUCH FACTORS IN THEIR DELIBERATIONS, AND WOULD BEAR IN MIND THE PREFERENCE FOR A PHASED APPROACH.

IN PARALLEL WITH THIS STUDY, MR YAXLEY SAID VARIOUS OPTIONS IN RELATION TO A REPLACEMENT AIRPORT WERE UNDER CONSIDERATION.

+THE PREVIOUS STUDY ON CHEK LAP KOK IS OF RELEVANCE BECAUSE THAT SITE REMAINS AN OPTION.+

POLICE FIRING UNDER STRINGENT GUIDELINES
* * * * *

A POLICE OFFICER MAY FIRE TO PROTECT HIMSELF OR ANY OTHER PERSON FROM DEATH OR SERIOUS PHYSICAL INJURY OR IN ORDER TO ARREST ANYONE HE SUSPECTS OF HAVING COMMITTED A SERIOUS OR VIOLENT CRIME, PROVIDED THAT NO LESSER DEGREE OF FORCE CAN ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

+UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD A POLICE OFFICER FIRE IN A CONFINED OR CROWDED AREA, WHERE IT IS LIKELY THAT AN INNOCENT PERSON WILL BE INJURED,+ HE SAID, REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI.

HE SAID THAT CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS TO POLICE OFFICERS ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH JUSTIFY THE USE OF FIREARMS AND THE USE OF FORCE GENERALLY, ARE SET OUT IN POLICE GENERAL ORDERS.

A POLICE OFFICER MUST NEVER USE MORE THAN THE MINIMUM FORCE NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE HIS OBJECTIVE.

WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES PERMIT, HE MUST GIVE A WARNING, AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO OBEY THAT WARNING, BEFORE USING FORCE, MR JEAFFRESON SAID.

+POLICE GENERAL ORDERS ALSO WARN POLICE OFFICERS THAT, IF THEY USE UNJUSTIFIABLE FORCE, THEY ARE LIABLE TO CRIMINAL OR CIVIL ACTION,+ HE ADDED.

HE FURTHER EXPLAINED THAT ALL POLICE OFFICERS ARE TAUGHT TO HANDLE FIREARMS AS PART OF THEIR BASIC TRAINING. OFFICERS AT THE POLICE TRAINING SCHOOL RECEIVE A MINIMUM OF 60 HOURS OF INSTRUCTION ON WEAPONS AND FIRE AT LEAST 480 ROUNDS OF REVOLVER AMMUNITION.

TRAINING PROGRESSES FROM SHOOTING AT STATIONARY TARGETS IN LOW LIGHT.

AN OFFICER AT THE TRAINING SCHOOL MUST PASS WRITTEN AND PRACTICAL EXAMINATIONS ON WEAPONS HANDLING AND A FIRING QUALIFICATION TEST, HE ADDED.

AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL, MR JEAFFRESON SAID OFFICERS MUST ATTEND THREE FIRING SESSIONS EACH YEAR, TAKING THEIR ANNUAL QUALIFICATION TEST ON THE THIRD SESSION. OFFICERS WHO NEED IT ARE GIVEN EXTRA INSTRUCTION BEFORE THEY TAKE THE TEST.

+UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES IS AN OFFICER ALLOWED TO CARRY A FIREARM UNTIL HE HAS PASSED THE TEST,+ HE SAID.

IN 1987 ABOUT 23 000 POLICE OFFICERS WILL EACH FIRE 138 ROUNDS OF AMMUNITION UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF QUALIFIED FIREARMS INSTRUCTORS.

OFFICERS POSTED TO THE POLICE TACTICAL UNIT OR TO OTHER SPECIALIST UNITS WILL RECEIVE ADDITIONAL TRAINING.

HE SAID AT PRESENT THE POLICE HAVE ONLY THREE FIRING RANGES OUTSIDE THE POLICE TRAINING SCHOOL AND POLICE TACTICAL UNIT.

+THREE MORE ARE PLANNED TO BE READY WITHIN THE NEXT 3-4 YEARS,+ HE SAID.

IN ADDITION, A COMPUTER-AIDED LASER SIMULATOR WILL BE INTRODUCED AND WILL BE USING MORE VIDEO AND SLIDE PHOTOGRAPHY TO MAKE FIREARMS TRAINING MORE REALISTIC, HE ADDED.

- - - - - 0 - - - - -

PRIVATE STREET RESUMPTION SCHEME A SUCCESS
* * * * *

A PILOT SCHEME ON PRIVATE STREETS RESUMPTION LAUNCHED IN 1983 HAS PROVED TO BE A SUCCESS AND WAS GENERALLY WELL RECEIVED BY RESIDENTS, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON CHIU HIN-KWONG, MR LEUNG SAID THAT SEVEN PRIVATE STREETS - FOUR IN KOWLOON AND THREE IN HONG KONG - WERE RESUMED UNDER THE ROADS (WORKS, USE AND COMPENSATION) ORDINANCE.

FOLLOWING RESUMPTION, ALL ILLEGAL STRUCTURES WERE CLEARED AND ROAD SURFACES RECONSTRUCTED AND ALL WORKS WERE SATISFACTORILY COMPLETED BY 1986.

+IN LIGHT OF THIS EXPERIENCE, NINE MORE PRIVATE STREETS WERE SELECTED IN EARLY 1986 FOR RESUMPTION. FIVE OF THESE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY RESUMED AND CLEARANCE AND RECONSTRUCTION WORK WILL COMMENCE SHORTLY. PREPARATORY WORK FOR THE RESUMPTION OF THE REMAINDER IS IN HAND,+ HE ADDED.

MR LEUNG POINTED OUT THAT TO BETTER CO-ORDINATE THE CONTINUED RESUMPTION OF PRIVATE STREETS IDENTIFIED TO HAVE MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS AND TO MONITOR PROGRESS, A PRIVATE STREET RESUMPTION COMMITTEE WAS ESTABLISHED LAST AUGUST UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR HONG KONG AND KOWLOON.

+ANNUAL RESUMPTION PROGRAMMES HAVE NOW BEEN DRAWN UP. FOR 1987/88, 11 PRIVATE STREETS WILL BE RESUMED. FROM 1988/89 ONWARDS, THE RESUMPTION TARGET WILL BE INCREASED TO 25 STREETS EACH YEAR, SUBJECT TO RESOURCES BEING MADE AVAILABLE,+ MR LEUNG SAID.

