



Received by PRO
on 20 JUL 1993

DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 842 8777

THURSDAY, JULY 15, 1993

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GOVERNOR IN LEGCO

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FOLLOWING IS THE TRANSCRIPT OF A STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, AT THE LEGCO MEETING TODAY (THURSDAY):

I AM DELIGHTED TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A BRIEF STATEMENT ON MY VISIT TO LONDON FROM THE 30TH JUNE TO THE 2ND JULY. WITH MEMBERS AGREEMENT, I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE FOREIGN SECRETARY'S VISIT ON THE 8TH AND 9TH JULY TO PEKING. I HAD A GOOD 48 HOURS IN LONDON. MINISTERS CONFIRMED THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE PRINCIPLES WHICH UNDERPIN OUR POSITION IN THE TALKS; FIRST THAT THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 1994 AND 1995 ELECTIONS SHOULD BE OPEN, FAIR AND ACCEPTABLE TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG, A FAMILIAR PRINCIPLE BUT ONE THAT BEARS REPETITION; AND SECOND, THAT THERE SHOULD BE A GENUINE "THROUGH TRAIN" WITH CLEAR OBJECTIVE CRITERIA FOR THOSE LEGISLATORS WHO ARE ELECTED IN 1995. ON THAT POINT, DESPITE THE FLURRY OF PRESS SPECULATION AT THE TIME OF MY VISIT TO LONDON, THERE HAS BEEN ABSOLUTELY NO CHANGE IN OUR POSITION. I ALSO SAW IN LONDON, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AND THE LABOUR SPOKESMAN ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS. IT WAS A USEFUL OPPORTUNITY TO BRING THEM UP TO DATE AND A USEFUL REMINDER AS WELL OF THE STRONG CROSS PARTY SUPPORT THAT EXISTS AT WESTMINSTER FOR THE APPROACH WE HAVE TAKEN. MINISTERS ALSO ENDORSED OUR RECOMMENDATION THAT THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SHOULD VISIT PEKING. AS YOU KNOW, HE DID SO ON THE 8TH AND 9TH JULY, ACCOMPANIED BY THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS. IN PEKING, HE HAD USEFUL TALKS WITH VICE PREMIER AND FOREIGN MINISTER QIAN QICHEN, HE ALSO SAW PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY GENERAL JIANG ZEMIN. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY WENT TO PEKING, AS YOU KNOW, NOT TO NEGOTIATE BUT TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON WHAT WE REGARD AS ESSENTIAL IN THESE TALKS. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY DID NOT MENTION DEADLINES DURING HIS VISIT, JUST AS I HAVE AVOIDED RINGING DATES IN THE CALENDAR, BUT EVERYONE KNOWS THAT TIME MARCHES ON AND THAT THERE ARE PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS WHICH HAVE TO BE MADE IN GOOD TIME; SO WE CANNOT GO ON TALKING INDEFINITELY.

IN ADDITION TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL TALKS, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY ALSO COVERED THE TALKS IN THE AIRPORT COMMITTEE AND IN THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP. ON THE AIRPORT, HE EMPHASISED TO THE CHINESE SIDE THAT DELAY IS EXPENSIVE AND DAMAGING TO HONG KONG AND TO CHINA. HE RAISED THE CENTRAL AND WANCHAI RECLAMATION SCHEME AND I AM PLEASED TO SAY THAT THE CHINESE SAID THEY HAD NO OBJECTION TO THE FIRST PHASE OF THAT SCHEME. IT WILL NOW GO TO FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR CONSIDERATION. SO THAT IS PROGRESS, ALTHOUGH PLAINLY THERE IS A GREAT DEAL STILL TO DO. WE MUST WORK MORE QUICKLY IF CHEP LAP KOK IS TO BE COMPLETED ON TIME. SIMILARLY, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY UNDERLINED THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PILE-UP OF WORK THAT WE NOW SEE IN THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP. MUCH OF IT VERY TECHNICAL, MUCH OF IT NOT INTRINSICALLY POLITICAL, BUT ALL OF IT ESSENTIAL IF THERE IS NOT TO BE A GAPING VOID IN THE LAWS OF HONG KONG WHEN SOVEREIGNTY CHANGES. I CANNOT EMPHASISE STRONGLY ENOUGH THE NEED TO GET CRACKING. SO A GOOD VISIT, CONDUCTED IN A CONGENIAL ATMOSPHERE, AS THE FOREIGN SECRETARY EMPHASISED, THE PROOF OF ITS SUCCESS OR OTHERWISE WILL COME IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. MEANWHILE, OUR NEGOTIATORS WORK ON. THERE WILL BE A FURTHER ROUND OF TALKS NEXT WEEK, AND, WE HOPE, A FURTHER ROUND IN AUGUST, THOUGH THE DETAILS REMAIN TO BE AGREED.

CHAIRMAN: MEMBERS WILL NOW PUT QUESTIONS TO THE GOVERNOR ON MATTERS ARISING FROM HIS ADDRESS. A MEMBER WHO HAS ASKED A QUESTION MAY, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ELUCIDATION ONLY, ASK A SHORT FOLLOW-UP QUESTION. A SHOW OF HANDS PLEASE.

MR CHEUNG MAN-KWONG: MR GOVERNOR, COULD YOU CLEARLY AND SPECIFICALLY TELL THIS COUNCIL THIS, LAST WEEK MR HURD IN HIS VISIT TO BEIJING DID HE TALK TO THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES IN RELATION TO THE 94/95 CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, HAS THERE BEEN ANY SECRET AGREEMENTS OR UNDERSTANDING IN RELATION TO THOSE ELECTIONS? IN OTHER WORDS, YOU'RE NOW STRESSING THE "THROUGH TRAIN", HAVE YOU BECAUSE OF THIS GIVEN UP ON YOUR DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

