



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1990

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1990

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GOVERNMENT TO RESTRICT USE OF LEVERAGED LEASING AS A TAX SHELTER

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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, MADE A STATEMENT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON ON LEVERAGED LEASING. THE FULL TEXT OF HIS STATEMENT IS AS FOLLOWS:

SIR,

I HAVE BECOME CONCERNED AT THE INCREASING USE BEING MADE IN HONG KONG OF LEVERAGED LEASING AND SIMILAR ARRANGEMENTS AS TAX SHELTERING DEVICES. THE AMOUNT OF TAX REVENUE DEFERRED AS A RESULT OF THESE TRANSACTIONS IS ALREADY THREATENING TO REACH \$1,000 MILLION THIS YEAR, A LEVEL THAT CANNOT BE TOLERATED. I THEREFORE PROPOSE TO SEEK AN AMENDMENT TO THE INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE TO RESTRICT THE SCOPE OF THE TAX BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO PERSONS ENTERING INTO LEVERAGED LEASING ARRANGEMENTS.

A LEVERAGED LEASE TRANSACTION IS TYPICALLY ONE IN WHICH A LIMITED PARTNERSHIP OF INVESTORS, USUALLY CORPORATIONS, ACQUIRES MACHINERY OR PLANT, COMMONLY AIRCRAFT, WHICH IS THEN LEASED BY THAT PARTNERSHIP FOR A TERM OF 10 YEARS OR MORE TO A LESSEE. BY REASON OF THE "LEVERAGE" OBTAINED FROM BORROWING A SUBSTANTIAL NON-RECOURSE LOAN, THE PARTNERSHIP IS EFFECTIVELY AT RISK FOR NO MORE THAN A SMALL PART OF THE ASSET COST. ON THE OTHER HAND, FOR HONG KONG TAX PURPOSES THE PARTNERSHIP IS ENTITLED TO INITIAL AND ANNUAL DEPRECIATION ALLOWANCES ON THE FULL COST OF THE ASSET, AND THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE PARTNERSHIP CAN SET OFF THEIR RESPECTIVE SHARE OF THE RESULTANT PARTNERSHIP LOSS AGAINST TAXABLE PROFITS THEY MAY DERIVE FROM OTHER BUSINESSES.

IN 1986 LEGISLATION WAS INTRODUCED WITH THE INTENTION OF DENYING DEPRECIATION ALLOWANCES WHERE SHIPS OR AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN ACQUIRED THROUGH LEVERAGED LEASE TRANSACTIONS AND THE LESSEE, REFERRED TO AS THE END-USER, WAS NOT A HONG KONG SHIP OR AIRCRAFT OPERATOR. HOWEVER, MORE AND MORE EXAMPLES OF SCHEMES ARE BEING ENCOUNTERED WHERE THE END-USER OF SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT ACQUIRED THROUGH A HONG KONG LIMITED PARTNERSHIP IS A FOREIGN OPERATOR. NONETHELESS, UNDER THE EXISTING LEGISLATION DEPRECIATION ALLOWANCES CANNOT BE DENIED TO THESE SCHEMES.

SUBJECT TO THE ADVICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, AMENDMENTS WILL BE INTRODUCED IN THE COMING YEAR TO ENSURE THAT FOREIGN OPERATORS DO NOT GET THE BENEFIT OF SUCH DEPRECIATION ALLOWANCES. IN ADDITION, I PROPOSE TO INTRODUCE FURTHER AMENDMENTS TO RESTRICT THE ABILITY OF THE PARTNERS OF A LIMITED PARTNERSHIP TO SET OFF THEIR SHARE OF THE LOSSES INCURRED BY SUCH A PARTNERSHIP. IN FUTURE, THE SHARE OF LOSS THAT CAN BE SET OFF AGAINST OTHER INCOME WILL BE LIMITED TO THE AMOUNT THE LIMITED PARTNER ACTUALLY HAS AT RISK IN THE PARTNERSHIP.

SUBJECT TO ITS BEING PASSED IN THIS COUNCIL, THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION WILL APPLY TO TRANSACTIONS ENTERED INTO ON OR AFTER TOMORROW'S DATE, THAT IS, 15 NOVEMBER 1990.

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FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF TAXPAYERS, THE COMMISSIONER OF INLAND REVENUE CURRENTLY OPERATES AN ADMINISTRATIVE ADVANCED RULING PROCEDURE IN RESPECT OF PROPOSED LEVERAGED LEASE TRANSACTIONS. UNDER THIS PROCEDURE THE COMMISSIONER, ON APPLICATION, GIVES A RULING AS TO WHETHER HE CONSIDERS A PROPOSED TRANSACTION IS LIKELY TO BE CHALLENGED UNDER THE GENERAL ANTI-AVOIDANCE PROVISIONS CONTAINED IN SECTION 6LA OF THE INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE. A NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS FOR ADVANCE CLEARANCE ARE NOW BEING CONSIDERED BY THE COMMISSIONER, AND THESE WILL BE CONSIDERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE EXISTING LAW AND PRACTICE. HOWEVER, IN CONSIDERING APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED AFTER TODAY, THE COMMISSIONER WILL HAVE REGARD TO THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION. AS IN THE PAST, THE ISSUE OF AN ADVERSE RULING WILL NOT IN ANY WAY AFFECT A TAXPAYER'S RIGHT OF OBJECTION AND APPEAL AGAINST ANY SUBSEQUENT ASSESSMENT.

THESE MEASURES WILL HELP STEM A MAJOR HAEMORRHAGE AFFECTING THE PUBLIC REVENUE. I MIGHT ADD THAT SIMILAR MEASURES HAVE BEEN USED IN OTHER TAX JURISDICTIONS.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

FOLLOW-UP ENQUIRIES ON THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S STATEMENT SHOULD BE MADE WITH THE COMMISSIONER OF INLAND REVENUE, MR ANTHONY AU-YEUNG OR SENIOR ASSESSOR, MR GARY LAIRD (TEL. 894 5001, 895 2116) OR WITH MR STEPHEN SELBY OF THE FINANCE BRANCH (TEL. 810 2370).

LOCAL EFFORTS TO REDUCE OZONE DEPLETION
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THE GOVERNMENT IS EXPLORING WAYS TO STRENGTHEN LOCAL EFFORTS TO REDUCE OZONE DEPLETION, FOLLOWING THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL ON SUBSTANCES THAT DEplete THE OZONE LAYER.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PETER WONG.

MR BARNES SAID: "THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL IN SUBSTANCES THAT DEplete THE OZONE LAYER REFLECT AND CODIFY A CONSENSUS OF SOME YEARS THAT THE PHASING OUT OF CHLOROFLUOROCARBONS (CFC'S) SHOULD BE ACCELERATED AND THAT HALONS AND CARBON TETRACHLORIDE AND METHYL CHLOROFORM SHOULD BE BROUGHT INTO THE NET.

"AT THE SECOND MEETING OF THE PARTIES, THE TIMETABLE FOR CONTROL OF CONSUMPTION OF CFC'S WAS ALTERED," MR BARNES SAID.

"THE NEW TIMETABLE ALLOWS 100 PER CENT OF 1986 LEVELS UNTIL JANUARY 1, 1995 AND THEN A PROGRESSIVE DECREASE TO ZERO ON AND AFTER JANUARY 1, 2000.

"PREVIOUSLY, CONSUMPTION AT 100 PER CENT OF 1986 LEVELS WAS PERMITTED UNTIL JULY 1, 1993, AND THEN A DECREASE UNTIL 50 PER CENT OF THAT LEVEL WAS REACHED ON AND AFTER JULY 1, 1988 WAS REQUIRED," HE SAID.

HE SAID PREVIOUSLY HALONS WERE NOT PERMITTED TO INCREASE ABOVE 1986 LEVELS. NOW, HE SAID, THE USAGE OF NON-ESSENTIAL HALONS WAS REQUIRED TO DECREASE PROGRESSIVELY FROM JANUARY 1, 1995 TO ZERO ON AND AFTER JANUARY 1, 2000.

"THESE DECISIONS ARE BINDING ON THE PARTIES WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT AND THE ADMINISTRATION IS CONSIDERING THE EFFECT OF THESE CHANGES.

"LEGISLATION TO COMPLY WITH THESE CHANGES OR, IF POSSIBLE, IMPROVE ON THEM WILL BE PREPARED SHORTLY FOR DISCUSSION," HE SAID.

THE SECOND MEETING HELD IN JUNE THIS YEAR ALSO RECOMMENDED CERTAIN AMENDMENTS TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL.

"THESE WILL NOT COME INTO EFFECT UNTIL 20 OR MORE PARTIES HAVE RATIFIED THEM, JANUARY 1, 1992 BEING THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE," MR BARNES SAID.

THESE AMENDMENTS WOULD REQUIRE OTHER CFC'S, CARBON TETRACHLORIDE, AND METHYL CHLOROFORM TO BE CONTROLLED, UNDER SYSTEMS WHICH CALL FOR PROGRESSIVE DECREASES IN USAGE TO ZERO ON JANUARY 1, 2000 FOR OTHER CFC'S AND CARBON TETRACHLORIDE, AND ON JANUARY 1, 2005 FOR METHYL CHLOROFORM.

"THE ADMINISTRATION IS ASSUMING THAT THESE RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS WILL BE ADOPTED, AND IS PREPARING THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION," MR BARNES SAID.

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ADEQUATE POWERS TO DEAL WITH KNOWN UBW'S

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THERE ARE ADEQUATE POWERS IN THE PRESENT BUILDINGS ORDINANCE TO DEAL WITH KNOWN UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS (UBW'S), AND THE BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) NO. 2 BILL INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LAST WEEK WILL SPEED UP THE EXERCISE OF THESE POWERS.

THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID THIS IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON DANIEL TSE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

/MR BARNES

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MR BARNES SAID: "THERE ARE MOREOVER ADEQUATE STAFF RESOURCES TO DEAL EXPEDITIOUSLY WITH UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS, WHICH ARE ALSO KNOWN TO BE DANGEROUS.

"INDEED DANGER, KNOWN DANGER, IS THE HIGHEST PRIORITY TARGET OF THE UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS SECTION OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE. SOME SUCH BUILDING WORKS, SUCH AS SOME RUSTY PROJECTING WINDOW CAGES ARE OBVIOUSLY BOTH ILLEGAL AND DANGEROUS AND ARE ACTED UPON EITHER ON THE BASIS OF PUBLIC COMPLAINT OR ON THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE'S INITIATIVE.

"IN OTHER WORKS, HOWEVER, WHICH MAY APPEAR LIKE LEGAL BUILDING WORKS, NEITHER THE DANGER NOR THE ILLEGALITY MAY BE APPARENT, AND THESE MAY BE AN EVEN GREATER THREAT TO LIFE AND LIMB."