THE PRIVATE STREET RESUMPTION COMMITTEE HAD DRAWN UP A SET OF SELECTION CRITERIA FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING PRIORITIES.

+THESE CRITERIA ARE SAFETY FACTORS, TRAFFIC CONSIDERATIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS,+ MR LEUNG SAID.

RESUMPTION WILL BE USED MAINLY IN THE CASE OF PRIVATE STREETS UNDER MULTIPLE-OWNERSHIP AS OTHER SOLUTIONS TEND TO BE MORE READILY AVAILABLE IN THE CASE OF STREETS UNDER SINGLE OWNERSHIP, WHERE IT IS EASIER TO PERSUADE OWNERS TO CARRY OUT THE NECESSARY IMPROVEMENT WORKS THEMSELVES OR TO NEGOTIATE A VOLUNTARY SURRENDER.

+WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT, THROUGH THE SUSTAINED AND CO-ORDINATED EFFORTS UNDER THE PRIVATE STREET RESUMPTION PROGRAMME AND PUBLIC SUPPORT, THE PROBLEM OF POORLY MANAGED PRIVATE STREETS WILL GRADUALLY BE RESOLVED,+ HE SAID.

----- 0 -----

ASBESTOS REMOVAL SUBJECT TO REGULATORY CONTROL
* * * * *

THE DISTURBANCE OR REMOVAL OF ASBESTOS IS SUBJECT TO CONTROL UNDER THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKING (ASBESTOS) SPECIAL REGULATIONS 1986, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY PROFESSOR THE HON POON CHUNG-KWONG, MR CHAMBERS SAID UNDER THESE REGULATIONS, CONTRACTORS WERE REQUIRED TO NOTIFY THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR 28 DAYS BEFORE COMMENCING WORK SO THAT ENQUIRIES COULD BE MADE INTO THE SCOPE OF SUCH WORK.

+THE REGULATIONS ALSO REQUIRED CONTRACTORS EITHER TO USE EQUIPMENT TO PREVENT THE ENTRY OF ASBESTOS DUST INTO THE AIR, OR TO PROVIDE PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING FOR EACH PERSON EMPLOYED IN CONNECTION WITH THE ASBESTOS PROCESS OR IN ANY PLACE INTO WHICH ASBESTOS DUST IS LIABLE TO ESCAPE,+ HE SAID.

+THE REGULATIONS ALSO REQUIRE LOOSE ASBESTOS TO BE KEPT IN A CLOSED RECEPTACLE WHICH PREVENTS THE ESCAPE OF ASBESTOS DUST, AND PROVIDE FOR ADEQUATE CLEANING OF PLANT AND PREMISES.+

MR CHAMBERS SAID THAT THE USE OF THE MORE DANGEROUS BLUE AND BROWN ASBESTOS WAS NOT PERMITTED.

+THE REGULATIONS SHOULD THEREFORE ENSURE THAT ALL STAFF WORKING WITH ASBESTOS, AND OTHER EMPLOYEES NEARBY WHO MAY BE AFFECTED, ARE ADEQUATELY PROTECTED, AND ALSO PROVIDE A CONSIDERABLE MEASURE OF PROTECTION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC,+ HE ADDED.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT, HE SAID, WAS DEVELOPING A BRIEF FOR CONSULTANTS TO EXAMINE THE EXTENT OF THE ASBESTOS PROBLEM IN PRIVATE BUILDINGS IN HONG KONG AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON POSSIBLE ANALYSIS AND INSPECTION SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

+CONSIDERATION WILL ALSO BE GIVEN TO THE NEED FOR FURTHER REGULATORY CONTROLS, INCLUDING THE LICENSING OF CONTRACTORS FOR ASBESTOS REMOVAL,+ HE SAID.

MR CHAMBERS SAID THAT A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF ALL GOVERNMENT-OWNED OR LEASED BUILDINGS WAS BEING UNDERTAKEN BY THE ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO DETERMINE WHETHER ANY POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS ASBESTOS MATERIALS NEED TO BE REMOVED.

+WHERE REMOVAL IS CONSIDERED NECESSARY, THIS WILL BE DONE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. WHERE REMOVAL IS CONSIDERED UNNECESSARY, REGULAR MONITORING WILL BE CARRIED OUT.+

- - - - 0 - - - -

CIVIL AVIATION POLICY EXPLAINED
* * * * *

HONG KONG'S AVIATION POLICY IS DESIGNED TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF THE HONG KONG TRAVELLING PUBLIC AND TO ENABLE HONG KONG-BASED AIRLINES TO COMPETE EFFICIENTLY WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL CARRIERS. THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON JOHN YAXLEY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON RICHARD LAI, HE SAID THE POLICY WAS FORMULATED ON THE ADVICE OF THE AVIATION ADVISORY BOARD AND SUBSEQUENTLY CONSIDERED BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN 1985.

IN ADDITION, MR YAXLEY DESCRIBED AS MISCONCEPTION ALLEGATION THAT THE GOVERNMENT FOLLOWED AN INFLEXIBLE AND NON-VARIABLE +ONE AIRLINE PER ROUTE+ POLICY WHICH CONFERRED A MONOPOLY ON AN INCUMBENT AIRLINE.

HE REFERRED TO TWO STATEMENTS ON GOVERNMENT'S AIR TRANSPORT POLICY MADE BY SIR JOHN BREMIDGE AND MR JACOBS TO THE COUNCIL ON NOVEMBER 20, 1985 AND ON FEBRUARY 18 THIS YEAR.

+THESE TWO STATEMENTS OUTLINED THE COMPLEXITIES AND CONSTRAINTS OF INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS, THE VERY REAL DEGREE OF COMPETITION THAT ALREADY EXISTS IN INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL AND THE LIMITATION ON OPTIONS OPEN TO THE GOVERNMENT IN BILATERAL AIR SERVICES AGREEMENTS,+ HE SAID.