GOVERNOR: WELL OF COURSE THE FOREIGN SECRETARY TALKED ABOUT THE 1994/95 ELECTIONS. I THINK THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WOULD HAVE BEEN SURPRISED IF HE'D GONE TO PEKING AND NOT DONE SO AND ONE OF THE MAIN PURPOSES OF HIS VISIT, A REASON WHY WE ADVISED HIM TO GO AND INDEED URGED HIM TO GO, WAS TO TRY TO PROVIDE A GREATER POLITICAL IMPULSE FOR THE TALKS WHICH HAVE BEEN GOING ON FOR THE LAST FEW WEEKS AND MONTHS. BUT HE DIDN'T REACH A SECRET DEAL OR ANY SORT OF DEAL DURING HIS TALKS. HE WASN'T NEGOTIATING, HE WAS TRYING TO FOCUS THE TALKS ON WHAT WE REGARD AS THE PRINCIPAL ISSUES AND TO ENSURE THAT THE TALKS MAKE THE SORT OF PROGRESS WHICH EVERYBODY I'M SURE IN THIS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WOULD LIKE TO SEE. OUR INTENTION IN THESE TALKS, AS I SAID EARLIER, IS TO SECURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 1994/95 ELECTIONS WHICH ARE FAIR, OPEN AND ACCEPTABLE TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG AND THAT IN MY JUDGEMENT MEANS THAT WE REALLY DO HAVE TO RESOLVE THE DIFFERENCES THAT PLAINLY EXIST, ON IN PARTICULAR THE ROLE OF THE ELECTION COMMITTEE, ITS COMPOSITION AND THE WAY IT'S ARRIVED AT AND THE NEW FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES AND I THINK THERE ARE VIEWS WHICH MEMBERS HAVE, MANY MEMBERS HAVE ON THE WAY THE EXISTING FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES OPERATE AS WELL, SO WE NEED TO MAKE PROGRESS ON THOSE MATTERS. BUT I DON'T THINK IT WOULD MAKE VERY MUCH SENSE FOR US TO REACH SOME SORT OF AGREEMENT ON THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ELECTIONS IN 1994/95 BUT NOT REACH AGREEMENT ON HOW LEGISLATORS COULD TRAVEL THROUGH THE TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY IN 1997, PROVIDED THAT THEY WERE PREPARED TO MEET THE SAME SORT OF OBJECTIVE TESTS WHICH EXIST TODAY. SO, I WOULDN'T REGARD SECURING SOME SORT OF AGREEMENT ON ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS BUT NO AGREEMENT ON THE "THROUGH TRAIN" IS ACCEPTABLE AND EQUALLY IMPROBABLE THOUGH IT WOULD BE I GUESS, I WOULDN'T REGARD IT AS ACCEPTABLE TO REACH AN AGREEMENT ON THE "THROUGH TRAIN" BUT NOT ABOUT THE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR 94/95. IF WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A SMOOTH TRANSITION, IF WE'RE TALKING ABOUT CONVERGENCE, THEN THAT MUST MEAN NOT JUST CONVERGENCE OF INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS BUT CONVERGENCE WHICH INVOLVES THE ROLE OF LEGISLATORS AS WELL OTHERWISE I DON'T THINK IT WOULD MAKE VERY MUCH SENSE. NO SECRET DEAL, ANYTHING WHICH EMERGES FROM THESE TALKS AND WE HOPE THAT WE WILL HAVE, IN DUE COURSE, GOOD NEWS, DIFFICULT THOUGH THE JOB IS BUT ANYTHING THAT EMERGES FROM THESE TALKS WILL OF COURSE BE WIDELY DEBATED IN THE COMMUNITY AND I GUESS EXTENSIVELY, LENGTHY AND ALWAYS INTELLIGENTLY DEBATED BY THIS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR CHEUNG MAN-KWONG: MR PRESIDENT, LAST YEAR THE GOVERNOR SAID THAT THESE DEMOCRATIC PROPOSALS ARE IN LINE WITH THE BASIC LAW AND IF THAT IS IN LINE WITH THE BASIC LAW THEN THERE MUST BE A "THROUGH TRAIN" AND SO WOULD YOU THEREFORE BE INSISTING ON THIS AND MAKE SURE THAT THIS WILL GO THROUGH STRADDLING THE TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY?

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GOVERNOR: I DON'T KNOW THAT I CAN REPEAT ANY MORE FIRMLY MY STRONG VIEW THAT A THROUGH TRAIN IS ESSENTIAL. IF WE'RE TO HAVE ANY SORT OF MEANINGFUL CONVERGENCE. FRANKLY, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE PRACTICAL PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH NOT SECURING A "THROUGH TRAIN" ALSO NEED TO BE ADDRESSED. WHAT ARE CANDIDATES TO SAY WITHOUT SOME AGREEMENT ON A "THROUGH TRAIN" WHEN THEY'RE CAMPAIGNING IN 1995? ARE THEY TO SAY, VOTE FOR ME AND I'LL EITHER BE THERE FOR TWO YEARS OR I'LL BE THERE FOR FOUR BUT MAYBE YOU'D BETTER ASK THE NCNA IN 1996/97 WHETHER IT'S TO BE TWO YEARS OR FOUR. IT DOESN'T SEEM TO ME THAT IT'S EXACTLY A RALLYING CRY AS ONE GOES FROM DOOR TO DOOR OR GOES CANVASSING ROUND THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY. EQUALLY I HAVE NEVER BELIEVED THAT AS IT'S FIRST ACT OF SOVEREIGNTY CHINA WOULD ACTUALLY WANT TO THROW LEGISLATORS OUT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AFTER THEY HAD BEEN DIRECTLY ELECTED. SO I THINK THAT SOME OF THE PRACTICAL PROBLEMS AND FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS NEED TO BE LOOKED AT. I THINK WE NEED TO APPLY A BIT OF COMMON SENSE TO THE ISSUE AND ASK OURSELVES WHETHER IF WE'RE CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROSPERITY AND STABILITY OF HONG KONG THERE SHOULD REALLY BE ANY ARGUMENT ABOUT THIS ISSUE AT ALL.

MR MICHAEL HO: MR PRESIDENT, THE GOVERNOR WAS REPEATING TO US THE "THROUGH TRAIN" CONCEPT, AND THE GOVERNOR, IN FACT, HAS PUBLICLY SAID THAT THE BASIC LAW ARTICLE 104 HAS ALREADY SET OBJECTIVE CRITERIA FOR THE "THROUGH TRAIN", THAT IS, LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS NEED ONLY PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE SAR AND ALSO UP HOLD THE BASIC LAW, AND THOSE WILL BE THE CRITERIA; SO MR GOVERNOR, HOW WILL YOU, IN RELATION TO FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS OR TALKS, THAT THE TEAM WILL HOLD ON TO SUCH VIEWS, AND WILL THEN WILL YOU BE ARRIVING AT AN AGREEMENT WITH CHINA ON CRITERIA FOR "THROUGH TRAIN" AND WILL WHAT LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS SAID PREVIOUSLY OR DID PREVIOUSLY BE FACTORS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT?