MR BARNES SAID COLLAPSES OF A SCALE SIMILAR TO THE RECENT ONE AT TO KWA WAN WOULD CONTINUE TO BE RARE AND THE CASE, WHICH WOULD BE THE SUBJECT OF A CORONER'S INQUEST, HAD CAUSED A VERY HIGH DEGREE OF PUBLIC CONCERN.

HE SAID GOVERNMENT INSPECTIONS, ENFORCEMENT OF REPAIRS AND ACTION AGAINST UBW'S ON A DAY TO DAY BASIS ENSURED THAT THERE WERE FAR LESS BUILDING COLLAPSES THAN THAT OTHERWISE WOULD BE. AND SINCE THE TO KWA WAN CASE, THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE HAD BEEN GIVING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO CANOPIES WHICH NEED ROUTINE INSPECTION. BUT THE LEGAL AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SAFETY OF A PRIVATE BUILDING WAS FIRMLY IN THE HANDS OF ITS OWNER.

MR BARNES SAID THERE WAS NO WAY IN WHICH THE RESOURCES OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE COULD BE BROUGHT UP TO THE LEVEL REQUIRED TO RELIEVE OWNERS OF THIS RESPONSIBILITY OR THAT THEY SHOULD BE.

MR BARNES ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE DIRECTOR OF BUILDINGS AND LANDS WOULD REPORT EARLY NEXT YEAR ON MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN BUILDING SAFETY CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT.

HE SAID: "I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE OPEN CONSULTATION THAT THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT IS PRESENTLY CONDUCTING WILL RESULT IN POSITIVE RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO HOW PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RESOURCES CAN BE POOLED MOST EFFECTIVELY, FOR IT IS ONLY WITH SUCH A JOINT EFFORT AND MUTUAL COOPERATION THAT THIS IMMENSE PROBLEM CAN BE SUCCESSFULLY TACKLED.

"IT FOLLOWS FROM WHAT I HAVE SAID THAT THE LIABILITY FOR COMPENSATION TO INJURED PERSONS MUST IN MOST CASES LIE WITH THE PARTY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NEGLIGENCE, IF ANY, WHICH RESULTED IN THE INJURY AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEGLIGENCE AND LIABILITY MUST REMAIN A JUDICIAL PROCESS," MR BARNES ADDED.

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GOVT INTENDS TO REPLACE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACTS WITH LOCAL LAW

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THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO INTRODUCE BEFORE 1997 LOCAL LEGISLATION TO REPLACE THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACTS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY INFORMED LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (LEGCO) TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MRS ELSIE TU, MR ASPREY SAID SECTION 2 OF THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT 1911, WHICH WAS REPEALED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM BY THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT 1989, REMAINS IN FORCE IN HONG KONG BECAUSE THE 1989 UNITED KINGDOM ACT HAS NOT BEEN APPLIED TO THE TERRITORY.

"THE ADMINISTRATION IS NOW CONSIDERING WHETHER THE 1989 UNITED KINGDOM ACT SHOULD BE APPLIED TO HONG KONG," MR ASPREY SAID.

THE ACT COULD BE GIVEN EFFECT IN HONG KONG EITHER BY ORDER IN COUNCIL OR IN THE FORM OF AN ORDINANCE ENACTED BY THE LEGCO HE SAID.

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SFC TAKEN ENFORCEMENT ACTION IN 282 CASES

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THE SECURITIES AND FUTURES COMMISSION HAS TAKEN ENFORCEMENT ACTION IN 282 CASES SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT ON MAY 1, 1989, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID LI, SIR PIERS SAID THE ENFORCEMENT ACTION HAD RESULTED IN THE ISSUE OF 53 LETTERS OF WARNING OR ADVICE AND 48 SUMMONSES.

"CURRENTLY, ENQUIRIES ON 59 CASES ARE CONTINUING," HE ADDED.

SIR PIERS SAID IN TERMS OF ROUTINE SURVEILLANCE OF MARKET INTERMEDIARIES AND ADVERTISEMENTS, THE COMMISSION HAD HANDLED 366 CASES SINCE ITS INCEPTION.

"THIS HAD RESULTED IN THE ISSUE OF 176 LETTERS OF WARNING OR ADVICE," HE SAID, ADDING THAT CURRENTLY ENQUIRIES ON 63 CASES ARE CONTINUING.

THE VARIOUS TYPES OF ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS TAKEN INCLUDED MISCONDUCT BY REGISTERED PERSONS, UNREGISTERED ACTIVITY, SHARE DEALING ENQUIRIES, BREACH OF PROTECTION OF INVESTORS ORDINANCE, ALLEGED FRAUD AND OTHER OFFENCES, ENQUIRIES FROM OVERSEAS AND OTHERS. ROUTINE COMPLIANCE AND SURVEILLANCE CASES INCLUDED INSPECTION OF INTERMEDIARIES, MATTERS RELATING TO REGISTERED PERSONS AND ADVERTISEMENT SURVEILLANCE.

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BILL SEEKING TO EXTEND PROTECTION OF
WORKERS' SAFETY AND HEALTH PASSED

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THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990, WHICH SEEKS TO EXTEND THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE TO THE CATERING TRADE BY INCLUDING CATERING ESTABLISHMENTS WITHIN THE DEFINITION OF AN INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKING, WAS PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE ORDINANCE, WHICH PROTECTS THE SAFETY AND HEALTH OF WORKERS, NOW COVERS FACTORIES AND CONSTRUCTION SITES ONLY BUT NOT RESTAURANTS AND OTHER CATERING ESTABLISHMENTS.

THANKING THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG FOR SUPPORTING THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON K.Y. YEUNG, POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SPARE NO EFFORT IN ENCOURAGING WORKERS IN THE CATERING TRADE TO ADOPT SAFE PRACTICES.

"I AM SURE THAT THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT WILL BE VERY ENCOURAGED TO KNOW THAT THEY HAVE THE STRONG SUPPORT OF THE TRADE UNIONS BEHIND THEIR EFFORT TO PROMOTE SAFETY AT WORK," HE ADDED.

MR YEUNG SAID SINCE 1987 THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT HAD BEEN ENCOURAGING AND HELPING BOTH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES TO FORM IN-PLANT SAFETY COMMITTEES ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS, AND IT WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO.

"WE WOULD LIKE TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THESE COMMITTEES ON THE PROMOTION OF INDUSTRIAL SAFETY BEFORE CONSIDERING WHETHER THEIR FORMATION SHOULD BE MADE COMPULSORY," HE SAID.

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NO GOVT PLAN FOR TAX RELIEF FOR MORTGAGE INTEREST PAYMENTS

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO PLANS AT PRESENT TO PROVIDE TAX RELIEF FOR INTEREST PAYMENTS ON MORTGAGE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED PREMISES.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID THIS IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID LI IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SIR PIERS SAID THE POTENTIAL COST OF SUCH PLANS TO REVENUE WOULD BE HIGH.

"MORTGAGES ARE LONG-TERM AND THE ROLL-OVER EFFECT COUPLED WITH AN UPWARD MOVEMENT IN HOUSE PRICES COULD PRODUCE SIGNIFICANT LONG-TERM REVENUE LOSSES," HE SAID.

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NOTING THAT HE WAS NOT INSENSITIVE TO THE HARDSHIP FACED BY MIDDLE INCOME SALARY EARNERS WITH DEBT REPAYMENTS DURING A TIME OF INFLATION. SIR PIERS SAID HE WAS DISINCLINED TO USE FISCAL MEANS FOR SOCIAL ENDS.

"WE HAVE A SIMPLE TAXATION SYSTEM WITH LOW RATES.

"IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO DEMONSTRATE THAT SOME SPECIFIC INEQUITY OR HARDSHIP HAD ARISEN BEFORE WE WOULD WISH TO CONTEMPLATE COMPROMISING THE SIMPLICITY PRINCIPLE," HE SAID.

AS REGARDS THOSE REPAYING MORTGAGES ON PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY, SIR PIERS SAID HE SAW NO INEQUITY.

"INDEED, IT IS ARGUABLE THAT A DEGREE OF INEQUITY WOULD COME ABOUT FOR THOSE WHO RENT THEIR HOMES OR THOSE WHO HAVE PURCHASED WITHOUT MORTGAGE, IF WE WERE TO INTRODUCE SPECIAL MEASURES TO BENEFIT MORTGAGE-PAYERS ALONE.

"WE WOULD ALSO HAVE TO BE AWARE OF POTENTIAL AREAS OF ABUSE OF ANY SUCH CONCESSION," HE SAID.

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COMPENSATION FOR POST-WAR DOMESTIC PREMISES TO BE REVIEWED
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THE GOVERNMENT WILL REVIEW NEXT YEAR THE LEVEL OF COMPENSATION PAYABLE TO DISPOSSESSED DOMESTIC TENANTS IN POST-WAR PREMISES BY REASON OF REDEVELOPMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON PETER TSAO, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MRS SO CHAU YIM-PING, MR TSAO SAID THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) ORDINANCE WAS REVIEWED ANNUALLY AND THE 1991 REVIEW WOULD EXAMINE WHETHER THE CURRENT LEVEL OF COMPENSATION PAYABLE TO THESE TENANTS SHOULD BE ADJUSTED TO PROTECT THEM FROM UNDUE HARDSHIP ON THE ONE HAND AND ON THE OTHER HAND TO FACILITATE DESIRABLE REDEVELOPMENT.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE LAW PROVIDED FOR A MINIMUM LEVEL OF COMPENSATION AND WAS DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE LANDLORDS AND TENANTS TO AGREE COMPENSATION ARRANGEMENTS WITHOUT RECOURSE TO LITIGATION.

MR TSAO SAID: "THE CURRENT PROVISIONS APPEAR TO BE WORKING SATISFACTORILY IN AS MUCH AS IN THE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 1990 OVER 90 PER CENT OF THE COMPENSATION CASES WERE RESOLVED BY AGREEMENT RESULTING IN THE PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION AT AN AVERAGE OF SEVEN TIMES THE 1983 RATEABLE VALUES.

"IN RESPECT OF THE BALANCE OF CASES WHERE COMPENSATION WAS AWARDED BY THE LANDS TRIBUNAL, THE AVERAGE PAYMENT WAS ABOUT THREE TIMES THE 1983 RATEABLE VALUES."

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BILL SEEKS TO LOCALISE JURISDICTION OF HK COURTS

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THE CRIMINAL LAW (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990 SEEKS TO LOCALISE THE JURISDICTION OF HONG KONG COURTS IN RELATION TO CRIMES COMMITTED AT SEA, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR MATHEWS SAID THE COURTS CURRENTLY DERIVED THEIR JURISDICTION TO DEAL WITH SUCH CRIMES FROM UNITED KINGDOM ENACTMENTS WHICH APPLIED TO HONG KONG.

"THESE ARE ENACTMENTS WHICH, AFTER JUNE 1997, CAN NO LONGER BE PART OF OUR LAW.