PLACEMENT SERVICE OF DISABLED EMPLOYEES WORKING WELL
* * * * *

THE PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF A RECENT SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE SUGGESTED THAT 94, OR 27 PER CENT, OUT OF A SAMPLE OF 349 BLIND PEOPLE IN THE 15-60 AGE BRACKET MIGHT BE UNEMPLOYED, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON RON BRIDGE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PAULINE NG, MR BRIDGE SAID THE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED BETWEEN AUGUST AND OCTOBER LAST YEAR ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE DISABLED ON BEHALF OF THE REHABILITATION DEVELOPMENT CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE.

+IN 1980 A SPECIAL DIVISION WAS SET UP IN THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT TO HELP AND ENCOURAGE THE EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE, INCLUDING THE BLIND,+ HE ADDED.

MR BRIDGE SAID THE DIVISION TRIED TO PROMOTE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE WORKING ABILITIES OF THE DISABLED THROUGH THE MASS MEDIA; TO MAINTAIN CLOSE CONTACT WITH INDUSTRY AND TO CONDUCT STUDIES TO IDENTIFY SUITABLE TYPES OF JOBS FOR THE DISABLED.

HE ADDED THAT THE DIVISION ALSO TRIED TO SOLICIT JOB VACANCIES FOR THE DISABLED BY VISITING AND WRITING TO PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS; TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT CANDIDATE FOR EACH JOB; AND TO ENCOURAGE EMPLOYERS BY MAKING AWARDS TO THOSE WHO EMPLOY THE MOST; AND PUBLICISING THEIR EFFORTS AS AN EXAMPLE TO OTHERS.

+SINCE THE DIVISION WAS ESTABLISHED IN JULY 1980 IT HAS MANAGED TO PLACE ABOUT 4 500 DISABLED PEOPLE, OF WHOM ABOUT 400 WERE BLIND,+ MR BRIDGE SAID.

HE SAID THIS NUMBER MIGHT SEEM DISAPPOINTINGLY SMALL. BUT SEEING HOW DIFFICULT IT COULD BE FOR THOSE WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES TO FIND JOBS AND THAT SO MANY BLIND PEOPLE HAD MANAGED TO DO SO, HE STRESSED THIS NUMBER HAD REFLECTED WELL BOTH ON THEIR OWN EFFORTS AND ON THOSE OF VARIOUS AGENCIES IN BOTH PRIVATE SECTOR AND GOVERNMENT.

+I KNOW THAT EVERY SUCH PLACEMENT REQUIRES A GREAT DEAL OF DEDICATION AND HARD WORK ON THE PART OF ALL CONCERNED,+ HE ADDED.

MR BRIDGE ALSO SAID IN 1982 A TECHNICAL AID AND RESOURCE CENTRE WAS SET UP IN THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND INDUSTRIAL TRAINING DEPARTMENT.

+ITS PURPOSE IS TO DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE EQUIPMENT OR TO ADAPT MACHINES TO ENABLE DISABLED PEOPLE TO BE TRAINED FOR, AND WORK IN, A WIDER RANGE OF JOBS,+ HE EXPLAINED.

+THE HONG KONG SOCIETY FOR REHABILITATION RUNS A FUND WHICH PROVIDES GRANTS TO DISABLED WORKERS AND THEIR EMPLOYERS FOR THE ADAPTATION OF MACHINERY OR PREMISES AND THE MANUFACTURE OR DIRECT PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT THAT WOULD ENABLE A DISABLED PERSON TO MAKE FULLER USE OF HIS WORKING ABILITY,+ HE ADDED.

MR BRIDGE SAID THE GOVERNMENT AND THE REHABILITATION DEVELOPMENT CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE WERE LOOKING INTO THE MEASURES OF IMPROVING THE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS OF THE DISABLED, INCLUDING THE BLIND.

HE SAID THEY WOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY BY THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE.

- - - - 0 - - - -

26 EX-SERVICEMEN APPLY FOR BRITISH CITIZENSHIP
* * * * *

TWENTY-SIX APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED BY THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT SINCE APRIL 30, 1986 FOR REGISTRATION AS BRITISH CITIZENS UNDER SECTION 4(5) OF THE BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT 1981 FROM EX-SERVICEMEN. THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY ARE BDTC'S OR OTHER BRITISH NATIONALS WHO HAVE SERVED WITH THE VOLUNTEERS OF OTHER HONG KONG GOVERNMENT UNITS AS SPECIFIED IN THE FIRST CATEGORY UNDER THE ACT.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON JOHN SWAINE, MR JEAFFRESON SAID 17 APPLICATIONS HAD BEEN APPROVED AND NINE WERE STILL BEING PROCESSED.

+AS REGARDS EX-SERVICEMEN IN THE SECOND CATEGORY (NON-BDTC'S OR NON-BRITISH OR THOSE WHOSE SERVICE WAS NOT WITH THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BUT WITH THE REGULAR FORCES), THE DEPARTMENT HAS NOT RECEIVED ANY APPLICATIONS SO FAR,+ HE SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

HIGHWAY NOISE BARRIERS NOT SUITABLE TO HK
* * * * *

THERE ARE FEW LOCATIONS IN HONG KONG WHERE NOISE BARRIERS WOULD BE EFFECTIVE, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG, MR BARNES SAID A STUDY OF NOISE ABATEMENT MEASURES USED IN JAPAN WAS CARRIED OUT IN JULY 1985 BY A MEMBER OF THE HIGHWAYS OFFICE.

HIS MAIN FINDING WAS THAT NOISE BARRIERS WERE WIDELY USED, AND FAIRLY WELL SUITED TO JAPAN, WHERE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WAS MOSTLY LOW RISE. MR BARNES SAID MOST SUCH BARRIERS COULD ONLY EFFECTIVELY REDUCE NOISE UP TO ROUGHLY FIVE OR SIX FLOORS ABOVE ROAD LEVEL.

+IN HONG KONG, WHERE OUR DEVELOPMENT IS MOSTLY HIGH-RISE, THERE ARE FEW LOCATIONS WHERE SIMPLE NOISE BARRIERS WOULD BE EFFECTIVE AND THE BEST NOISE PROTECTION IS DISTANCE,+ HE SAID.

+NEVERTHELESS, NOISE BARRIERS WILL BE USED WHERE THEY WOULD BE EFFECTIVE AND PRACTICABLE.+

MR BARNES SAID ALONG THE SECTION OF ROUTE 5 RUNNING FROM TSUEN WAN TO SHA TIN, THERE WAS PROVISION FOR NOISE BARRIERS ADJACENT TO MEI LAM ESTATE IN SHA TIN.