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GOVERNOR: I DON'T THINK ONE COULD REGARD A TEST OF PREVIOUS OPINION AS AN OBJECTIVE CRITERIA. I AM NOT SURE HOW ONE COULD CONCEIVABLY WEIGH THAT FACTOR. LET'S BE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR WHAT I HAVE ARGUED FOR AND WHAT I THINK THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL HAVE ARGUED FOR IN THE PAST. NOBODY, AND I HOPE THAT WHEN THIS SENTENCE IS REPORTED, THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES IN THE PARAGRAPH WILL BE REPORTED ALSO; NOBODY IS ARGUING THAT THERE SHOULD BE AN ABSOLUTE GUARANTEE THAT EVERYONE WHO IS ELECTED IN A GIVEN ELECTION APPEARS IN THE LEGISLATURE AFTER 1997. I SAID, HOLD ON, I SAW THE WORDS 'WHY NOT' ON THE HONOURABLE MEMBER'S LIPS. THERE ISN'T THAT GUARANTEE AT THE MOMENT. YOU COULD STAND FOR ELECTION, MEETING ALL THE QUALIFICATIONS OF CANDIDATURE, YOU COULD BE ELECTED AND THEN YOU COULD COME TO THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE AND REFUSE TO TAKE EITHER THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE OR THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OATH, AND IN THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES YOU WOULDN'T BE ALLOWED TO TAKE YOUR PLACE IN THIS CHAMBER AND YOU WOULDN'T EITHER BE ALLOWED TO DRAW YOUR ALLOWANCES OR OTHER ENTITLEMENTS AS A MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. SO THERE IS AN OBJECTIVE TEST FOR THOSE WHO WIN THE ELECTION BEFORE THEY TAKE UP THEIR POSITION AS LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS. I AM NOT ARGUING, I DON'T THINK ANYBODY IN THIS CHAMBER IS ARGUING THAT THE SITUATION SHOULD BE DIFFERENT AFTER 1997, BUT I AM ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT IT SHOULD BE, GIVEN THE CHANGE OF SOVEREIGNTY, PRETTY MUCH THE SAME. WE KNOW FROM ARTICLE 104 THAT THOSE WHO DRAFTED THE BASIC LAW, IN THEIR WISDOM, POSITED AN OBJECTIVE SET OF CRITERIA AFTER 1997 FOR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, FOR JUDGES, FOR SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS AND FOR LEGISLATORS. ALL I HAVE ARGUED, IS THAT IT SHOULD BE PERFECTLY POSSIBLE TO APPLY A SIMILAR OBJECTIVE SET OF CRITERIA FOR 1995/1997. I DON'T THINK THAT THAT SHOULD ACTUALLY TAKE MORE THAN FIVE MINUTES THOUGHT TO BOTH AGREE AND TURN INTO SOME SENSIBLE YARDSTICK. SO I REPEAT, WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR IS A SIMILAR CRITERION TO THAT WHICH EXISTS AT THE MOMENT. A CRITERION AT THE MOMENT WHICH WOULD, I GUESS, BE JUSTICIABLE, IF HONOURABLE MEMBERS WISH TO TAKE IT THAT FAR. WE NEED SOMETHING WHICH IS CLEAR, WE NEED SOMETHING WHICH IS EXPLICIT AND WE NEED SOMETHING WHICH WILL GIVE THE COMMUNITY THE SORT OF CONFIDENCE THAT IT WILL NEED IN THE ELECTIONS IN 1995. THAT'S WHAT WE'RE ARGUING FOR, THAT'S WHAT, IN MY JUDGMENT, THE "THROUGH TRAIN" MEANS, AND I CAN'T FOR THE LIFE OF ME SEE WHY ANYBODY SHOULD BE OPPOSED TO IT. IF THERE ARE ANY ARGUMENTS AGAINST IT I WOULD LOVE TO KNOW WHAT THEY ARE.

MR LEE WING-TAT: FROM WHAT YOU SAID JUST NOW YOU SAID THAT YOU AS WELL AS UK ADMINISTRATION INSISTED ON ONE PRINCIPLE. THAT IS THE 94/95 ELECTIONS MUST BE OPEN, FAIR AND ACCEPTABLE TO HONG KONG PEOPLE. I HOPE THAT YOU ARE REALLY GOING TO INSIST ON THIS PRINCIPLE. MR GOVERNOR, I THINK YOU UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE FACING ONE CHOICE, FIRST YOU CAN CHOOSE TO INSIST ON THE PRINCIPLE THAT 94/95 ELECTIONS MUST BE FAIR, OPEN AND ACCEPTABLE TO HONG KONG PEOPLE. ANOTHER CHOICE FOR YOU IS THAT IN ORDER TO REACH AN AGREEMENT THAT IS ACCEPTABLE TO THE CHINESE SIDE, YOU MAY HAVE TO MAKE MAJOR CONCESSIONS. MR GOVERNOR, I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU THIS, HOW CAN YOU THROUGH CONCRETE ACTIONS PROVE, I'M TALKING ABOUT CONCRETE ACTIONS I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT LIP SERVICE, HOW CAN YOU THROUGH CONCRETE ACTIONS SHOW THAT YOUR INSISTENCE ON THE PRINCIPLE OF 94/95 ELECTIONS BEING OPEN, FAIR AND ACCEPTABLE TO HONG KONG PEOPLE? FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THIS, YOU AND YOUR GOVERNMENT WHEN REACHING AN INITIAL AGREEMENT BUT BEFORE ACTUALLY SIGNING IT, ARE YOU GOING TO BEFORE THAT CONSULT THIS LEGCO?