"THEREFORE, OUR OWN LEGISLATION IS REQUIRED, AND THIS BILL WILL MEET THAT REQUIREMENT," HE SAID.

MR MATHEWS SAID THE BILL WOULD GIVE HONG KONG COURTS JURISDICTION OVER CRIMES AT SEA WHERE THERE WAS A HONG KONG "CONNECTION" PRESENT:

"FIRST, OVER ANY ACT WHICH TAKES PLACE ON BOARD A HONG KONG SHIP ON THE HIGH SEAS AND WHICH WOULD BE AN OFFENCE IF IT TOOK PLACE IN HONG KONG;

"SECOND, OVER ANY ACT WHICH TAKES PLACE ON BOARD ANY SHIP IN HONG KONG WATERS AND WHICH WOULD AMOUNT TO AN INDICTABLE OFFENCE IF IT TOOK PLACE ON BOARD A HONG KONG SHIP (IN SUCH CASES THE GOVERNOR'S CONSENT IS REQUIRED TO PROSECUTE A PERSON WHO IS NOT A BRITISH NATIONAL AND WHERE THE ACT TAKES PLACE ON A SHIP THAT IS NEITHER A HONG KONG SHIP NOR A BRITISH SHIP);

"THIRD, OVER ANY ACT OF A BRITISH NATIONAL (INCLUDING A HONG KONG BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORIES CITIZEN) WHICH TAKES PLACE ON BOARD A HONG KONG SHIP IN ANY PORT OUTSIDE HONG KONG (OR ON BOARD ANY OTHER SHIP TO WHICH THE PERSON DOES NOT BELONG) AND WHICH WOULD BE AN OFFENCE IF IT TOOK PLACE IN HONG KONG;

"FOURTH, OVER ANY ACT OF A MASTER, SEAMAN OR APPRENTICE EMPLOYED ON A HONG KONG SHIP OR WHO WAS SO EMPLOYED WITHIN THE PRECEDING THREE MONTHS, WHEREVER THE ACT TAKES PLACE, IF THE ACT AMOUNTS TO AN OFFENCE AGAINST THE PERSON OR AGAINST PROPERTY; AND

"FIFTH AND FINALLY, OVER ANY ACT THAT TAKES PLACE ON THE HIGH SEAS OR IN ANY OTHER PLACE OUTSIDE HONG KONG RESULTING IN THE DEATH IN HONG KONG OF A PERSON AND WHERE THE ACT WOULD AMOUNT TO MURDER OR MANSLAUGHTER (OR BEING ACCESSORY TO THOSE CRIMES) IF IT TOOK PLACE IN HONG KONG," HE SAID.

MR MATHEWS POINTED OUT THAT THE REFERENCE TO "A HONG KONG SHIP" WAS NEW, FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM ENACTMENTS REFERRED TO BRITISH SHIPS.

HE SAID THE CHANGE WAS IN LINE WITH THE PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEW HONG KONG SHIPPING REGISTER.

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"FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE BILL, A HONG KONG SHIP WILL BE ONE REGISTERED OR LICENSED IN HONG KONG.

"UNTIL JUNE 30, 1997, THE HONG KONG COURTS WILL, IN ADDITION, RETAIN JURISDICTION OVER CRIMES COMMITTED ON BOARD BRITISH SHIPS.

"IN SO FAR AS THE BILL MAKES REFERENCE TO BRITISH NATIONALS, IT WILL OF COURSE NOT BE APPROPRIATE AFTER JUNE 1997 FOR THE COURTS TO EXERCISE JURISDICTION BASED ON BRITISH NATIONALITY.

"IN DUE COURSE WE PLAN TO LOOK AT SUCH REFERENCES IN ALL OUR LEGISLATION AND TO MAKE THE NECESSARY CHANGES," MR MATHEWS SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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NO GREATER SECURITY OF TENURE FOR MAGISTRATES NEEDED: JACOBS

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THE JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION WILL CONSIDER AND ADVISE THE CHIEF JUSTICE ON APPLICATION MADE BY A MAGISTRATE FOR RENEWAL OF CONTRACT, THE ACTING CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON J.D. MCGREGOR, SIR PIERS POINTED OUT THAT THE COMMISSION WAS AN INDEPENDENT BODY, THE DELIBERATIONS OF WHICH WERE, BY THEIR VERY NATURE, CONFIDENTIAL.

"THE COMMISSION DOES NOT DISCLOSE THE CRITERIA IT ADOPTS IN MAKING ITS RECOMMENDATIONS," HE SAID.

SIR PIERS POINTED OUT THAT ALL MAGISTRATES WERE INITIALLY EMPLOYED ON A THREE-YEAR CONTRACT, WHICH MIGHT BE REGARDED AS A PROBATIONARY PERIOD.

"IF, AT THE END OF THAT CONTRACT, THE MAGISTRATE WISHES TO CONTINUE HIS EMPLOYMENT, AND THE JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION SUPPORT HIS APPLICATION, THEN THE MAGISTRATE, WHETHER EXPATRIATE OR LOCAL, MAY APPLY TO JOIN THE PERMANENT AND PENSIONABLE ESTABLISHMENT.

"THIS WILL GIVE HIM SECURITY OF TENURE TO THE AGE OF 60, WHICH IS THE NORMAL RETIREMENT AGE FOR MAGISTRATES," HE SAID.

SIR PIERS SAID THAT IF A MAGISTRATE CHOSE TO REMAIN ON CONTRACT TERMS, THEN HE COULD STILL APPLY AT ANY TIME TO JOIN THE PERMANENT AND PENSIONABLE ESTABLISHMENT.

"GIVEN THESE OPTIONS, IT IS NOT CONSIDERED THAT ANY GREATER SECURITY OF TENURE FOR MAGISTRATES IS REQUIRED," SIR PIERS SAID.

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PLANNED INCREASE IN F.6 PLACES WILL MEET REQUIREMENTS

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THE GOVERNMENT IS CONFIDENT THAT THE PLANNED INCREASE IN SIXTH FORM PLACES AND THE PULL-THROUGH INTO THESE PLACES WILL MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE TERTIARY EDUCATION EXPANSION PROGRAMME IN TERMS OF STUDENT NUMBERS, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON K.Y. YEUNG, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID CHEUNG, MR YEUNG STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT PLANNED TO INCREASE THE PROVISION OF SUBSIDISED SECONDARY 6 PLACES FROM 18,270 PLACES AT THE PRESENT TIME TO 22,240 PLACES IN SEPTEMBER 1992 AND TO 23,000 IN SEPTEMBER 1994.

"FUNDS WILL BE SOUGHT IN THE 1991-92 DRAFT ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE TO START CONVERSION WORKS FOR ADDITIONAL CLASSROOMS TO MEET THIS TARGET," HE SAID.

MR YEUNG SAID THE INCREASE IN PROVISION WAS IN LINE WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY, STATED IN THE 1978 WHITE PAPER ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SENIOR SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION, TO PROVIDE SUBSIDISED SIXTH FORM PLACES FOR UP TO ONE-THIRD OF THE STUDENTS ENTERING SUBSIDISED SECONDARY 4 PLACES TWO YEARS PREVIOUSLY.

"TOGETHER WITH NON-SUBSIDISED PLACES, THE INCREASE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR WILL PRODUCE SOME 26,000 SIXTH FORM PLACES IN 1994.

"SET AGAINST THE TARGET OF 15,000 FIRST YEAR, FIRST DEGREE PLACES IN THE SAME YEAR, THIS PROVISION OF SIXTH FORM PLACES WOULD ENABLE SIX OUT OF 10 STUDENTS LEAVING SIXTH FORM TO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY FOR A DEGREE COURSE AT THE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS," HE SAID.

AS TO MR CHEUNG'S QUESTION ON WHETHER ALL SIXTH FORM PLACES FOR THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR HAD BEEN OCCUPIED AND THE COMPARISON WITH THAT OF LAST YEAR, MR YEUNG SAID A HEAD-COUNT IN ALL GOVERNMENT AND AIDED SECONDARY SCHOOLS CONDUCTED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IN THE FIRST WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 1990 INDICATED THAT 87 PER CENT OF THE SECONDARY 6 PLACES HAD BEEN FILLED, COMPARED WITH 79 PER CENT LAST YEAR.

"THE PERCENTAGE DROPPED TO 81 PER CENT IN EARLY OCTOBER WHEN THE POLYTECHNICS, COLLEGES OF EDUCATION AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTES ANNOUNCED THEIR STUDENT INTAKE.

"THIS WASTAGE OCCURS ANNUALLY AND IS CAUSED BY SECONDARY 6 ENTRANTS SIMULTANEOUSLY APPLYING FOR COURSES AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS, AND THEN DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL WHEN THEY RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE," MR YEUNG EXPLAINED.

MR YEUNG SAID GIVEN THE TREND OF UNDER-ENROLMENT, THE GOVERNMENT'S NEXT TASK WAS TO ACHIEVE THE FULLEST POSSIBLE UTILISATION OF SECONDARY 6 PLACES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR.

"TO THIS END WE NEED TO ACHIEVE A 33 PER CENT PULL-THROUGH INTO THE SIXTH FORM," HE SAID.

MR YEUNG POINTED OUT THAT THE MAIN REASONS FOR THE TREND OF UNDER-ENROLMENT COULD BE TRACED TO UNNECESSARILY RESTRICTIVE ENTRY CRITERIA FOR SITTING A-LEVELS, THE HIGHLY SELECTIVE ADMISSION POLICY ADOPTED BY MANY SCHOOLS, AND THE PRACTICE OF WELL QUALIFIED CANDIDATES APPLYING SUCCESSFULLY FOR ADMISSION TO MORE THAN ONE SCHOOL.

"TO OVERCOME THESE PROBLEMS THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAS RECENTLY FORMULATED A PACKAGE OF PROPOSALS.

"THIS INCLUDES LOWERING THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR SITTING A-LEVEL EXAMINATIONS (WHICH IS JUSTIFIED NOW THAT THE BROADENED SIXTH FORM CURRICULUM IS NO LONGER INTENDED ONLY FOR MATRICULATION); REDUCING THE LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY OF A-LEVEL EXAMINATIONS, PARTICULARLY IN THE SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS (WHICH ARE ACCEPTED AS HAVING A DIFFICULTY LEVEL TWO GRADES ABOVE EQUIVALENT A-LEVELS IN THE UK)," HE SAID.

OTHER PROPOSALS INCLUDED ASKING SCHOOLS TO FILL ALL THEIR SECONDARY 6 PLACES, BY ADOPTING A FIVE-STAGE ADMISSION PROCEDURE; AND ENCOURAGING SCHOOLS IN CLOSE PROXIMITY OR WHICH WERE UNDER THE SAME SPONSOR TO SPECIALISE, AND TO CO-OPERATE WITH EACH OTHER BY EXCHANGING STUDENTS FOR VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

MR YEUNG SAID THE HONG KONG EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY AND VARIOUS SCHOOLS COUNCILS WERE BEING CONSULTED ON THESE MEASURES, AND IT WAS HOPED TO INTRODUCE THEM STARTING FROM SEPTEMBER 1991.