ALSO, ON THE KAM TIN BYPASS, NOISE BARRIERS WOULD BE INSTALLED ON TOP OF EARTH MOUNDS SHOULD THEY BE FOUND EFFECTIVE, MR BARNES SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

FLOODING CONTROL MEASURES TO BE BETTER CO-ORDINATED
* * * * *

THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL ENGINEERING SERVICES HAS BEEN GIVEN OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY TO CO-ORDINATE FLOODING CONTROL MEASURES, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON POON CHI-FAI, MR BARNES SAID THE DIRECTOR WOULD HAVE TO REVIEW ALL THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING REMEDIAL WORKS, EMERGENCY MEASURES AND FOR INFORMATION ON FLOODING.

+IF WE ARE DOING REASONABLY WELL NOW, HE MUST ENSURE THAT WE DO BETTER,+ HE ADDED.

MR BARNES WENT ON TO OUTLINE THE WAYS IN WHICH GOVERNMENT SOUGHT TO PREVENT FLOODING.

HE SAID FIRSTLY, IT REQUIRED ITS OWN CONTRACTORS TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT EXCAVATION MATERIAL OR BUILDING DEBRIS FROM ENTERING THE STORM-WATER DRAINAGE SYSTEM ON A HALF-FINISHED CONSTRUCTION SITE.

THIS REQUIRED A CONSIDERABLE EFFORT OF SUPERVISION ON THE PART OF THE CONTRACTOR AND ALSO A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF REGULAR SITE INSPECTIONS TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE.

SECONDLY, FOR PRIVATE CONSTRUCTION SITES, APPOINTED AUTHORISED PERSONS WERE BOUND TO ENSURE THAT CONTRACTORS TOOK SIMILAR PRECAUTIONS IN RESPECT OF THEIR WORK SITES.

+IF A CONTRACTOR FAILS TO DO THIS, HE CAN BE PROSECUTED UNDER THE SUMMARY OFFENCES ORDINANCE, AND IF CONVICTED, IS LIABLE TO A FINE OR IMPRISONMENT,+ MR BARNES SAID.

HE SAID OBVIOUSLY HOW EFFECTIVELY EVERYBODY - AND IT WAS A VERY LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED ALL OVER THE TERRITORY - SUCCEEDED IN DOING HIS PART VARIED AND DEPENDED AT LEAST IN PART ON WARNING OF BAD WEATHER.

/+BUT THE

+BUT THE SITUATION WOULD BE VERY BAD INDEED IF THE SYSTEM WAS NOT WORKING PRETTY WELL,+ HE SAID.

THE NEXT LINE OF DEFENCE, MR BARNES SAID, WAS DESILTING ALL THE MAJOR STORM-WATER NULLAHS AND CULVERTS.

THIS WAS NORMALLY DONE ONCE A YEAR, WITH NULLAHS SUBJECT TO HEAVY SILTING BEING CLEARED AS MANY AS FOUR TIMES A YEAR.

DURING TYPHOONS AND RAINSTORMS, THE HIGHWAYS, URBAN SERVICES AND REGIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENTS MUST ALL ENSURE THAT ALL DRAINS AND SURFACE CHANNELS WERE KEPT CLEAR.

HE SAID THE CAPACITY TO DRAIN AWAY VERY HIGH CONCENTRATIONS OF RAINFALL WAS A BASIC NECESSITY FOR THE ENGINEERING OF ALL URBAN DEVELOPMENT, WHICH WAS WHY ALMOST EVERY NEW TOWN WAS BLESSED WITH AT LEAST ONE NULLAH RUNNING THROUGH ITS MIDDLE.

THERE WERE NOT FOOL-PROOF, HOWEVER- IF THEY GOT BLOCKED, WATER PILED UP UNTIL THE BLOCK WAS CLEARED.

CLEARANCE MAY TAKE TIME, BUT THERE WAS A CONSIDERABLE MARGIN OF CAPACITY EVEN FOR VERY HEAVY RAINFALL AND GENERALLY SPEAKING THE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS, WHEN COMPLETED, WERE EXCELLENT, HE ADDED.

WITH ALL THIS, SOME AREAS WOULD ALWAYS BE SUSCEPTIBLE.

+IN CHA KWO LING AND LEI YUE MUN, WHICH MR POON MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY, I UNDERSTAND THAT RECENT FLOODS WERE LOCAL, PARTICULARLY IN THE SQUATTER AREAS, WHERE THERE ARE SCATTERED MAN-MADE DEPRESSIONS PARTICULARLY PRONE TO FLOODING, AND CONTROL OVER ILLEGAL DUMPING OF REFUSE AND DEBRIS IS LESS EFFICIENT,+ MR BRANES SAID.

+SO I THINK THAT THIS SYSTEM IS SUFFICIENTLY COMPREHENSIVE AND I SEE ONLY ONE MAJOR IMPROVEMENT WHICH NEEDS MAKING.

+BECAUSE RESPONSIBILITIES ARE DIFFUSE, IT IS SOMETIMES DIFFICULT TO BE SURE THAT THERE ARE NO GAPS IN THE SYSTEM.

- - - - 0 - - - -

ONE BILL PASSED
* * *

THE APPROPRIATION BILL 1987 WAS PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

TEN OTHER BILLS - THE BUSINESS REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, THE ROAD TRAFFIC (DRIVING LICENCES REGULATIONS AND REGISTRATION AND LICENSING OF VEHICLES REGULATIONS)(AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, THE IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, THE ESTATE DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, THE OCEAN PARK CORPORATION BILL 1987, THE AIR POLLUTION CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, THE LIFTS AND ESCALATORS (SAFETY)(AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, THE NEW TERRITORIES LEASES (EXTENSION) BILL 1987 AND THE DANGEROUS DRUGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 WERE READ A SECOND TIME AND DEBATE ON THEM WAS ADJOURNED.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED TO MAY 13.