/GOVERNOR

GOVERNOR: LET ME STRESS ONCE AGAIN AT THE OUTSET THAT WE ARE TAKING PART IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS IN GOOD FAITH. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE A SATISFACTORY OUTCOME, JUST AS THE COMMUNITY WOULD LIKE TO SEE A SATISFACTORY OUTCOME. I HAPPEN TO THINK THAT IT WOULD BE WORSE FOR HONG KONG TO HAVE AN OUTCOME, AN AGREEMENT IN THE TALKS, WHICH PRODUCED ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WEREN'T OPEN AND FAIR AND ACCEPTABLE THAN TO HAVE NO AGREEMENT AT ALL. I THINK IT WILL BE SAD IF WE CAN'T REACH AN AGREEMENT BUT HONG KONG WILL SURVIVE AND WE'LL DO OUR BEST IN THE NEXT FOUR YEARS TO ENSURE THAT THERE ARE DECENT AND REASONABLE ARRANGEMENTS IN PLACE, WHICH I DON'T BELIEVE A SENSIBLE INCOMING SOVEREIGN POWER WOULD WISH TO CHANGE. BUT I REPEAT, I REPEAT VERY CLEARLY, I WOULD LIKE ABOVE ALL TO SEE AN AGREEMENT. NOW THE HONOURABLE MEMBER ASKS ME PERFECTLY REASONABLY WHAT DO I MEAN BY OPEN, FAIR AND ACCEPTABLE. ARE THERE OTHER WAYS OF ARRANGING THINGS IN 1994/95 OTHER THAN THE PROPOSALS I PUT FORWARD WHICH WOULD BE OPEN, FAIR AND ACCEPTABLE AND I HAVE TO SAY HAND ON HEART THAT THERE ARE OTHER WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN SECURE THAT OBJECTIVE. WHAT WE'RE NOT PREPARED TO DO IS TO THROW AWAY THE PRINCIPLES EVEN IF WE'RE PREPARED IN A GENEROUS SPIRITED WAY TO LOOK AT WAYS OF ACCOMPLISHING THOSE PRINCIPLES. I THINK THAT AT THE END OF THE DAY, IF WE REACH AN AGREEMENT, IT WILL BE PERFECTLY CLEAR WHETHER OUR ARRANGEMENTS MEET THE CRITERIA WHICH I'VE SET. YOU CAN'T TELL WHEN THERE'S A LOT OF RUSTLING IN THE SHRUBBERY WHETHER THERE'S A PANDA OR A BIG BEAR BEHIND THE BUSHES, BUT YOU SURE ENOUGH KNOW WHEN THEY EMERGE INTO THE DAYLIGHT WHICH IS WHICH. AND I THINK AT THE END OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS PEOPLE WILL KNOW WHETHER THE ARRANGEMENTS THAT WE'RE PROPOSING, WHICH WILL BE WIDELY DEBATED HERE, WHICH WILL BE WIDELY DEBATED IN THE COMMUNITY, MEET THE CRITERIA FOR WHICH THIS COUNCIL HAS VOTED ON I THINK A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS. WE WILL HAVE TO PUT PROPOSALS TO THIS COUNCIL BECAUSE THIS COUNCIL WILL HAVE TO VOTE THROUGH THE LEGISLATION AND I DON'T WISH TO BE IN THE SAME POSITION THAT WE FOUND OURSELVES IN A YEAR OR SO AGO, PRE-PATTEN, ON THE COURT OF FINAL APPEAL. I DON'T WANT TO FIND OURSELVES IN A POSITION IN WHICH THIS COUNCIL IS AT ODDS WITH US ON WHATEVER COMES OUT OF NEGOTIATIONS, SO I WOULDN'T WISH TO RECOMMEND TO THIS COUNCIL PROPOSALS WHICH I DIDN'T THINK THIS COUNCIL WOULD FIND ACCEPTABLE.

MR LEE WING-TAT: A SHORT FOLLOW-UP. THANK YOU MR PRESIDENT. I WOULD LIKE TO ASK MR GOVERNOR THIS: YOU STRESS THAT LEGCO IS GOING TO EXAMINE THE RESULTS OF THE SINO-BRITISH TALKS AND SO THIS IS ONE WAY TO ENSURE THAT THERE WILL BE PUBLIC OPINION FEEDBACK BUT MR GOVERNOR I WOULD LIKE TO REMIND YOU THAT NOT ALL MEMBERS SITTING ON THE COUNCIL ARE DIRECTLY ELECTED AND SO APART FROM TABLING THE BILL AT LEGCO, WHAT OTHER MEANS DO YOU HAVE TO ENSURE THAT YOU KNOW WHAT IS THE PUBLIC OPINION ON THE SINO-BRITISH TALKS RESULTS?

GOVERNOR: I DARESAY THERE WILL BE MANY DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS ON PUBLIC OPINION. I'VE BEEN INTERESTED OVER THE LAST MONTHS IN HOW, DESPITE THE FACT THAT VIRTUALLY EVERY OPINION POLL THERE'S BEEN HAS SHOWN SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT FOR THE SORT OF PROPOSALS THAT WE PUT LAST AUTUMN, SOME PEOPLE HAVE STILL MANAGED TO ARGUE THAT THE PUBLIC AREN'T ACTUALLY IN FAVOUR OF THEM. SO THERE'S PLENTY OF SCOPE FOR BEING LIBERAL IN ONE'S INTERPRETATIONS OF PUBLIC OPINION. BUT I THINK THAT THIS COUNCIL IS THE BEST REFLECTION OF PUBLIC OPINION THOUGH I RECOGNISE THAT THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS THINKS IT'S AN IMPERFECT REFLECTION BECAUSE IT ISN'T ENTIRELY ELECTED AS IT WILL BE IN 1995. WE WILL HAVE TO REACH A JUDGEMENT WHICH WILL BE BASED BOTH ON WHAT WE CAN GAUGE FROM THE COMMUNITY OUTSIDE THIS COUNCIL AND FROM WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM OUR CONTACTS WITH MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL AND FROM DEBATES THAT TAKE PLACE WITHIN THIS COUNCIL. BUT I REPEAT THAT I DON'T THINK THAT IT WOULD BE CONDUCIVE TO POLITICAL STABILITY FOR THE GOVERNOR AND THE GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG TO BE FACED FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS OF BRITISH SOVEREIGNTY AND FOR MANY YEARS AFTER THAT OF CHINESE SOVEREIGNTY WITH A PUBLIC WHICH IS HOSTILE TO THE GOVERNING ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WE HAVE PROPOSED FOR THE GOOD OF THIS COMMUNITY. POLITICAL STABILITY MUST INVOLVE NOT JUST THE ABILITY OF A GOVERNMENT TO EXERCISE AUTHORITY BUT ITS ABILITY AS WELL TO COMMAND THE LOYALTY AND THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF THE PUBLIC. THAT'S NOT A THREE LEGGED STOOL OR ANY OTHER PIECE OF FURNITURE, WHAT THAT IS IS A SENSIBLE APPROACH TO GOVERNMENT IN THE 1990'S.

MR FRED LI WAH-MING: MR PRESIDENT, THE BRITISH HAVE ALWAYS STRESSED THIS POINT, THAT IS, THEY ARE STILL FOURSQUARE BEHIND YOUR CONSTITUTIONAL PACKAGE. YET, WE'VE HEARD, AND IT HAS BEEN REPORTED, THAT AT THE NEGOTIATION TABLE THEY ARE NOW ON TO FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES, AND THE NEW NINE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES; AND THE CHINESE SIDE HAS ALREADY GIVEN SUGGESTIONS TO THE NINE NEW ONES AND THAT DISCUSSION IS NOW UNDERWAY. SO OBVIOUSLY, YOUR SUGGESTIONS AS TO BROADENING THE FRANCHISE FOR THE NINE NEW FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES IS NOW GONE, SO MY QUESTION IS HAVE YOUR PROPOSALS VANISHED, IT'S NO LONGER ON THE NEGOTIATION TABLE, THAT IS?