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CHILDREN TO SCHOOL IN DISTRICT THEY LIVE: YEUNG SAYS
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IT IS GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO ALLOCATE PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES TO SCHOOL CHILDREN WITHIN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT IN WHICH THEY LIVE, YET IT IS NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE IN PRACTICE TO GUARANTEE THAT NO CHILD WILL TRAVEL BEYOND 400 METRES TO GET TO SCHOOL.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON K.Y. YEUNG, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID CHEUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

AS A PLANNING GUIDELINE, MR YEUNG SAID PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR SHOULD PREFERABLY BE LOCATED WITHIN 400 METRES OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS TO ENSURE THAT YOUNG CHILDREN DO NOT HAVE TO TRAVEL EXCESSIVE DISTANCES TO GET TO SCHOOL.

"I MUST EMPHASISE, HOWEVER, THAT THIS IS A PLANNING GUIDELINE, AND NOT THE POLICY ITSELF," HE SAID.

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REFERRING TO THE CASE WHEREBY PARENTS OF A GROUP OF PRIMARY ONE STUDENTS IN LONG PING ESTATE, YUEN LONG REFUSED TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO SCHOOLS ORIGINALLY LOCATED TO THEM, MR YEUNG SAID RESIDENTS OF LONG PING ESTATE WERE SERVED BY THREE PRIMARY SCHOOLS SITUATED WITHIN THE ESTATE, AND BY OTHER PRIMARY SCHOOLS LOCATED OUTSIDE THE ESTATE BUT WITHIN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT.

HOWEVER, COMPLAINTS AROSE THIS SUMMER WHEN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ALLOCATED TO 110 CHILDREN LIVING IN LONG PING ESTATE PRIMARY ONE PLACES IN SCHOOLS LOCATED IN THE ADJACENT YUEN LONG ESTATE IN SPITE OF VACANCIES WITHIN THE LONG PING ESTATE SCHOOLS.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TOOK THIS STEP PARTLY BECAUSE LONG PING ESTATE WAS EXPECTING A FURTHER INTAKE OF 500 FAMILIES AT THE END OF NEXT YEAR AND CONSIDERED IT PRUDENT TO SET PLACES ASIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN, AND PARTLY BECAUSE THE SCHOOLS IN THE ADJACENT YUEN LONG ESTATE WERE UNDER-ENROLLED.

"HOWEVER," MR YEUNG SAID, "OSTENSIBLY BECAUSE THIS ALLOCATION WOULD INVOLVE THE 110 CHILDREN OF LONG PING ESTATE HAVING TO TRAVEL A DISTANCE OF AT LEAST 700 METRES, THE PARENTS COMPLAINED."

"I SAID OSTENSIBLY BECAUSE IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE PARENTS REGARD THE TWO SCHOOLS IN THE ADJACENT YUEN LONG ESTATE TO BE SOMEWHAT INFERIOR," HE ADDED.

THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY REPRESENTATIONS MADE BY PARENTS TO THE DISTRICT BOARD, THE OMELCO, THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND TO THE GOVERNOR.

AFTER FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, PARENTS OF 67 CHILDREN ACCEPTED THE DEPARTMENT'S ALLOCATION, WHILE THE REMAINING 43 REFUSED TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL.

FACED WITH THESE CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE SCHOOL YEAR, MR YEUNG SAID THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION DECIDED THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER THE REMAINING CHILDREN COULD BE ACCOMMODATED IN THE LONG PING ESTATE SCHOOLS AND, SECONDLY, WHETHER BY CONVERTING CERTAIN GENERAL PURPOSE ROOMS THE CHILDREN OF THE EXPECTED INTAKE OF FAMILIES INTO THE ESTATE COULD ALSO BE ACCOMMODATED.

THIS WAS DONE IN ORDER TO AVOID A SITUATION IN WHICH THE CHILDREN WERE KEPT AWAY FROM SCHOOL AND NOT TO PROLONG THE CONFRONTATION, MR YEUNG ADDED.

"UNFORTUNATELY, BECAUSE THE SCHOOL SUPERVISORS WERE AWAY ON VACATION, IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR THAT A FINAL DECISION COULD BE TAKEN TO PLACE THE 43 CHILDREN IN ONE OF THE LONG PING ESTATE SCHOOLS.

"FOLLOWING THIS, A FURTHER 13 CHILDREN ACCEPTED AN OFFER BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO TAKE UP PRIMARY ONE PLACES IN ANOTHER SCHOOL IN LONG PING ESTATE," HE SAID.

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MR YEUNG SAID THE INCIDENT HAD NO EFFECT ON EXISTING POLICY ON THE ALLOCATION OF PRIMARY ONE SCHOOL PLACES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR.

HE SAID: "WHILE IT MAY ENCOURAGE OTHER PARENTS TO APPLY PRESSURE ON THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AGAINST ANY ALLOCATION THEY DO NOT LIKE, AND WHILE THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE TO DEAL WITH REQUESTS FOR CHANGE THAT ARE JUSTIFIED, IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION HAS TWO IMPORTANT TASKS TO PERFORM.

"THE FIRST IS TO SORT OUT AND PLACE UPWARDS OF 75,000 CHILDREN INTO PRIMARY ONE EACH YEAR; THE SECOND IS TO ENFORCE OUR SYSTEM OF FREE AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION."

THUS, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, MR YEUNG SAID IF PARENTS REFUSED TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL, THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION WOULD HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO ISSUE ATTENDANCE ORDERS TO THEM UNDER SECTION 74 OF THE EDUCATION ORDINANCE.

IN THE MEANTIME, MR YEUNG SAID THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WOULD STEP UP ITS PUBLICITY EFFORTS WITH A VIEW TO GIVING PARENTS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRIMARY ONE ALLOCATION SYSTEM.

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METHANE IN TSEUNG KWAN O AIR TOO LOW TO POSE THREAT
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CHECKS ON LEVELS OF METHANE ON THE AIR HAD INDICATED THAT THE LEVELS AT TSEUNG KWAN O (JUNK BAY) WERE SLIGHTLY LESS THAN THE AVERAGE LEVELS OF OTHER LOCATIONS IN HONG KONG, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON LEONG CHE-HUNG, MR BARNES SAID A CHECK BY THE GOVERNMENT ON OXYGEN PRODUCED AT THE TSEUNG KWAN O PLANT OF THE HONG KONG OXYGEN AND ACETYLENE COMPANY HAD FOUND METHANE CONTAMINATION OF 10 TO 30 PARTS PER MILLION.

"THERE WOULD NOT, THEREFORE, APPEAR TO BE ANY SIGNIFICANT CONTAMINATION OF OXYGEN PRODUCED AT JUNK BAY BY METHANE FROM THE JUNK BAY LANDFILL," MR BARNES SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE HOSPITAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT WAS SATISFIED THAT THE PRESENCE OF METHANE IN SUCH SMALL QUANTITIES WAS NOT A THREAT TO HUMAN HEALTH.

CHECKS ON THE STANDARD OF OXYGEN PRODUCED AT THE TSEUNG KWAN O PLANT BY THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT HAD CONFIRMED THE COMPANY'S EARLIER STATEMENT THAT THE OXYGEN PRODUCED WAS 99.6 PER CENT OXYGEN, MR BARNES SAID.

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LAM KAM ROAD IMPROVEMENTS START

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THE WORKS TO IMPROVE LAM KAM ROAD BETWEEN TAI PO ROAD AND KADOORIE FARM STARTED LAST MONTH, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG, MR LEUNG SAID THE WORKS INCLUDING ROAD WIDENING AND RECONSTRUCTION, IMPROVEMENTS TO THE ALIGNMENT, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CLIMBING LANE ON THE STEEP SECTIONS WOULD BE COMPLETED BY EARLY 1993.

THERE WERE ALSO PLANS TO IMPROVE CERTAIN SECTIONS OF LUK KENG ROAD TO SMOOTH OUT THE SHARPER BENDS, IMPROVE MOTORISTS' SIGHT LINES, AND PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FOOTPATHS. WORK COULD START WHEN FUNDS WERE AVAILABLE, HE SAID.

MR LEUNG SAID KAM SHEUNG ROAD WAS ONLY A LOCAL ACCESS ROAD AND COULD COPE ADEQUATELY WITH PRESENT TRAFFIC FLOW. THERE WAS THEREFORE NO PLAN TO WIDEN OR UPGRADE IT AT PRESENT.

HE SAID ROUTE TWISK HAD ENOUGH CAPACITY TO COPE WITH PRESENT AND FUTURE TRAFFIC FLOWS UP TILL THE LATE 1990'S

ADDITIONAL CAPACITY WOULD IN THE LONGER TERM BE PROVIDED BY THE ROUTE 3 COUNTRY PARK SECTION BETWEEN TSING YI AND YUEN LONG, MR LEUNG ADDED.

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FIVE BILLS PASSED

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

THEY WERE THE CONTROL OF EXEMPTION CLAUSES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990, FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990, MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990, AGRICULTURAL PESTICIDES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990 AND EVIDENCE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990.

THE CRIMINAL LAW (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990 WAS INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS. DEBATE ON IT WAS ADJOURNED.

IN ADDITION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, MADE A STATEMENT ON LEVERAGED LEASING.

TWO REPORTS WERE TABLED: THE "ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ACCOUNTING SERVICES AND THE ACCOUNTS OF HONG KONG FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 1990", AND THE "REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT ON THE ACCOUNTS OF THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 1990 AND THE RESULTS OF VALUE FOR MONEY AUDITS".

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AIRPORT PLAN A KEY STRATEGIC DECISION

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THE NEW AIRPORT AT CHEK LAP KOK IS A KEY STRATEGIC DECISION FOR HONG KONG'S LONG TERM PLANNING, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DAVID FORD, SAID IN SAN FRANCISCO ON TUESDAY (NOVEMBER 13).

ADDRESSING A JOINT LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA AND SAN FRANCISCO WORLD TRADE CLUB, SIR DAVID SAID THAT THE DECISION TO BUILD THE NEW AIRPORT UNLOCKED SEVERAL OTHER DECISIONS ON THE EXPANSION OF THE PORT AND THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE OVERCROWDED OLDER PARTS OF THE CITY.

MUCH OF THIS WORK, FOR EXAMPLE, ALMOST ALL OF THE PORT FACILITIES WOULD BE PRIVATELY FINANCED, BUILT AND OPERATED, HE SAID.

SIR DAVID EXPLAINED THAT THIS WAS HOW HONG KONG WORKED: GOVERNMENT PROVIDED THE BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND LEFT BUSINESSMEN TO READ THE SIGNALS OF THE MARKET PLACE.