- - - - 0 - - - -

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

- 44 -

HK FARES WELL AFTER JOINT DECLARATION

* * * * *

THE SINO-BRITISH AGREEMENT HAS BEEN WELCOMED BY THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG, BY THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, AND BY HONG KONG'S OVERSEAS INVESTORS AND TRADING PARTNERS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SPECIAL ADVISER TO THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID AKERS-JONES, TO THE BELGIUM-HONG KONG SOCIETY AT A BUSINESS CONFERENCE IN BRUSSELS TODAY (WEDNESDAY), ADDING THAT THE INGREDIENTS FOR MAINTAINING HONG KONG'S PROSPERITY AND STABILITY WERE THERE AND THAT THE TERRITORY HAD FARED WELL SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE JOINT-DECLARATION.

SPEAKING ON THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FUTURE OF HONG KONG, SIR DAVID SAID THAT WITH RETURNING CONFIDENCE, THE ECONOMY OF HONG KONG HAD RESPONDED TO OPPORTUNITIES AFFORDED BY THE GROWTH IN WORLD TRADE, BY THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF CHINA AND MORE GENERALLY DEVELOPMENT IN THE REST OF THE PACIFIC REGION.

ON BUSINESS CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG, SIR DAVID SAID THAT THERE WAS A GROWTH RATE OF JUST UNDER NINE PER CENT IN REAL TERMS IN GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT AND EIGHT PER CENT IN REAL TERMS OF INVESTMENT IN PLANT AND MACHINERY IN 1986.

+ALSO INDICATIVE OF CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE HAS BEEN THE REVIVAL OF INTEREST IN INVESTMENT IN ALL SECTORS OF THE PROPERTY MARKET,+ HE SAID.

IN 1986, HONG KONG'S TOTAL TRADE AMOUNTED TO U.S.\$71 BILLION, SIR DAVID SAID, ADDING THAT IN TERMS OF TOTAL TRADE, HONG KONG WAS THE WORLD'S 13TH LARGEST TRADER.

THERE WAS ALSO A RAPID GROWTH IN RE-EXPORTS OF CHINA ORIGIN IN 1986 AND EARLY 1987, REFLECTING THE RE-EMERGENCE OF HONG KONG'S ROLE AS A MAJOR ENTREPOT OF CHINA.

ON HONG KONG-BELGIUM TRADE, SIR DAVID SAID THAT IT HAD BEEN ON A STEADY INCREASE IN RECENT YEARS AND THE AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE WAS ABOUT NINE PER CENT.

+HONG KONG IS NOW A MAJOR COMMUNICATION CENTRE FOR THE FAR EAST. IN THE LAST DECADE, IT HAS ALSO BECOME ONE OF THE MAJOR FINANCIAL CENTRES OF THE WORLD,+ HE SAID.

COMMENTING ON THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN HONG KONG, SIR DAVID SAID THAT IT WAS SECOND ONLY TO JAPAN IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND WAS COMPARABLE TO THAT OF SINGAPORE.

+AT THE SAME TIME, THERE HAS BEEN VAST EXPENDITURE ON THE WELFARE FOR A GROWING POPULATION,+ HE SAID, QUOTING EXAMPLES OF FREE EDUCATION FOR EVERY CHILD, MEDICAL SERVICE WITH ONLY NOMINAL CHARGES AND PUBLIC HOUSING FOR NEARLY HALF OF THE POPULATION.

/+THERE IS

+THERE IS AN INCREASINGLY ELABORATE NETWORK OF SOCIAL WELFARE BENEFITS, AND LEGISLATION TO PROTECT WORKERS EXTENDS INTO ALMOST EVERY AREA OF EMPLOYMENT.+

SIR DAVID ATTRIBUTED HONG KONG'S SUCCESS TO THE GOVERNMENT POLICIES WHICH PROVIDED THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE INFRASTRUCTURE TO ALLOW PEOPLE THE OPPORTUNITY TO THRIVE AND TO PROSPER.

+HONG KONG HAS ITS LAWS AND ITS REGULATORY MECHANISMS BUT WITHIN THOSE LIMITS, DECISIONS ARE LEFT TO THE MARKET PLACE AND THE PRESSURES OF COMPETING RESOURCES.

+THIS IS AN IMPORTANT AND DISTINCTIVE FEATURE OF HONG KONG,+ HE SAID.

TURNING TO POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, SIR DAVID SAID THAT ONE OF THE MOST ABSORBING AND IMPORTANT MATTERS FACING HONG KONG WAS TO DECIDE ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT AND ITS BUREAUCRATIC MACHINERY.

+THERE IS A GREAT AND HEALTHY DEBATE GOING ON IN HONG KONG AT THE PRESENT TIME ABOUT THIS AND, FROM THIS DEBATE, WITHIN THE NEXT TWO TO THREE YEARS FIRM PRINCIPLES WILL HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED ON THE PROCESSES WHICH WILL ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION TO BE FORMED,+ HE SAID.

EARLIER IN HIS SPEECH, SIR DAVID SAID THAT BOTH THE BRITISH AND CHINESE GOVERNMENTS HAD JOINTLY COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO IMPLEMENT THEIR DECLARATION IN ALL ITS SUPPORTIVE DETAIL.

HE CITED EXAMPLES OF PRACTICAL PROGRESS ALREADY ACHIEVED SINCE THE JOINT DECLARATION WAS SIGNED TWO YEARS AGO, WHICH INCLUDED, AMONG OTHER THINGS, HONG KONG'S PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AS A SEPARATE ENTITY.

+FULL AGREEMENT HAS ALSO ALREADY BEEN REACHED ON THE RANGE OF TRAVEL DOCUMENTS TO BE USED BY HONG KONG'S RESIDENTS BEFORE AND AFTER 1997.+

AGREEMENT HAD ALSO BEEN REACHED ON THE LEGISLATION REQUIRED TO EXTEND TO 2047 LAND AND PROPERTY RIGHTS WHICH EXPIRED IN 1997, AND ON THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SHARING THE INCOME FROM THE SALE OF LAND BETWEEN THE PRESENT HONG KONG GOVERNMENT AND POST 1997 GOVERNMENT, HE SAID.

+BOTH THE CHINESE AND BRITISH GOVERNMENTS HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR DETERMINATION TO MAKE THE JOINT DECLARATION WORK.

+GOODWILL AND UNDERSTANDING ON THE PART OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AS WELL WILL BE NECESSARY IN SMOOTHING THE WAY AHEAD,+ HE ADDED.