GOVERNOR: I HAVE SAID FROM THE OUTSET, THOUGH IT WOULD BE TEMPTING FOR ME TO GO BEYOND IT, I HAVE SAID FROM THE OUTSET THAT I DON'T THINK IT WOULD HELP THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE TALKS TO SET OUT IN DETAIL EXACTLY WHAT IS HAPPENING AT EVERY STAGE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. I HAVEN'T ABANDONED THE PRINCIPLES WHICH I ENUNCIATED EARLIER, NOR HAS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, NOR, OF COURSE, HAVE THOSE WHO ARE NEGOTIATING IN THE NAME OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF RUMOURS ABOUT WHAT MAY OR MAY NOT BE HAPPENING, MOST OF WHICH BEAR LITTLE RELATIONSHIP TO THE TRUTH. I GUESS THAT IS AN INEVITABLE CONSEQUENCE OF HAVING TO NEGOTIATE IN CONFIDENCE. BUT WE WERE TOLD BEFORE THESE TALKS THAT TALKS COULD ONLY TAKE PLACE IF WE ABANDONED, BURIED, INCINERATED OUR PROPOSALS. WE HAVEN'T DONE SO; TALKS ARE TAKING PLACE. ALL SORTS OF OTHER THINGS HAVE BEEN SAID IN THE LAST YEAR ABOUT WHAT MAY OR MAY NOT HAPPEN UNLESS WE DID WHATEVER THE NCNA WANTED, OR WHATEVER SENIOR CHINESE OFFICIALS WANTED; AND LIFE HAS TURNED OUT, HAPPILY, TO BE RATHER DIFFERENT FROM THOSE DIRE AND CATASTROPHIC PREDICTIONS. SO I THINK THAT I CAN BEST RESPOND TO THE HONOURABLE MEMBER BY SAYING THAT WE ARE PREPARED, IN GOOD FAITH, TO LOOK AT ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF SECURING THE PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES WHICH I MENTIONED EARLIER. WE ARE PREPARED TO REGARD WHAT I SAID LAST AUTUMN AS PROPOSALS, RATHER THAN ARGUMENTS FIXED IN CONCRETE. BUT AT THE END OF THE DAY, WE WILL BE JUDGED BY THIS CLEAR TEST. HAVE YOU PUT FORWARD PROPOSALS WHICH MAKE THE LIMITED DEMOCRATIC STEP WHICH HONG KONG IS TAKING IN 1995 CREDIBLE OR NOT? A LOT OF HONOURABLE MEMBERS IN THIS CHAMBER WOULD LIKE THE ARGUMENT TO BE ABOUT AN EXTENSION OF DEMOCRACY FOR HONG KONG. I UNDERSTAND THAT. IT'S NOT ABOUT AN EXTENSION OF DEMOCRACY FOR HONG KONG, IT'S ABOUT WHETHER AGREED PROGRESS TOWARDS GREATER DEMOCRACY IS TO BE CREDIBLE OR IS TO BE INCREDIBLE, THAT'S WHAT IT'S ABOUT. AND I AM DETERMINED THAT IT SHOULD BE CREDIBLE, BECAUSE IF IT IS NOT CREDIBLE, THERE IS NO POINT IN TAKING THAT STEP.

MR SZETO WAH: MR GOVERNOR, TODAY IN THE NEWSPAPER THERE WAS AN ARTICLE SAYING THAT A CERTAIN HONG KONG PERSON WHO WAS GOING TO BEIJING TO PARTICIPATE IN A MEETING OF THE WORKING PANEL OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE AND THAT PARTICULAR PERSON NAMED SEVERAL, ACTUALLY NAMED AN INDIVIDUAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR, SAYING THAT HE WOULD NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR A "THROUGH TRAIN", AND THAT PERSON ALSO LISTED THE REASONS WHY THESE COUNCILLORS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RIDE THE "THROUGH TRAIN". IF WHAT HE SAID WAS TO BE THE CRITERIA THAT WOULD BE AGREED TO BY BOTH THE SINO-BRITISH GOVERNMENTS, DO YOU THINK THAT THAT CRITERIA IS ACCEPTABLE?

GOVERNOR: OF COURSE NOT. IF THAT IS THE STANDARD OF THE ADVICE WHICH THAT PARTICULAR DISTINGUISHED INDIVIDUAL IS GIVING TO THE GOVERNMENT IN CHINA, THEN I DON'T THINK THEY WILL BE AS WELL INFORMED AS THEY DESERVE TO BE. THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS, THAT WITHOUT GETTING INVOLVED IN THE NAMING OF INDIVIDUALS, OBJECTIVE MEANS OBJECTIVE, AND IT DOESN'T MEAN ASKING WHETHER YOU LIKE, WHAT OPINIONS PEOPLE HAD FOUR OR FIVE YEARS' AGO, OR HOW MANY BUTTONS THEY HAVE ON THEIR CUFF, OR WHAT THEIR ASTROLOGICAL SIGN IS. THAT CANNOT CONCEIVABLY BE A WAY OF MAKING DEMOCRATIC ARRANGEMENTS CREDIBLE FOR THIS COMMUNITY. I DON'T WANT THE ARGUMENT TO BE ABOUT INDIVIDUALS, THOUGH I AM SURE OTHERS WILL TRY TO SEE IT IN THAT SENSE. I THINK THAT IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT IN A COMMUNITY WHICH BELIEVES IN THE RULE OF LAW, YOU CAN APPLY, SUBJECTIVELY, RULES TO SOME WHICH DON'T APPLY TO THE OTHERS, AND WHICH HAVE EVERYTHING TO DO WITH OPINION AND SIMILAR TESTS RATHER THAN ANYTHING OBJECTIVE. SO IF WE'RE CONCERNED ABOUT THE RULE OF LAW, WE SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT OBJECTIVE CRITERIA FOR MEMBERS OF THIS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL; AND IF WE ARE NOT TO APPLY THOSE CRITERIA, THEN HEAVEN HELP THE RULE OF LAW IN HONG KONG.