"THEY READ THEM BETTER THAN BUREAUCRATS," HE ADDED.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT TRUE TO ITS OPEN MARKET ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY, WAS INVITING INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION IN THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW AIRPORT.

"AMERICAN FIRMS HAVE TENDED IN THE PAST TO SHY AWAY FROM HONG KONG IN THE MISTAKEN BELIEF THAT BRITISH COMPANIES WERE GIVEN PREFERENCE.

"BOTH BECHTEL AND GREINER HAVE FOUND THIS NOT TO BE THE CASE AND HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPETED AGAINST A VARIETY OF FOREIGN FIRMS FOR PARTS OF THE PROJECT," HE SAID.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT LOOKED FORWARD TO MORE AMERICAN INTEREST IN ALL OF HONG KONG'S PROJECTS FROM DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION TO FITTING, FINISHING AND THE SUPPLY OF PARTS AND EQUIPMENT.

SIR DAVID STRESSED THAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT DID NOT FORGET THE SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN ITS LONG-TERM PLANNING EITHER.

HE OUTLINED THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANS FOR DRAMATIC GROWTH IN EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND THE PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME WHICH WOULD PROVIDE ANOTHER 430,000 HOMES BY THE TURN OF THE CENTURY ON TOP OF THE THREE-QUARTERS OF A MILLION THE GOVERNMENT HAD BUILT SO FAR.

"WE HAVE JUST PUBLISHED A BLUE PRINT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMMES AND ANOTHER ON THE CARE AND REHABILITATION OF THE HANDICAPPED WILL BE PUBLISHED NEXT YEAR.

"WE STRONGLY BELIEVE IN PLANNING TO MEET THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE WHO WILL STAY IN HONG KONG, FOR WHOM HONG KONG IS HOME AND WHO WANT THE BEST FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES.

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"WE WOULD BE FAILING IN OUR DUTY IF WE WERE NOT PLANNING TO GO ON IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THEIR LIVES NOT JUST BEFORE 1997 BUT WELL INTO THE NEXT CENTURY," SIR DAVID SAID.

NOTING THAT IT WAS FASHIONABLE TO TALK IN PESSIMISTIC TERMS ABOUT 1997, SIR DAVID OFFERED THREE PERSONAL REASONS WHY HE WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG.

"FIRST, I KNOW HONG KONG TOO WELL.

"THOSE OF US WHO LIVED THROUGH THE DARK DAYS OF 1967, THE ECONOMIC CRISES OF THE 1970'S AND THE TENSE PERIOD OF NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE FUTURE KNOW HOW RESILIENT HONG KONG REALLY IS," HE SAID.

SECONDLY, SIR DAVID SAID, PEOPLE'S LIVES DID NOT SIMPLY STOP JUST BECAUSE OF A DATE IN THE CALENDAR.

"THERE ARE CHILDREN NOW ENTERING SCHOOL WHO WERE BORN AFTER THE JOINT DECLARATION.

"THERE ARE YOUNG GRADUATES NOW JOINING THE CIVIL SERVICE WHO DO SO WITH THEIR EYES WIDE OPEN.

"THERE ARE BUSINESSMEN PUTTING MONEY INTO HONG KONG AND INTO GUANGDONG WHO ARE SETTING THE PATTERN FOR TRADE AND BUSINESS BETWEEN THESE PLACES FOR THE FUTURE," HE SAID.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID THEY WERE TAKING INTELLIGENT RISKS LIKE BUSINESSMEN ALL OVER THE WORLD AND THEIR HORIZONS EXTENDED BEYOND 1997 AND SO DID THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR DECISIONS.

"THEY, LIKE THE GOVERNMENT, REFUSE TO LET 1997 BE A BARRIER," HE SAID.

THIRDLY, THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID, THERE WAS A CERTAIN ARROGANCE ABOUT THE VIEW, WHICH HE DID NOT SHARE, WHICH SAID JUST BECAUSE BRITISH SOVEREIGNTY CAME TO AN END, HONG KONG WOULD GO DOWNHILL.

"IT IS ARROGANT BECAUSE IT IGNORES THE FACT THAT LESS THAN TWO PER CENT OF THE 190,000 PEOPLE WHO WORK FOR THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT ARE BRITISH, AND THAT ALREADY MY CHINESE COLLEAGUES OCCUPY MORE THAN HALF OF THE TOP POSTS AND ARE PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF TAKING OVER THE OTHER HALF IN THE COMING FEW YEARS.

"IT ALSO OVERLOOKS THE FACT THAT THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND LEGAL STRUCTURE WHICH HAS BEEN FUNDAMENTAL TO HONG KONG'S SUCCESS UNDER A BRITISH ADMINISTRATION WILL REMAIN INTACT UNDER CHINESE SOVEREIGNTY," HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS ALSO AN OUT-OF-DATE VIEW BECAUSE IT IGNORED THE CHANGES WHICH HAD ALREADY TAKEN PLACE IN HONG KONG'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA AND IN PARTICULAR THE ECONOMIC LINKS WITH CHINA'S SOUTHERN PROVINCES, PROVINCES WHICH HAD MADE SUCH GIANT ECONOMIC STRIDES OVER THE PAST DECADE.

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"THESE ARE THE FACTORS WHICH PROVIDE GOOD GROUNDS FOR OPTIMISM.

"CERTAINLY, WE IN THE GOVERNMENT ARE FIRMLY COMMITTED TO GIVING HONG KONG THE BEST POSSIBLE START IN 1997 AND ARE DOING ALL WE CAN TO ENSURE ITS CONTINUING SUCCESS THEREAFTER," SIR DAVID SAID.

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CS' VISIT TO NORTH AMERICA

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DAVID FORD, GAVE A KEYNOTE SPEECH IN SAN FRANCISCO YESTERDAY (TUESDAY) TO AN AUDIENCE OF SOME 300 INFLUENTIAL BAY AREA BUSINESS PEOPLE AT A JOINT LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE SAN FRANCISCO WORLD TRADE CLUB AND THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA.

SIR DAVID STARTED THE DAY WITH A BREAKFAST MEETING HOSTED BY THE LEGAL FIRM, GRAHAM AND JAMES.

HE UPDATED HIS AUDIENCE OF ATTORNEYS AND THEIR GUESTS ON HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR US PROFESSIONALS IN HONG KONG.

IN THE AFTERNOON, SIR DAVID LEFT SAN FRANCISCO FOR THE PACIFIC NORTH WEST. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MINISTER (WASHINGTON), PETER LO, AND DIRECTOR OF THE SAN FRANCISCO ECONOMIC AND TRADE OFFICE, PETER JOHNSON.

HIS FIRST STOP WAS SEATTLE WHERE HE ATTENDED A DINNER HOSTED IN HIS HONOUR BY ONE OF THE REGION'S LEADING BANKS, THE SECURITY PACIFIC BANK.

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GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYERS ON II WORKERS

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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, HAS SUGGESTED SOME PRACTICAL MEASURES FOR EMPLOYERS AND THOSE IN CHARGE OF CONSTRUCTION SITES TO MAKE SURE THAT ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS ARE NOT EMPLOYED ON THEIR PREMISES.

HE WAS SPEAKING TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AT A SEMINAR ON THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE AND THE PERSONNEL PROFESSIONAL, ORGANISED BY THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT.

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ONE OF THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR WAS TO DISCUSS RECENTLY ENACTED AMENDMENTS TO THE ORDINANCE WHICH INCLUDED HEAVIER PENALTIES FOR THE EMPLOYERS OF II'S BUT ALSO PROVIDED FOR A DEFENCE FOR THOSE WHO COULD SHOW THAT ALL PRACTICABLE STEPS HAD BEEN TAKEN TO DETERMINE WHETHER WORKERS WERE LAWFULLY EMPLOYABLE AND TO PREVENT II'S FROM BEING ON A CONSTRUCTION SITE.

MR STRACHAN SAID WHILE THE GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED TO PROPOSE GUIDELINES IN RESPONSE TO REQUESTS FROM INDUSTRY, HE STRESSED THAT WHAT AMOUNTED TO "ALL PRACTICABLE STEPS" WOULD BE FOR THE COURTS TO DETERMINE IN EACH CASE.

HE SUGGESTED THAT EMPLOYERS COULD CHECK THE DETAILS OF AN IDENTITY CARD AGAINST OTHER SUPPORTING EVIDENCE SUCH AS BANK BOOK, DRIVING LICENCE AND CREDIT CARDS.

"THEY CAN SCRUTINISE THE PHOTOGRAPH ON THE IDENTITY CARD CAREFULLY AGAINST THE PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEE AND CHECK THE AGE RECORDED.

"THEY CAN ALSO INSTITUTE IDENTITY CHECKS AT RANDOM TIMES AND SPOT CHECK PEOPLE ENTERING THE PREMISES."

MR STRACHAN ALSO SUGGESTED THAT EMPLOYERS COULD MAKE CONDITION OF ENTRY, ESPECIALLY TO A CONSTRUCTION SITE, CONTINGENT ON PRODUCTION OF AN IDENTITY CARD AND INFORM EMPLOYEES THAT FAILURE TO PRODUCE A CARD WOULD RESULT IN EXPULSION FROM THE SITE.

"RECORDS OF IDENTITY CARDS PRODUCED AND THE RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS GIVEN SHOULD BE KEPT."

MR STRACHAN OFFERED SOME ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS WHICH WERE PARTICULARLY RELEVANT TO CONSTRUCTION SITES:

- MAKE IT KNOWN TO SUB-CONTRACTORS THAT IF THEY EMPLOY II'S THEY WILL RECEIVE NO FURTHER WORK FROM THE COMPANY;
- MAKE IT A BREACH OF CONTRACT FOR A SUB-CONTRACTOR TO EMPLOY AN II;
- PUT UP SIGNS OR POSTERS STATING THAT II'S WILL NOT BE EMPLOYED ON THE SITE AND ANY FOUND WILL BE REPORTED TO THE POLICE;
- POST SIGNS THAT STATE NO ONE WILL BE ALLOWED TO REMAIN ON THE SITE IF THEY REFUSE TO PRODUCE THEIR IDENTITY CARD WHEN REQUESTED BY A SUPERVISOR;
- TELL SUB-CONTRACTORS THEY MUST KEEP A FULL LIST OF WORKERS' NAMES AND IDENTITY CARD NUMBERS WHICH MUST BE PRODUCED TO THE SITE OFFICE DAILY;
- SECURE THE SITE AT NIGHT AND TELL THE SECURITY GUARD THAT NO ONE IS ALLOWED TO SLEEP ON THE SITE;

- OFFER A REWARD TO ANY EMPLOYEE WHO REPORTS THE PRESENCE OF AN II: THIS COULD BE PUBLICISED ON POSTERS;
- REPORT ANY SUSPECTED II'S IMMEDIATELY TO THE POLICE;
- CONTACT YOUR LOCAL POLICE DIVISIONAL COMMANDER AND ASK FOR A VISIT FROM THE CRIME PREVENTION OFFICER WHO CAN ADVISE ON SITE SECURITY;
- FULLY BRIEF ALL SUPERVISORY STAFF ON THE PROCEDURES AND HAVE A RECORD OF THIS IN A COMPANY WRITTEN CODE OF PRACTICE.