SIGNIFICANCE OF ASIA-PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT STRESSED

*** * * * ***

EUROPE SHOULD REGARD THE EMERGING ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC AREA AS A CHALLENGE, RATHER THAN CONFRONTATION, THE BELGIAN MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND FOREIGN TRADE, MR HERMAN DE CROO, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR DE CROO, WAS GUEST SPEAKER AT THE LUNCH OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, +HONG KONG GATEWAY TO CHINA AND THE SOUTH-EAST ASIAN REGION+ HELD IN BRUSSELS TODAY.

ADDRESSING SOME 150 DELEGATES ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC AREA FOR BELGIUM AND HER EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURS, MR DE CROO SAID, +THE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE TO THE WORLD ECONOMY OF THIS HUGE REGION HAS INCREASED IN TRULY SPECTACULAR FASHION IN RECENT YEARS AND EUROPE SHOULD NOT AND INDEED CANNOT AFFORD TO VIEW THIS SHIFT OF FOCUS OF WORLD TRADE AS CONFRONTATION BUT RATHER AS A CHALLENGE WHICH IT MUST ENDEAVOUR TO TAKE UP.+

MR DE CROO ALSO SAID, +IN BELGIUM ALONE, VARIOUS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE BELGIAN OFFICE OF FOREIGN TRADE AND VARIOUS CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE, HAVE BEEN PRIME MOVERS IN PROMOTING MUTUALLY PROFITABLE ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN THE REGION+.

+IN THIS CONTEXT, I BELIEVE THAT GRATEFUL THANKS ARE DUE TO THE RECENTLY ESTABLISHED +BELGIUM-HONG KONG SOCIETY+ WHICH HAS INVITED SUCH A LARGE NUMBER OF DISTINGUISHED EXPERTS WITH PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE OF HONG KONG TO COME AND SPEAK HERE TODAY AND SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES,+ THE MINISTER SAID.

ON BELGIUM'S TRADING TRADITIONS WITH HONG KONG AND CHINA, MR DE CROO NOTED THAT +THEY ARE IN FACT THE LINCHPIN OF THE WHOLE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR ECONOMIC INFLUENCE IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD.+

+A SPECIFIC ILLUSTRATION SUPPORTING THIS ASSERTION IS THE FACT THAT AROUND 30 BELGIAN FIRMS OF ALL KINDS HAVE AN AGENCY IN HONG KONG, WHILE OUR BANKING SECTOR, MORE PARTICULARLY THE BELGIAN BANK, WHICH HAS BEEN IN BUSINESS THERE FOR OVER 50 YEARS AND HAS 15 OR SO HIGHLY CONSPICUOUS BRANCHES, PLAYS A LEADING ROLE IN THE TERRITORY'S AFFAIRS.

HE ALSO SAID BELGIAN FIRMS WERE MANAGING TO SUSTAIN A RELATIVELY SUBSTANTIAL FLOW OF TRADE IN GOODS WHICH - IN MANY CASES - WERE RE-EXPORTED TO THE CHINESE MAINLAND.

+IN ADDITION TO OUR MAIN EXPORT - DIAMONDS, WE ARE AWARE OF AN INCREASED DEMAND FOR BELGIAN CONSUMER GOODS IN HONG KONG, MAINLY LEISURE AND FOOD STUFFS.

+AS FOR IMPORTS FROM HONG KONG, THESE INCREASED BY 6 PER CENT IN 1986 BUT ARE STILL BELOW THE VALUE OF BELGIUM'S EXPORTS TO THE TERRITORY,+ HE ADDED.

TURNING TO LARGE SCALE PROJECTS, MR DE CROO SAID:

+BELGIAN INDUSTRIES ARE FOCUSSING THEIR ATTENTION ON THE SUPPLY OF EQUIPMENT FOR MAJOR LOCAL ELECTRICITY GENERATING FIRMS AND FOR HONG KONG'S PORT, AIRPORT, ROAD AND TOWN PLANNING INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEMES.

THE INTEREST OF OUR BUILDING INDUSTRY FIRMS IS SUCH THAT MY COLLEAGUE - THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS - IS GIVING SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THE POSSIBILITY OF SECONDING AN EXPERT FROM HIS DEPARTMENT TO OUR CONSUL-GENERAL IN HONG KONG IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN OUR LOCAL COMMERCIAL OFFICE WHICH MONITORS THE MOST INTERESTING PROJECTS IN HONG KONG ITSELF AND IN SOUTHERN CHINA.+

THE MINISTER STRESSED THAT HE WAS SURE THAT THE CONFERENCE WOULD SERVE TO AWAKEN THE INTEREST OF BELGIAN IMPORTERS AND EXPORTERS TO THE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY HONG KONG AND THE ASIAN REGION.

- - - - -

PAY SCALE ADJUSTMENTS APPROVED
* * * * *

THE FINANCE COMMITTEE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED EXPENDITURE OF \$1 325 MILLION FOR ADJUSTMENTS TO THE PAY SCALES OF CIVIL SERVANTS FOR THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR.

THE PAY RISE OF 6.30 PER CENT FOR THE UPPER BAND, 6.40 PER CENT FOR THE MIDDLE BAND AND 7.13 PER CENT FOR THE LOWER BAND WILL BE EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 1 THIS YEAR AND WILL BE INTRODUCED AT THE END OF THIS MONTH. DIRECTORATE LEVEL CIVIL SERVANTS WILL RECEIVE AN AVERAGE OF 6.27 PER CENT RISE.

ALSO COVERED BY THE PAY REVISION ARE SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS WHICH ENJOY FULL SUBSIDY FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

THE FINANCE COMMITTEE APPROVAL FOLLOWED THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE RESULTS OF A RECENT PAY TREND SURVEY OF 64 PRIVATE COMPANIES CONDUCTED BY THE STANDING COMMISSION ON CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE.

THE SURVEY TOOK INTO ACCOUNT ONLY INCREASES RELATING TO COST OF LIVING, COMPANY PERFORMANCE AND GENERAL INCREASES IN MARKET AREAS, AND EXCLUDED OTHER INCREASES SUCH AS MERIT PAYMENTS AND PAY SCALE INCREMENT.