MR RONALD ARCULLI: MR CHAIRMAN, I WONDER WHETHER I COULD GO AWAY FROM CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES AND ON THE SAME THEME ABOUT DISCUSSIONS WITH CHINA PUT A QUESTION TO THE GOVERNOR, THROUGH YOU SIR, AND THAT IS THIS. IN TERMS OF THE WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL CROSSING AND IN TERMS OF THE SORT OF INTERESTING AND HEATED DEBATE THAT WE'VE HAD OVER THE PAST TEN DAYS OR TWO WEEKS, I WONDER WHETHER IT'S POSSIBLE THAT ON ECONOMIC ISSUES AFFECTING HONG KONG, WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT FORM PART OF JLG AGENDA AND PARTICULARLY IF IT DID, IS IT POSSIBLE, CAN THE GOVERNMENT OR THE GOVERNOR SEE SOME WAY OF TAKING SOUNDINGS, CONSULTING MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL, WHETHER INFORMALLY OR FORMALLY SO THAT SOME SORT OF STEER WOULD BE OBTAINED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND SOME FORM OF YOU KNOW GUIDANCE OR GUIDELINES OR WHATEVER ONE CHOOSES TO CALL IT IN ORDER TO TRY AND ARRIVE AT A TRANSACTION OR AN ISSUE, BEARING IN MIND THE VIEWS THAT MIGHT BE EXPRESSED IN THIS COUNCIL?

GOVERNOR: THERE ARE OBVIOUSLY DIFFICULTIES WHEN YOU'RE DEALING WITH A SENSITIVE COMMERCIAL NEGOTIATION BUT I GUESS WE'VE ALL IN THIS COUNCIL AND IN THE EXECUTIVE LEARNED ONE OR TWO LESSONS IN THE LAST WEEK OR SO AND IT'S IN OUR INTERESTS, IN THE EXECUTIVE, IF WE TAKE A LEAD IN TRYING TO LEARN FROM THOSE LESSONS AND AVOID SIMILAR DIFFICULTIES IN THE FUTURE. IT WON'T SURPRISE THE HONOURABLE MEMBER TO KNOW THAT I BELIEVE VERY STRONGLY THAT THE DECISION ON THE WESTERN HARBOUR CROSSING IS ENORMOUSLY IMPORTANT NOT JUST FOR THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF HONG KONG BUT FOR HONG KONG'S REPUTATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL COMMUNITY. I THINK THAT THIS COMMUNITY MANAGES BETTER THAN ALMOST ANY OTHER IN THE WORLD TO USE PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT FOR PUBLIC GOOD. IT DOES IT IN AN EXTREMELY COMPETENT, SOPHISTICATED WAY AND I KNOW OF NOWHERE ELSE THAT CAN DO IT AS WELL. FOR THE WESTERN HARBOUR CROSSING TO GO WRONG WILL I THINK RAISE SUBSTANTIAL QUESTIONS IN THE MINDS OF POTENTIAL INVESTORS ABOUT WHETHER HONG KONG CAN CONTINUE TO PRACTISE BOT PROJECTS, PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE FUTURE AS WELL AS IT HAS IN THE PAST AND I THINK FOR THE DECISION TO GO WRONG WOULD ALSO RAISE PERHAPS UNFAIRLY, QUESTIONS IN SOME PEOPLE'S MINDS ABOUT THE POLITICISATION OF ECONOMIC ISSUES IN HONG KONG. SO I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT THE DECISION WILL GO THE RIGHT WAY NEXT WEEK AND I CAN ASSURE THE HONOURABLE MEMBER THAT WE WILL TRY TO LEARN SOME LESSONS FROM THE DISCUSSIONS OVER THE LAST WEEK OR SO THOUGH I HAVE TO SAY AS AN EX-LEGISLATOR MYSELF THAT I DIDN'T REGARD IT AS NECESSARILY A ROLE OF THE MOTHER OF PARLIAMENTS TO GET INVOLVED IN EVERY PRIVATE COMMERCIAL SETTLEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR. LOOKING AFTER PUBLIC FUNDS I ALWAYS THOUGHT WAS OUR JOB RATHER THAN POLICING PRIVATE FUNDS.

MISS CHRISTINE LOH: THANK YOU PRESIDENT. WHEN THE FOREIGN SECRETARY WAS HERE LAST WEEK, HE SAID THAT WHEN HE WAS IN PEKING HE BROUGHT UP THE SUBJECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE APPLICATION OF THE TWO INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COVENANTS. THE CHINESE REAFFIRMED THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE PROMISES IN THE JOINT DECLARATION BUT I BELIEVE THERE WAS NO SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION ON HOW THEY WOULD FULFILL THAT OBLIGATION. ARE YOU AND IS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT SATISFIED WITH THAT RESPONSE WITH ONLY LESS THAN FOUR YEARS LEFT?

/GOVERNOR

GOVERNOR: PLAINLY ONE OF THE REASONS WHY THE FOREIGN SECRETARY RAISED THE QUESTION WITH HIS DISTINGUISHED OPPOSITE NUMBER WAS BECAUSE WE'RE NOT WHOLLY SATISFIED ABOUT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FUTURE. LET'S BE CLEAR, THE COMMITMENT TO THE TERMS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION IS WRITTEN INTO NOT ONLY THE JOINT DECLARATION BUT ALSO INTO THE BASIC LAW. WE KNOW THAT ONE OF THE TERMS OF THAT AGREEMENT TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION IS REGULAR REPORTING BY, IN THE PRESENT CASE, BRITAIN WHICH IS THE SOVEREIGN POWER. THAT REGULAR REPORTING WILL, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, STILL BE REQUIRED OF CHINA THE FUTURE SOVEREIGN POWER EVEN THOUGH CHINA IS NOT HERSELF A SIGNATORY OF THE CONVENTION. I DON'T WISH ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS, STANDING ABOVE ME TO COMMENT ON WHAT CHINA SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT DO BUT IT'S HARDLY SURPRISING IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT THE BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY SHOULD ARGUE THAT THE SIMPLEST WAY OF RESOLVING THIS MATTER WOULD BE FOR CHINA, THOUGH IT'S A MATTER FOR THE EXERCISE OF CHINESE SOVEREIGNTY, HERSELF TO SIGN UP TO THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS. THAT'S PLAINLY THE EASIEST WAY OF RESOLVING THE ISSUE AND IT SEEMS TO ME THAT IT WOULD BE A WAY OF RESOLVING THE ISSUE WHICH WOULD PROVIDE A GREAT DEAL OF CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG AND A GREAT DEAL OF CONFIDENCE IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WHICH LOOKS TOWARDS A SUCCESSFUL HONG KONG AS AN IMPORTANT INGREDIENT IN THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION.