MR STRACHAN SAID WHILE HE HOPED THESE GUIDELINES WERE HELPFUL, HE REITERATED THAT THE DECISION ON WHETHER THE MEASURES TAKEN CONSTITUTED AN ADEQUATE DEFENCE WAS A MATTER FOR THE COURTS.

IT WAS POINTED OUT BY MR STRACHAN THAT THE MAJORITY OF II'S CAME TO HONG KONG FOR ECONOMIC REASONS AND THAT THE RECENT LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS WERE NECESSARY BECAUSE THE PENALTIES PREVIOUSLY IN FORCE WERE NO LONGER HAVING THE DESIRED DETERRENT EFFECT.

MR STRACHAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNISED THE NEED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE FACT THAT THE PRESENT LABOUR MARKET IN HONG KONG WAS VERY TIGHT, AND THAT THERE WERE VERY CLOSE ECONOMIC AND FAMILY LINKS BETWEEN HONG KONG AND SOUTHERN CHINA.

HE ALSO EXPLAINED THAT THERE WERE THREE LEGAL AVENUES THROUGH WHICH THESE NEEDS COULD BE MET. THESE WERE THE ONE-WAY PERMIT SYSTEM THROUGH WHICH 75 PERSONS A DAY OR 27,000 A YEAR ARE PERMITTED TO ENTER HONG KONG FROM CHINA; PERMISSION OF ENTRY FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR THOSE WITH PROFESSIONAL AND MANAGERIAL SKILLS WHICH ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY IN HONG KONG; AND THE RECENTLY EXPANDED IMPORTATION OF LABOUR SCHEME WHICH WILL ALLOW SOME 15,000 TECHNICIANS AS WELL AS SKILLED AND SEMI-SKILLED WORKERS TO ENTER HONG KONG OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS.

MR STRACHAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT REGULARLY REVIEWED AND ADJUSTED ITS IMMIGRATION POLICIES TO ENSURE THAT THEY REMAINED CONSISTENT WITH THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OBJECTIVES OF HONG KONG.

"BUT THE GOVERNMENT ALSO BELIEVES STRONGLY THAT IMMIGRATION NEEDS TO BE REGULATED PROPERLY THROUGH LEGAL MEANS, AND NOT THROUGH TURNING A BLIND EYE TO ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION.

"THIS IS IN THE INTERESTS NOT ONLY OF HONG KONG, BUT ALSO OF THE IMMIGRANTS THEMSELVES, WHO DESERVE PROTECTION FROM EXPLOITATION BY THOSE WHO ORGANISE ILLEGAL ENTRY, AND BY THE SMALL NUMBER OF UNSCRUPULOUS EMPLOYERS," HE SAID.

QUARTERLY BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS RELEASED

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FIRMS IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR EXPERIENCED A MILD IMPROVEMENT IN BUSINESS IN THE THIRD QUARTER OF 1990 WHEN COMPARED WITH THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1990, ACCORDING TO THE RESULTS OF THE QUARTERLY BUSINESS SURVEY RELEASED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

IN GENERAL, FIRMS IN THIS SECTOR EXPECT BUSINESS TO REMAIN RELATIVELY STABLE IN THE FOURTH QUARTER, ALTHOUGH THE EXPECTATIONS OF FIRMS IN INDIVIDUAL INDUSTRIES VARY.

THESE COMPARISONS ARE, HOWEVER, LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED BY SEASONAL FACTORS. AS FAR AS MANUFACTURING ACTIVITY IS CONCERNED, THE THIRD QUARTER AND THE FOURTH QUARTER OF A YEAR ARE SEASONALLY MORE ACTIVE PERIODS THAN THE SECOND QUARTER.

FIRMS IN MOST MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN THE FOOD, BEVERAGE AND TOBACCO AND THE PRINTING INDUSTRIES, EXPERIENCED AN IMPROVEMENT IN BUSINESS IN THE THIRD QUARTER OF 1990. ON THE OTHER HAND, BUSINESS IN THE TEXTILES AND PLASTICS INDUSTRIES REMAINED RELATIVELY STABLE OVER THE SAME PERIOD.

AS REGARDS THE BUSINESS PROSPECTS FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER, FIRMS IN THE WEARING APPAREL, ELECTRONICS, PRINTING, AND FABRICATED METAL PRODUCTS INDUSTRIES ANTICIPATE A FURTHER IMPROVEMENT IN BUSINESS OVER THE THIRD QUARTER, WHILE FIRMS IN THE TEXTILES AND PLASTICS INDUSTRIES EXPECT A DETERIORATION IN BUSINESS IN THE FOURTH QUARTER.

BUSINESS IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR REMAINED STABLE IN THE THIRD QUARTER. FIRMS IN THIS SECTOR GENERALLY EXPECT THE SITUATION TO CONTINUE IN THE FOURTH QUARTER.

FIRMS IN THE DISTRIBUTIVE AND CATERING TRADES SECTOR GENERALLY EXPERIENCED AN IMPROVEMENT IN BUSINESS IN THE THIRD QUARTER, EXCEPT FOR HOTELS WHICH REPORTED A MILD DETERIORATION IN BUSINESS.

REGARDING THE BUSINESS OUTLOOK FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER, FIRMS IN THIS SECTOR, PARTICULARLY HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS, EXPECT AN IMPROVEMENT IN BUSINESS.

IN THE OTHER SERVICES SECTOR, WHILE BANKS AND FIRMS IN THE TRANSPORT, STORAGE AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES EXPERIENCED AN IMPROVEMENT IN BUSINESS IN THE THIRD QUARTER, BUSINESS IN THE REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED SERVICES REMAINED STABLE.

REGARDING THE BUSINESS PROSPECTS FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER, FIRMS IN THE TRANSPORT, STORAGE AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES AND THE REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED SERVICES EXPECT BUSINESS TO REMAIN STABLE, WHILE BANKS EXPECT A DETERIORATION IN BUSINESS.

ABOUT 1,000 FIRMS FROM VARIOUS INDUSTRIES AND TRADES, FORMING A CROSS-SECTION OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, PARTICIPATED IN THE SURVEY. THEY WERE ASKED ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS EXPERIENCES AND EXPECTATIONS AS WELL AS THE BUSINESS PROBLEMS THEY FACED.

IN THE THIRD QUARTER OF 1990, FIRMS IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR GENERALLY EXPERIENCED LABOUR SHORTAGES, PARTICULARLY IN SKILLED LABOUR; HIGH MATERIAL PRICES; INSUFFICIENT BUSINESS ORDERS OR CONTRACTS; AND HIGH WAGE RATES.

THE PROBLEM OF HIGH MATERIAL PRICES WAS PARTICULARLY WIDESPREAD FOR FIRMS IN THE PLASTICS INDUSTRY. THESE PROBLEMS ARE EXPECTED TO REMAIN IN THE FOURTH QUARTER.

IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR, FIRMS REPORTED PROBLEMS OF HIGH WAGE RATES; SHORTAGE OF LABOUR, PARTICULARLY SKILLED LABOUR; AND PRICE COMPETITION FROM LOCAL FIRMS IN THE THIRD QUARTER. THESE PROBLEMS ARE EXPECTED TO SUSTAIN IN THE FOURTH QUARTER.

IN THE DISTRIBUTIVE AND CATERING TRADES SECTOR AND OTHER SERVICES SECTOR, A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF FIRMS CITED SHORTAGE OF STAFF GENERALLY; HIGH STAFF TURNOVER; HIGH STAFF COSTS; AND PRICE COMPETITION AS THEIR MAJOR BUSINESS PROBLEMS IN THE THIRD QUARTER.

IN ADDITION TO THESE PROBLEMS, HOTELS WERE PARTICULARLY AFFECTED BY THE PROBLEM OF INSUFFICIENT BUSINESS WHILE BANKS REPORTED THE PROBLEM OF SHORTAGE OF EXPERIENCED STAFF. THESE SITUATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO PERSIST IN THE FOURTH QUARTER.

ACCORDING TO THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT, RESULTS OF THE QUARTERLY BUSINESS SURVEY, OBTAINED WITH A MINIMUM TIME LAG, ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE A SOURCE OF REFERENCE FOR MAKING A QUICK ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION OF HONG KONG FROM A SHORT-TERM PERSPECTIVE.

IN THE SURVEY, PARTICIPATING FIRMS WERE ASKED TO INDICATE WHETHER, IN THEIR OPINION, THE GENERAL BUSINESS SITUATION AND LEVEL OF CAPACITY UTILISATION HAD "IMPROVED", "REMAINED THE SAME" OR "DETERIORATED" IN THE THIRD QUARTER OF 1990 AS COMPARED WITH THE PRECEDING QUARTER. THEY WERE ALSO ASKED TO INDICATE WHETHER THE SITUATION IS EXPECTED TO "IMPROVE", "REMAIN THE SAME" OR "DETERIORATE" IN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1990.

THE OPINIONS OF RESPONDENTS WERE TABULATED AND ANALYSED. MOREOVER, THE SURVEY REPORT CONTAINS A SECTION ON THE BUSINESS PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED AND EXPECTED BY FIRMS IN DIFFERENT ECONOMIC SECTORS, AND A BREAKDOWN OF THE VIEWS OF FIRMS BY EMPLOYMENT SIZE GROUP.

THE DEPARTMENT CAUTIONED THAT, IN A SURVEY OF THIS NATURE, THE RESULTS SHOULD BE INTERPRETED WITH CAUTION AS IT IS DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH PRECISELY THE EXTENT TO WHICH RESPONDENTS' RECOLLECTION OF THE PAST AND PERCEPTION OF THE FUTURE ACCORDS WITH THE UNDERLYING TRENDS.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY PURCHASE COPIES OF THE SURVEY REPORT FROM THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE, GROUND FLOOR, GPO BUILDING, CONNAUGHT PLACE, CENTRAL, OR FROM THE PUBLICATIONS SALES COUNTER OF THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT, 19TH FLOOR, WANCHAI TOWER 1, 12 HARBOUR ROAD, WAN CHAI, AT \$5.50 PER COPY.

FURTHER DETAILS OF THE QUARTERLY BUSINESS SURVEY MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH SECTION OF THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT ON TEL. 839 3223.

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TRADE DEPT'S RESPONSE TO EC'S IMPOSITION OF
PROVISIONAL ANTI-DUMPING DUTY

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THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES HAS IMPOSED A PROVISIONAL ANTI-DUMPING DUTY AT A RATE OF 2.4 PER CENT ON IMPORTS OF AUDIO CASSETTE TAPES FROM HONG KONG, EXCEPT FOR FOUR COMPANIES, WITH EFFECT FROM TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE TRADE DEPARTMENT SAID THE PROCEEDING WAS INITIATED IN JANUARY 1989 AGAINST FIVE HONG KONG COMPANIES WHICH PARTICIPATED IN THE INVESTIGATION INTO DUMPING ALLEGATIONS.