- - - - -

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

- 48 -

CONSULTANT STUDY ON CHEMICAL WASTE TREATMENT PLANT

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT, IN PLANNING FOR THE PROPER TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL OF CHEMICAL WASTES, HAS COMMISSIONED A CONSULTANCY STUDY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CENTRALISED FACILITY FOR THE SOUTHEASTERN PART OF TSING YI ISLAND WHICH IS CONSIDERED SUITABLE AS IT IS FAR AWAY FROM RESIDENTIAL AREAS.

A DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUCH TREATMENT FACILITIES WAS ESSENTIAL IF HONG KONG WAS TO AVIOD EXTENSIVE POLLUTION CAUSED BY THE INDISCRIMINATE DISPOSAL OF CHEMICAL WASTES.

AT THE SAME TIME, TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE MARPOL CONVENTION WHICH WAS EXTENDED TO HONG KONG IN 1984, A RECEPTION FACILITY FOR MARINE OILY AND CHEMICAL WASTES WAS URGENTLY REQUIRED.

AN AGREEMENT SIGNING CEREMONY TOOK PLACE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DEPARTMENT AND ERL (ASIA) LTD. THE STUDY, AT A COST OF \$6.5 MILLION, IS DIVIDED INTO THREE PHASES AND IS EXPECTED TO LAST FOR TWO-AND-A-HALF YEARS.

DURING PHASE ONE, THE CONSULTANT HAS TO PRODUCE CONCEPTUAL DESIGN AND PREFORMANCE SPECIFICATIONS OF THE FACILITY. THE CONSULTANT WOULD ALSO CARRY OUT AN INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EA) AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON APPROPRIATE CONTROL MEASURES AND REQUIREMENTS. THIS WOULD INCLUDE RISK EVALUATION TO ENSURE THAT ALL NECESSARY SAFETY MEASURES WOULD BE INCORPORATED INTO THE DESIGN AND OPERATION OF THE FACILITY.

THE CONSULTANT WOULD ALSO ADVISE THE GOVERNMENT ON THE ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND CONTRACTUAL ASPECTS OF THE PROJECTS, AND MAKE APPROPRIATE RECOMMENDATIONS.

SUBJECT TO GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO PROCEED WITH PHASE TWO, THE CONSULTANT WOULD PREPARE TO INVITE TENDERS FROM EXPERIENCED WASTE DISPOSAL CONTRACTORS FOR THE DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF THE FACILITY.

DURING PHASE THREE, THE CONTRACTOR WOULD CARRY OUT SITE CONSTRUCTION WITH A VIEW TO COMMISSIONING THE FACILITY IN EARLY 1990.

TO ENSURE THAT THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS WERE FULLY TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT DURING THE DESIGN STAGE OF THE PLANT, THE CONTRACTOR WOULD BE REQUIRED TO CONDUCT A DETAILED EIA IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS.

- - - - - 0 - - - - -

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

- 49 -

EDUCATION BOARD MEMBERS VISIT TECHNICAL SCHOOL
* * * * *

SIX MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR RON BRIDGE, THIS (WEDNESDAY) MORNING VISITED TANG SHIU KIN VICTORIA TECHNICAL SCHOOL IN WAN CHAI TO SEE FOR THEMSELVES THE PROVISION OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN HONG KONG.

THE MEMBERS WERE MR DAVID CHEUNG, MRS RITA FAN, THE REV. J.G. FOLEY, MR M. PAGLIARI AND MRS MABLE CHOW.

ACCOMPANIED BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION (SCHOOLS), MR WONG SHEK-WAH, AND SENIOR EDUCATION OFFICER (SERVICING UNIT), MR NG KOON-CHEE, THE VISITORS WERE GIVEN A CONDUCTED TOUR OF THE SCHOOL PREMISES BY THE ACTING PRINCIPAL OF THE SCHOOL, MR MA CHI-SAU.

THEY WERE TOLD THAT THE SCHOOL WAS ONE OF THE OLDEST GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS WHICH OFFERED A TECHNICALLY-ORIENTED EDUCATION.

THE PARTY WAS ALSO TOLD HOW COMMERCIAL AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS COULD BE EFFECTIVELY BLENDED INTO THE CURRICULUM WHICH ALSO AIMED TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH GENERAL ACADEMIC EDUCATION CONSISTING OF ENGLISH, CHINESE, MATHEMATICS, ARTS AND SCIENCE SUBJECTS.

BOYS IN THE SCHOOL WERE OFFERED A GENERAL DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY COURSE UP TO FORM 2 BEFORE THEY WERE STREAMED INTO EITHER METAL OR WOOD BIASED CLASSES. GIRLS WERE OFFERED THE OPTIONS OF EITHER THE SCIENCE, THE COMMERCE OR THE HOME ECONOMICS STREAM.

THE VISITORS ALSO NOTED THAT THE SCHOOL OFFERED MATRICULATION CLASSES FOR STUDENTS WHO PREPARED TO FURTHER STUDIES IN ENGINEERING AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN UNIVERSITIES AND POLYTECHNICS.

- - - - - 0 - - - - -

COURSE FOR BANKING TRAINING OFFICERS OFFERED
* * * * *

TRAINERS IN THE BANKING INDUSTRY ARE INVITED TO APPLY FOR A COURSE ON INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES, WHICH IS ORGANISED JOINTLY BY THE HONG KONG TECHNICAL TEACHERS' COLLEGE AND THE BANKING TRAINING BOARD OF THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL.

THE FOUR-DAY COURSE FROM MAY 26 WILL ENABLE PARTICIPANTS TO IDENTIFY AND ANALYSE TRAINING NEEDS, TO STRUCTURE AND SEQUENCE LEARNING MATERIALS, TO ORGANISE ROLE-PLAY AND CHAIR DISCUSSION GROUPS, AND TO SELECT AND PREPARE VISUAL AIDS FOR USE IN TRAINING SESSIONS.

PARTICIPANTS WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED TO PRESENT A 20-MINUTE SESSION WHICH WILL BE VIDEO-TAPED FOR PLAYBACK DISCUSSION.

/COURSE FEE

- 50 -

COURSE FEE IS \$427. BUT QUALIFIED PARTICIPANTS WILL BE REFUNDED HALF OF THE FEE UNDER THE COUNCIL'S SUBSIDISED TRAINING SCHEME.