MR PRESIDENT: THE GOVERNOR WILL NOW ADDRESS THE COUNCIL ON THE SUBJECT OF LAW AND ORDER.

GOVERNOR: I'M VERY PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO DISCUSS THIS VITAL TOPIC WITH HONOURABLE MEMBERS THIS AFTERNOON. LAW AND ORDER IS A SUBJECT AFTER ALL ABOUT WHICH THE COMMUNITY IS UNDERSTANDABLY AND RIGHTLY CONCERNED. THE TERM EMBRACES A WIDE RANGE OF RESPONSIBILITIES, THE WORK OF OUR POLICEMEN AND WOMEN ON THE BEAT, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR JUDICIAL SYSTEM, ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION, SMUGGLING, HUMAN RIGHTS, CORRUPTION. A WHOLE SERIES OF DISPARATE SUBJECTS, BUT ONE FOUNDATION UNDERPINS THEM ALL -THE RULE OF LAW. THE RULE OF LAW FORMS THE BEDROCK OF OUR FREEDOMS AND OUR WAY OF LIFE IN THIS TERRITORY. ONE OF THE MOST INSIDIOUS THREATS TO THAT RULE OF LAW IS CORRUPTION. IT IS ON THE INCREASE AND WE MUST FIGHT IT WITH ALL THE MEANS AT OUR DISPOSAL. THE ICAC WILL BE IN THE VANGUARD BUT IT WILL BE UP TO ALL OF US, BUSINESS LEADERS, COMMUNITY LEADERS, MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL TO JOIN TOGETHER IN STATING IN THE PLAINEST TERMS CORRUPTION IN HONG KONG WOULD DESTROY HONG KONG AND WE WILL NOT TOLERATE IT. THE SAME GOES FOR ORGANISED CRIME AND TRIAD ACTIVITIES. THERE IS NOTHING GLAMOUROUS ABOUT TRIADS; THEY EXTORT MONEY FROM SHOPKEEPERS AND HAWKERS, FROM PUBS AND FROM CLUBS, FROM THE DRIVERS OF BUSES AND TAXIS. THEY MASTERMIND PIMPING, THEY PUSH DRUGS TO OUR YOUNG PEOPLE, THEY'RE INVOLVED IN EVERY KIND OF CRIME. WE MUST CONFRONT THIS MENACE. THE ORGANISED AND SERIOUS CRIMES BILL IS NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THIS COUNCIL. IT PROPOSES MUCH TOUGHER INVESTIGATIVE POWERS FOR THE POLICE IN CRACKING DOWN ON CRIMINAL SYNDICATES. IT WILL NOT SOLVE ALL THE PROBLEMS WE FACE OVERNIGHT BUT IT WILL HELP US TO COMBAT THE TRIAD SCOURGE. I HOPE HONOURABLE MEMBERS WILL GIVE IT SPEEDY PASSAGE.

WE MUST OF COURSE KEEP OUR CRIME PROBLEMS IN PERSPECTIVE. HONG KONG IS ONE OF THE FEW COMMUNITIES IN THE WORLD THAT ACTUALLY HAS FALLING CRIME RATES, SOME TWO PER CENT DOWN COMPARED WITH THE SAME TIME LAST YEAR. THIS IS A GREAT TRIBUTE TO OUR POLICE FORCE; I PAY WARM TRIBUTE TO THEM TODAY. THEIR PROFESSIONALISM, COMMITMENT AND DEDICATION TO DUTY, NOT TO MENTION THEIR COURAGE ARE SECOND TO NONE. AND IT'S A STRONGER POLICE FORCE TOO, WITH BETTER EQUIPMENT AND MORE MEN AND WOMEN ON THE BEAT FIGHTING CRIME AROUND THE CLOCK. SINCE LAST OCTOBER WE'VE PUT A FURTHER 350 POLICE OFFICERS ON THE BEAT AND THE NUMBERS ARE RISING EVERY MONTH. THERE ARE LIMITS TO WHAT WE CAN DO TO TACKLE CRIME IN HONG KONG ON OUR OWN. WE HAVE TO WORK CLOSELY TOGETHER WITH THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES IN STAMPING OUT CROSS-BORDER CRIMES SUCH AS SMUGGLING, CAR THEFT AND THE IMPORT OF ILLEGAL WEAPONS. ALREADY WE'RE DOING SO AND I WARMLY WELCOME THE IMPROVED CO-OPERATION THAT WE'VE SEEN OVER THE LAST YEAR. IT'S GOOD FOR HONG KONG AND IT'S GOOD FOR CHINA TOO. FINALLY I'D LIKE TO THANK HONOURABLE MEMBERS FOR ALL YOU DO TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST CRIME AND TO EXHORT THE GOVERNMENT TO FURTHER MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN LAW AND ORDER IN HONG KONG AND I WOULD OF COURSE WANT ALSO TO COMMEND THE WORK UNDERTAKEN IN THE COMMUNITY BY THE FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEES.

MR PRESIDENT: MEMBERS MAY NOW PUT QUESTIONS TO THE GOVERNOR ON LAW AND ORDER. A SHOW OF HANDS PLEASE.

PRESIDENT: MEMBERS MAY NOW PUT QUESTIONS TO THE GOVERNOR ON LAW AND ORDER. A SHOW OF HANDS PLEASE.

MR JAMES TIEN: THANK YOU MR PRESIDENT. GOVERNOR, THIS COUNCIL YESTERDAY PASSED A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE SETTING UP OF A HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION. DO YOU THINK THIS MATTER REQUIRES TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP, AND IF NOT, WILL YOU, AS GOVERNOR, RECONSIDER THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION YESTERDAY AGAINST ESTABLISHING A HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION?