FOUR OF THEM --- SWIRE MAGNETICS, MAGNETIC ENTERPRISES, FORWARD ELECTRONICS AND TOMEI MAGNETICS --- WERE FOUND TO HAVE ZERO OR NEGLIGIBLE DUMPING MARGINS AND WERE, THEREFORE, NOT SUBJECT TO ANY ANTI-DUMPING MEASURE.

THE REMAINING COMPANY WAS FOUND TO HAVE A DUMPING MARGIN OF 2.4 PER CENT AND A PROVISIONAL ANTI-DUMPING DUTY AT THE SAME RATE HAS NOW BEEN IMPOSED ON IT, AS WELL AS ON OTHER HONG KONG COMPANIES WHICH DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE INVESTIGATION.

THE SPOKESMAN DISPUTED THE COMMISSION'S RATIONALE FOR IMPOSING THE ANTI-DUMPING DUTY.

"THE NORMAL SCENARIO ASSOCIATED WITH DUMPING IS THAT AN EXPORTER USES HIGH PRICES IN A PROTECTED DOMESTIC MARKET IN ORDER TO REDUCE PRICES OVERSEAS AND THUS UNDERMINE THE DOMESTIC INDUSTRY OF THE IMPORTING COUNTRIES.

"HONG KONG HAS AN OPEN ECONOMY AND DOES NOT HAVE A PROTECTED MARKET. IT IS MOST UNLIKELY THAT HONG KONG COMPANIES, MOST OF WHICH ARE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZE, WOULD DUMP.

"WE HAVE DRAWN THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION TO THESE FACTS, BUT REGRET THAT THE COMMISSION HAS NOT TAKEN THEM INTO ACCOUNT WHEN DECIDING ON THE IMPOSITION OF PROVISIONAL ANTI-DUMPING MEASURES.

"WE SHALL CONTINUE TO CONSULT WITH THE COMMISSION WITH A VIEW TO SEEKING TERMINATION OF THE PROCEEDING AGAINST HONG KONG," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

EXPRESSING THE DEPARTMENT'S DISSATISFACTION OVER THE RULING, THE SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT IMPORTS OF THE AUDIO CASSETTE TAPES IN QUESTION FROM HONG KONG INTO THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY HAD BEEN VERY SMALL, OCCUPYING ONLY ABOUT 1.5 PER CENT OF THE EEC MARKET SHARE.

"IN ADDITION, THE COMMISSION'S INVESTIGATIONS SHOW THAT FOUR OF THE FIVE COMPANIES INVESTIGATED ARE EXONERATED. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT IMPORTS FROM HONG KONG COULD HAVE CAUSED ANY SIGNIFICANT INJURY TO THE EEC INDUSTRY," HE SAID.

THE FINAL DETERMINATION ON THE DEFINITIVE ANTI-DUMPING DUTY WILL BE MADE WITHIN SIX MONTHS.

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NEW AIR CARGO TERMINAL TO BE COMPLETED NEXT YEAR

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THE COMPLETION OF THE \$1.3 BILLION AIR CARGO TERMINAL PROJECT AT KAI TAK LATER NEXT YEAR IS A SIGNIFICANT VOTE OF CONFIDENCE, NOT ONLY IN HONG KONG'S FUTURE GENERALLY BUT ALSO IN ITS FUTURE AS AN AIR CARGO CENTRE OF WORLD IMPORTANCE, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ANSON CHAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE TOPPING OUT CEREMONY OF TERMINAL TWO OF HACTL THIS MORNING, MRS CHAN SAID THE EFFICIENT PROCESSING OF AIR CARGO WAS VITAL IN SUPPORTING HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC GROWTH.

"ABOUT 30 PER CENT OF OUR EXPORT, 20 PER CENT OF OUR IMPORTS AND 16 PER CENT OF OUR RE-EXPORTS WERE CARRIED BY AIR IN 1989," SHE SAID.

SHE NOTED THAT \$36.5 BILLION WORTH OF FASHION WEAR AND WATCHES AND CLOCKS ALONE WERE EXPORTED THROUGH TERMINAL ONE LAST YEAR.

"TERMINAL ONE IS ALREADY OPERATING BEYOND ITS DESIGN CAPACITY. THE SECOND TERMINAL WOULD ENABLE HACTL TO HANDLE UP TO A STAGGERING 1.4 MILLION TONNES OF AIR CARGO PER YEAR.

"WITH TERMINAL TWO OPERATING, THE POTENTIAL EXISTS FOR KAI TAK TO TAKE ON AN EVEN MORE PROMINENT ROLE IN THE RECORD BOOKS AS REGARDS AIR CARGO.

"THIS PROMINENCE HAS BEEN WON OVER A RELATIVELY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME," SHE SAID, ADDING THAT IN 1947, 846 TONNES OF AIR CARGO PASSED THROUGH KAI TAK AND IN 1976, WHEN HACTL COMMENCED OPERATION 163,000 TONNES WERE HANDLED.

"BY 1983, ONLY SEVEN YEARS LATER, THE CARGO THROUGHPUT DOUBLED TO 368,000 TONNES. AND TODAY, ANOTHER SEVEN YEARS LATER THAT THROUGHPUT HAS ONCE MORE DOUBLED," SHE SAID.

MRS CHAN POINTED OUT THAT OVER THE COMING YEARS, UNTIL THE OPENING OF THE NEW AIRPORT, KAI TAK WOULD FACE ENORMOUS PRESSURES RESULTING FROM A STEADY INCREASE IN TRAFFIC GROWTH.

"THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF KAI TAK IN THE MOST COST-EFFECTIVE WAY BUT OUR EFFORTS MUST GO HAND IN HAND WITH THE ENDEAVOURS OF THE PRIVATE OPERATORS AT KAI TAK IF WE ARE TO MEET SUCCESSFULLY THE CHALLENGES IN THE YEARS AHEAD," SHE SAID.

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NEW DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES

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THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THE APPOINTMENT OF MR BILLY LAM CHUNG-LUN TO SUCCEED MR ROY KILVERT AS DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES IN JANUARY 1991.

MR KILVERT, WHO JOINED THE GOVERNMENT IN MAY 1951 AS AN ASSISTANT STORES OFFICER, WILL BE RETIRING AFTER 40 YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE. HE BECAME THE DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES IN 1979 AND IS ONE OF THE LONGEST SERVING HEADS OF DEPARTMENT IN THE GOVERNMENT.

AGED 42, MR LAM JOINED THE GOVERNMENT AS AN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER IN 1970. HE ROSE TO HIS PRESENT RANK OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER STAFF GRADE B IN 1985. HE ATTENDED THE SLOAN PROGRAM AT THE STANFORD UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS FROM 1985 TO 1986 AND OBTAINED A MASTERS DEGREE IN MANAGEMENT SCIENCE.

MR LAM HAS SERVED IN A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND BRANCHES.

FROM JUNE 1986 TO DECEMBER 1987, HE WAS HEAD OF THE HONG KONG ECONOMIC AND TRADE AFFAIRS OFFICE IN SAN FRANCISCO. HE WAS DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS FROM JUNE 1988 TO AUGUST 1989, BEFORE HE TOOK UP HIS PRESENT APPOINTMENT AS DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES.

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TAR YIELD OF CIGARETTES DECREASED

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THE AVERAGE TAR YIELD AMONG THE 109 TOP BEST-SELLING CIGARETTES IN HONG KONG HAS DECREASED BY 0.5MG/CIGARETTE TO 14.5MG/CIGARETTE COMPARED WITH THE FIGURE OF 15.0MG/CIGARETTE IN THE LAST SURVEY, ACCORDING TO THE LATEST SIX-MONTH REVIEW OF TAR AND NICOTINE YIELDS OF CIGARETTES RELEASED BY THE GOVERNMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE AVERAGE NICOTINE YIELD OF CIGARETTES HAS, HOWEVER, REMAINED AT THE SAME LEVEL OF 1.27MG/CIGARETTE AS IN THE LAST SURVEY.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THE FIGURES FROM THE LATEST ANALYSIS SHOW THAT THE AVERAGE TAR YIELD HAS FALLEN TO A RECORD LOW SINCE THE COMMENCEMENT OF PERIODICAL SURVEYS OF TAR AND NICOTINE YIELDS OF CIGARETTES SOME SEVEN YEARS AGO.

"APART FROM THE REDUCTION IN THE AVERAGE TAR YIELD, THE PRESENT SURVEY HAS NOT REVEALED ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE FROM THE POSITION SIX MONTHS AGO," HE ADDED.

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AS IN PREVIOUS SURVEYS, NO HIGH TAR CIGARETTES WERE FOUND IN THIS TEST PROGRAMME AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF BRANDS OF VARIOUS TAR GROUPS BETWEEN THE CURRENT AND PREVIOUS SURVEYS HAD REMAINED VERY MUCH THE SAME.

A FULL REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S FINDINGS ON TAR AND NICOTINE YIELDS HAS BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE LATEST EDITION OF "CHOICE" MAGAZINE.

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GUIDELINES ON BRINGING SCHOOL DROPOUTS BACK TO CLASSROOM ISSUED

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GUIDELINES ON BRINGING SCHOOL DROPOUTS BACK TO THE CLASSROOM ARE BEING ISSUED TO SCHOOLS TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

RECEIVING THE GUIDELINES ARE ALL GOVERNMENT AND AIDED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS, PREVOCATIONAL AND CAPUT SCHOOLS, ASSISTED PRIVATE SCHOOLS, PRIVATE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN THE BOUGHT PLACE SCHEME, AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SAID THE NEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE PLACEMENT OF PUPILS APPROVED THE GUIDELINES AT ITS FIRST MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 27.

"WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT, DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICERS WILL PLACE DROPOUT PUPILS TO SCHOOLS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GUIDELINES AND ONLY DIFFICULT CASES WHICH CANNOT BE PLACED WILL BE REFERRED TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN ADVISED THAT AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, THE ORIGINAL SCHOOL WHERE THE PUPIL DROPPED OUT SHOULD HAVE THE OBLIGATION TO RE-ADMIT THE PUPIL, HE SAID.

"THE OBVIOUS ADVANTAGE OF THIS ARRANGEMENT IS THAT THE PUPIL CAN ADJUST TO THE ENVIRONMENT EASILY," THE SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED.

HE ADDED THAT IF BEING RE-ADMITTED TO THE ORIGINAL SCHOOL WOULD AFFECT THE PUPIL'S MOTIVATION IN STUDY OR CAUSE OTHER PROBLEMS, A TRANSFER TO A MORE SUITABLE SCHOOL WOULD BE CONSIDERED.