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATION IS MAY 12. THOSE INTERESTED SHOULD APPLY EARLY AS THE CLASS IS LIMITED TO 15 PERSONS.

FURTHER DETAILS ON THE COURSE SHOULD BE MADE TO THE SECRETARY OF THE BANKING TRAINING BOARD ON 5-8932341 EXT. 255.

- - - - 0 - - - -

NEW HOME FOR RARE ANIMALS AND BIRDS
* * * * *

TWENTY-TWO ENDANGERED SPECIES KEPT IN THE CUSTODY OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT WILL BE FLOWN TO THEIR NEW HOME IN PEKING, CHINA, ON FRIDAY (MAY 8).

THESE ANIMALS AND BIRDS, WHICH WILL JOIN THE BREEDING COLONIES IN THE PEKING ENDANGERED ANIMAL BREEDING CENTRE, ARE SEVEN RHESUS MONKEYS, FOUR BURMESE PYTHONS, TWO FISCHER'S LOVEBIRDS, EIGHT DERBYAN PARAKEETS AND A YOUNG ASIATIC BLACK BEAR.

THE LATTER WAS DISCOVERED AND CAPTURED AT MUK WU VILLAGE IN TA KWU LING IN EARLY MARCH THIS YEAR.

THESE PROTECTED SPECIES WILL BE HANDED OVER TO THE HONG KONG REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA IMPORT AND EXPORT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE, DR EDGAR LIONG, AT THE AFD AIRPORT ANIMAL HOSTEL BEFORE DEPARTURE.

PRESENT AT THE HANDING-OVER CEREMONY WILL BE THE DEPARTMENT'S ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (CONSERVATION AND COUNTRY PARKS), MR K.C. IU, AND SENIOR VETERINARY OFFICER, DR NORMAN CHENG.

- - - - -

NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE HANDING-OVER CEREMONY AT THE AFD AIRPORT ANIMAL HOSTEL AT 61, CONCORD ROAD (OPPOSITE HEACO BUILDING) AT 9.30 AM ON FRIDAY. THE CEREMONY WILL BE FOLLOWED BY A PRESS BRIEFING ABOUT THE HOMING EXERCISE.

- - - - 0 - - - -

DB COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS NOISE CONTROL BILL

THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE OF THE YAU MA TEI DISTRICT BOARD WILL MEET TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO DISCUSS THE DRAFT NOISE CONTROL BILL.

THE DRAFT BILL CONSOLIDATES EXISTING LAW RELATING TO THE CONTROL OF NOISE. IT ALSO ENABLES THE INTRODUCTION OF DETAILED CONTROL CRITERIA, MEASUREMENT PROCEDURES AND OTHER TECHNICAL DETAILS.

MEMBERS WILL ALSO DISCUSS FUND ALLOCATION FOR A PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN ON BUILDING MANAGEMENT WHICH INVOLVES AN EXHIBITION, SEMINARS AND A SYMPOSIUM.

AT TOMORROW'S MEETING, THE ISSUE OF THE RECENT REHOUSING OFFER FOR BOAT DWELLERS IN THE YAU MA TEI TYPHOON SHELTER WILL ALSO BE RAISED BY A MEMBER.

OTHER ITEMS ON THE AGENDA INCLUDE A PROPOSAL TO SET UP A STATUE AT PARK LANE BOULEVARD TO PROMOTE COURTESY, ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SURVEILLANCE OF CLEARED REAR LANES AND ENVIRONMENTAL BLACKSPOTS AND AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AT MAN CHEONG STREET.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING AT 2.30 PM TOMORROW IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF YAU MA TEI DISTRICT OFFICE, SECOND FLOOR, 490 NATHAN ROAD.

----- 0 -----
KWAI TSING DISTRICT SUB-OFFICE ON THE MOVE

THE TSING YI SUB-OFFICE OF THE KWAI TSING DISTRICT OFFICE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) MOVED TO CHEUNG CHING ESTATE COMMUNITY CENTRE TODAY (WEDNESDAY), ADJACENT TO THE CHEUNG CHING BUS STATION ON THE ISLAND.

THE SUB-OFFICE WILL NOW OCCUPY ROOM 104, FIRST FLOOR OF THE COMMUNITY CENTRE AND THE TELEPHONE NUMBER IS 0-4974097. THE TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR THE PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICE IS 0-4951735.

THE REMOVAL WILL PROVIDE DISTRICT OFFICE STAFF WITH BETTER ACCESS TO TSING YI RESIDENTS TO UTILISE THE CENTRE FACILITIES IN ORGANISING AND PROMOTING FUNCTIONS. THE ARRANGEMENT WILL ALSO ENHANCE LIAISON WITH VOLUNTARY AGENCIES OPERATING IN THE SAME BLOCK.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1987

- 52 -

**URBAN CLEARWAY RESTRICTIONS IN WAN CHAI
* * * * ***

LOCKHART ROAD WESTBOUND FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH ARSENAL STREET TO A POINT ABOUT 45 METRES EAST OF THE SAME JUNCTION WILL BE MADE A 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY URBAN CLEARWAY STARTING FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (MAY 9).

AT THE SAME TIME, TWO SECTIONS OF THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF PERCIVAL STREET IN WAN CHAI WILL ALSO BECOME URBAN CLEARWAYS OPERATING BETWEEN 7 AM AND MIDNIGHT.

THEY ARE THE SECTION BETWEEN HENNESSY ROAD AND LOCKHART ROAD, AND THE SECTION FROM THE JUNCTION OF PERCIVAL STREET WITH HENNESSY ROAD TO A POINT ABOUT 20 METRES SOUTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION.

NO VEHICLE OTHER THAN FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP WITHIN THE ABOVE URBAN CLEARWAYS FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS.

- - - - - 0 - - - - -

**RESTRICTED ZONE ON TO KWA WAN ROAD
* * * * ***

THE EXISTING PEAK HOUR RESTRICTION ON TO KWA WAN ROAD NORTHBOUND, BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH SHEUNG HEUNG ROAD AND A POINT ABOUT 45 METRES NORTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION, WILL BE REPLACED BY A 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY RESTRICTED ZONE STARTING FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (MAY 9).

NO VEHICLE WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS WITHIN THE RESTRICTED AREA.

- - - - - 0 - - - - -