BUT THE PHYSICAL LOCATION OF THE NEW SCHOOL IN RELATION TO THE PUPIL'S HOME SHOULD ALSO BE CONSIDERED.

SCHOOLS HAVE ALSO BEEN ADVISED THAT:

- * A SCHOOL WITH MORE VACANCIES SHOULD HAVE MORE OBLIGATION TO ADMIT THE PUPIL;
- * IN GENERAL, THE ABILITY BAND OF THE PUPIL SHOULD NOT BE TOO DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF THE OTHER PUPILS OF THE NEW SCHOOL; AND
- * IN PRINCIPLE, NO DISTINCTION SHOULD BE MADE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT, AIDED OR BOUGHT-PLACE PRIVATE SCHOOLS ON THE PLACEMENT OF THESE PUPILS.

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SEMINAR FOR PRESSURE EQUIPMENT PERSONNEL

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THE PRESSURE EQUIPMENT DIVISION OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT WILL ORGANISE A TWO-DAY RESIDENTIAL SEMINAR FOR ITS STAFF, APPOINTED EXAMINERS AND PERSONNEL FROM THE RELATED TRADES FROM TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE SEMINAR WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR STAFF OF THE DIVISION TO APPRAISE THEIR PROFESSIONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITIES IN A DETACHED MANNER AND TO EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH OTHER PERSONNEL IN THE FIELD ON TOPICS OF COMMON CONCERN AND INTEREST.

TWO EXPERTS FROM JAPAN AND LOCAL SPECIALISTS WILL ADDRESS THE GATHERING ON SUCH TOPICS AS QUALITY CONTROL, MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION OF BOILERS AS WELL AS SAFETY IN THE USE OF STEAM RECEIVER IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY.

THE SEMINAR WILL BE OFFICIALLY OPENED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH COUNCIL, MR HO SAI-CHU, TOMORROW AT 10.15 AM AT LEI YUE MUN PARK HOLIDAY VILLAGE.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE OPENING OF THE PRESSURE EQUIPMENT DIVISION SEMINAR WHICH WILL BEGIN AT 10.15 AM AT LEI YUE MUN PARK HOLIDAY VILLAGE TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

A VAN (AM 5605) TAKING MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES TO THE VENUE WILL LEAVE HARBOUR BUILDING, 38 PIER ROAD, CENTRAL, AT 9 AM.

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PAC HEARINGS NEXT WEEK

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OPEN HEARING OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE WILL BE HELD NEXT WEEK FOLLOWING THE TABLING OF THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE REPORT IS ON THE ACCOUNTS OF THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31 AND THE RESULTS OF VALUE FOR MONEY AUDITS.

TWO SESSIONS OF PUBLIC HEARINGS WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER IN THE MORNINGS OF NOVEMBER 19 (MONDAY) AND NOVEMBER 22 (THURSDAY), STARTING AT 9 AM.

/CONTROLLING OFFICERS

CONTROLLING OFFICERS WILL APPEAR BEFORE THE COMMITTEE IN
RELATION TO POINTS MADE IN THE REPORT.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

COPIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT'S REPORT WILL BE BOXED. PLEASE
NOTE THAT REPORTERS ATTENDING THE OPEN HEARINGS NEXT WEEK SHOULD
BRING A COPY OF THE REPORT WITH THEM.

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FINANCE COMMITTEE TO MEET ON FRIDAY

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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WILL HOLD A MEETING ON FRIDAY (NOVEMBER
16) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 2.30 PM.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO OBSERVE THE COMMITTEE'S
PROCEEDINGS FROM THE CHAMBER'S PUBLIC GALLERIES AND THEY MAY MAKE
RESERVATIONS BY TELEPHONING 844 0899.

THE AGENDA OF THE MEETING WILL BE SENT BY FACSIMILE.

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MUSIC OFFICE TO ENHANCE MUSIC TRAINING FOR YOUTH AND DISABLED

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ONE OF THE LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES OF THE MUSIC OFFICE IS TO
PROVIDE FOR THE UNDERPRIVILEGED, ESPECIALLY THE DISABLED, WITH THE
OPPORTUNITY OF MUSIC APPRECIATION AND TRAINING, THE MUSIC
ADMINISTRATOR OF MUSIC OFFICE, MRS AGNES ALLCOCK, SAID TODAY
(WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT A LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE VICTORIA LIONS CLUB, MRS
ALLCOCK SAID THE NEEDS OF THE PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY HANDICAPPED FOR
MUSIC TRAINING HAD NOT BEEN NEGLECTED.

MRS ALLCOCK SAID ACTIVITIES ORGANISED BY THE MUSIC OFFICE
INCLUDED CHORAL CLASSES FOR PATIENTS AT THE LAI CHI KOK HOSPITAL AND
PIANO-AND-THEORY CLASSES FOR STUDENTS OF THE EBENEZER SCHOOL AND HOME
FOR THE BLIND. NO TUITION FEES FOR THESE CLASSES WERE CHARGED SO AS TO
ENCOURAGE MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION.

"IN THE PAST YEAR, THE MUSIC OFFICE HAD PRESENTED VARIOUS CONCERTS AT HOME, HOSTELS, AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS FOR THE DISABLED.

"THIS YEAR, WE HAD TAKEN ACTIVE STEPS TO INCREASE OUR INPUT IN THIS AREA. WE HAVE ACTIVELY INVITED MEMBERS OF ORGANISATIONS FOR THE DISABLED TO ATTEND OUR MAJOR CONCERTS," MRS ALLCOCK SAID.

SHE SAID IN APRIL THIS YEAR, THE MUSIC OFFICE, WAI YIN CLUB, TVB AND THE ACADEMY FOR PERFORMING ARTS JOINTLY ORGANISED A CHARITY CONCERT TO RAISE A TOTAL OF \$200,000 FOR THE HONG KONG ARTS WITH THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION TO PROMOTE MUSIC AMONG THE DISABLED.

WHILE THE MUSIC OFFICE WAS SET UP TO RUN A FULL-SCALE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC TRAINING PROGRAMME, BOTH CHINESE AND WESTERN, TO PROMOTE AN INTEREST IN MUSIC ESPECIALLY AMONG THE YOUNGER GENERATION AND TO ENCOURAGE AND ASSIST IN THE ORGANISING OF MUSIC ACTIVITIES IN HONG KONG, MRS ALLCOCK SAID MORE THAN 4,000 YOUNG PEOPLE AGED BETWEEN SIX AND 23 WERE CURRENTLY UNDERTAKING TRAINING PROGRAMMES ORGANISED BY THE MUSIC OFFICE.

"TRAINEES ARE ALSO PROVIDED WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO ATTEND AURAL AND THEORY CLASSES AND MASTERCLASSES, LECTURE-DEMONSTRATIONS AND WORKSHOPS BY VISITING ARTISTS THROUGH WHICH THEIR MUSICAL EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE ARE FURTHER ENHANCED," SHE SAID.

MRS ALLCOCK ALSO POINTED OUT THAT REGULAR MUSIC ACTIVITIES SUCH AS THE YOUTH MUSIC CAMP, THE HONG KONG YOUTH CHINESE MUSIC FESTIVAL AND YOUTH BAND FESTIVAL WERE ORGANISED ANNUALLY FOR THE YOUTH AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

"THE 'MUSIC FOR THE MILLIONS' CONCERTS, A MUSIC PROMOTION PROGRAMME PERFORMED BY OUR INSTRUCTORS, HAVE BEEN ORGANISED FOR MORE THAN 4,800 TIMES AND HAVE ATTRACTED OVER THREE MILLION AUDIENCE," MRS ALLCOCK SAID.

REVIEWING THEIR CONNECTION WITH OTHER CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS, THE MUSIC ADMINISTRATOR SAID THE MUSIC OFFICE PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN ADVISING LOCAL ORGANISATIONS AND SCHOOLS ON ISSUES PERTAINING TO MUSIC.

"WE ARE INVITED TO SERVE AS OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES ON THE CULTURE SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS, ARTS AND CULTURE ASSOCIATIONS AND DISTRICT CHOIR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES," MRS ALLCOCK SAID.

THE MUSIC ADMINISTRATOR ALSO SAID INTERNATIONAL MUSIC EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES WERE REGULARLY ORGANISED FOR YOUNG MUSICIANS TO IMPROVE THEIR INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING AND TO WIDEN THEIR HORIZON.

DURING THE PAST YEARS, THE MUSIC OFFICE HAD ORGANISED OVERSEAS TOURS FOR YOUNG MUSICIANS TO AUSTRALIA, CHINA, CYPRUS AND THE UK. VISITING GROUPS FROM THESE COUNTRIES WERE ALSO INVITED TO PLAY WITH YOUNG MUSICIANS IN HONG KONG.

"IN JULY THIS YEAR, THE 66-STRONG HONG KONG YOUTH CHINESE ORCHESTRA TOURED USA AND CANADA, GIVING A TOTAL OF 12 HIGHLY-ACCLAIMED PERFORMANCES IN VANCOUVER, SAN FRANCISCO AND LOS ANGELES. AND WE ARE NOW PLANNING TO BRING THE HONG KONG YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ABROAD NEXT YEAR," MRS ALLCOCK ADDED.

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CARE FOR ELDERLY DAY IN YAU TSIM

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A "CARE FOR ELDERLY" ACTIVITIES DAY WILL BE HELD FOR OVER 4,000 SENIOR RESIDENTS AT THE KOWLOON PARK PIAZZA FROM 10 AM TO 4 PM ON SUNDAY (NOVEMBER 18).

IT IS ORGANISED BY THE YAU TSIM DISTRICT FESTIVAL CARE FOR THE ELDERLY PROJECT WORKING GROUP TO PROMOTE THE CARE AND WELFARE OF THE AGED.

THERE WILL BE FREE MEDICAL CHECK-UP AND ADVICE, GAME STALLS INTRODUCING WELFARE SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY, DISPLAY OF HEALTH PRODUCTS, AN OPERA SHOW AND A "RIGHTS FOR THE AGED" QUIZ.

FREE ADMISSION TICKETS ARE NOW AVAILABLE AT THE YAU TSIM DISTRICT OFFICE, 15 MIDDLE ROAD, TSIM SHA TSUI.

AN OPENING CEREMONY WILL BE HELD AT 11.30 AM THAT DAY. OFFICIATING WILL BE THE YAU TSIM DISTRICT OFFICER, MISS ANNIE TANG; DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMAN, MR YIP WAH; DISTRICT FESTIVAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, MR CHIU YU-HEI; AND REGIONAL SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICER (WEST KOWLOON), MRS PUN LEE WAI-CHUN.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO COVER THE "CARE FOR ELDERLY" ACTIVITIES DAY AND ITS OPENING CEREMONY ON SUNDAY (NOVEMBER 18) AT THE KOWLOON PARK PIAZZA. THE OPENING CEREMONY WILL BE HELD AT 11.30 AM.

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