GOVERNOR: PERHAPS I CAN, FIRST OF ALL, WELCOME THE HONOURABLE MEMBER BACK TO A CHAMBER WITH WHICH HE IS FAMILIAR. I DON'T THINK I CAN ADD TO WHAT THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS SAID ABOUT A HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION YESTERDAY. I THINK THE EXCHANGE THAT I HAD WITH THE HONOURABLE MEMBER EARLIER ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR HONG KONG ARE OF MORE RELEVANCE THAN SETTING UP ANOTHER STATUTORY BODY. IT IS NOT AN ISSUED ON WHICH I'VE GOT AN ENTIRELY CLOSED MIND, BUT I THINK IT'S MORE IMPORTANT TO MAKE PROGRESS IN THAT AREA THAN TO LOOK AT NEW INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS. AFTER ALL, PRESUMABLY ONE OF THE FIRST QUESTIONS THAT A HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION WOULD ASK ITSELF IS HOW IT COULD BE SURE THAT THE SORT OF RIGHTS WHICH IT WAS POLICING AND SEEKING TO SECURE COULD BE MAINTAINED AFTER 1997 WITHOUT THE AGREEMENT MENTIONED EARLIER. THE HONOURABLE MEMBER IS ENTIRELY RIGHT IN SAYING WERE WE TO CHANGE OUR MIND, WHICH IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE, AND TO MAKE PROPOSALS IN THIS SECTOR, WE WOULD NEED TO DISCUSS THE MATTER IF IT WAS TO HAVE ANY LONG-TERM, MEANINGFUL SIGNIFICANCE IN THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP, OR INFORMALLY OUTSIDE IT. THERE WOULDN'T BE MUCH POINT IN SETTING UP A HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION WHICH WASN'T GOING TO LAST VERY LONG INTO THE FUTURE.

MR JAMES TO: JUST NOW THE GOVERNOR SAID THAT LEGCO IS THE BEST REFLECTION OF PUBLIC OPINION. ON THE 24TH APRIL, LEGCO URGED THE ADMINISTRATION TO SET UP AN INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE AGAINST THE POLICE, THAT IS, OUTSIDE THE POLICE FORCE, I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW THE PROGRESS ON THIS. I THINK ON THE WHOLE THE POLICE FORCE IS DESERVING OF OUR COMMENDATION, BUT TO HAVE AN INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AND SYSTEM TO MONITOR THE POLICE FORCE AND TO WEED THE POLICE FORCE OF SOME UNRULY ELEMENTS IS REALLY GOING TO INJECT MORE CONFIDENCE OF OUR PEOPLE IN TO THE POLICE FORCE. I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW THE PROGRESS ON THIS.

GOVERNOR: I KNOW THIS IS A SUBJECT WHICH HONOURABLE MEMBERS FEEL QUITE STRONGLY ABOUT. I HAVE TO SAY THAT I THINK THE MOST SENSIBLE WAY TO PROCEED IS, FIRST OF ALL, TO LOOK AT THE SPECIFIC AND SENSIBLE PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE, TO IMPLEMENT THOSE AND TO SEE HOW FAR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THOSE PROPOSED REFORMS MEETS SOME OF THE PUBLIC ANXIETIES WHICH PRESUMABLY CONCERN THE HONOURABLE MEMBER. WE ALL WANT TO ENSURE THAT OUR POLICE HAVE THE MAXIMUM SUPPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY, AND WE ALL RECOGNISE THAT WILL INVOLVE, FROM TIME TO TIME, TAKING TOUGH MEASURES WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL POLICE OFFICER FALLS BELOW THE HIGHEST PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF HIS OR HER COLLEAGUES. WE EQUALLY, I'M SURE, ALL RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE TO A GOOD AND EFFECTIVE POLICE FORCE OF HIGH POLICE MORALE, AND WHAT WE ARE FACED WITH IS A PROBLEM OF BALANCING THOSE TWO FACTORS, BUT FOR THE TIME BEING, THE CONCERN OF THE ADMINISTRATION IS TO ENSURE THAT THE PCC'S RECOMMENDATIONS ARE CARRIED INTO ACTION AND PERHAPS WE CAN REVIEW WHETHER WE NEED TO GO FURTHER IN THE LIGHT OF PROGRESS ON THAT FRONT.

MR WONG WAI-YIN: ... THE GOVERNOR SAID THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WILL HAVE TO LOOK AT THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE BEFORE DECIDING WHERE TO GO FROM THERE. BUT ON THE 24TH APRIL, THERE WAS SOME LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR WHO WISHED TO AMEND THE MOTION SO THAT THE IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS WOULD BECOME PART OF THE MOTION BUT IT WAS TURNED DOWN AND SO I THINK IF LEGCO REFLECTS PUBLIC OPINION, SUCH PUBLIC OPINION AS REFLECTED SHOULD BE RESPECTED OR IS IT THAT IF THE ADMINISTRATION WANTS TO PASS SOMETHING THAT IT WOULD ACCEPT FAVOURABLE PUBLIC OPINION OR IF IT'S SOMETHING THAT THE ADMINISTRATION FEELS IS NOT FAVOURABLE TO THE ADMINISTRATION THEN THE ADMINISTRATION WILL REJECT LEGCO OPINION ON GROUNDS OF RESOURCES AND OTHER SIMILAR FACTORS?

GOVERNOR: NO, LET ME PUT A SIMPLE AND RATHER OBVIOUS POINT TO THE HONOURABLE MEMBER. I GUESS IT'S FAIR TO SAY THAT THE BEST REFLECTION OF PUBLIC OPINION IN THE UNITED STATES IS THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES BUT BOTH OF US ARE AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT EVERY PRESIDENT AND EVERY EXECUTIVE AGREE WITH EVERYTHING THAT CONGRESS SAYS, THAT'S NOT EVEN THE CASE WHERE THE MAJORITY IN THE CONGRESS COMES FROM THE SAME PARTY AS THE PRESIDENT. THE EXECUTIVE HAS TO EXERCISE ITS JUDGEMENT AND HAS TO EXPLAIN IT'S JUDGEMENT TO A LEGISLATURE BUT WE WON'T ALWAYS FIND OURSELVES, I FEAR, IN TOTAL HARMONY AND AMITY. I HOPE OVER THE YEARS THAT WE'LL HAVE MORE HARMONY THAN DISHARMONY BUT WE WON'T ALWAYS FIND OURSELVES TOTALLY IN AGREEMENT.

MR WONG WAI-YIN: THANK YOU. TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER IN HONG KONG WE NEED A GOOD POLICE FORCE. AS MR GOVERNOR YOU SAID A MINUTE AGO, MORALE IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO OUR POLICE FORCE. MY QUESTION FOR THE GOVERNOR IS THIS, IN RELATION TO THE MORALE OF THE POLICE FORCE NOW, IF IT HINGES ON THE NUMBER ONE LICENCE PLATE FOR VEHICLE, IS THIS REALLY DANGEROUS ACTUALLY? IF YOU DO FEEL THAT THIS IS RATHER DANGEROUS, WHAT MEASURES WOULD YOU TAKE TO DO SOMETHING SO THAT THE NUMBER ONE LICENCE PLATE WILL NOT BE THE SOURCE OF MORALE FOR THE POLICE?

GOVERNOR: I APPROACH ANSWERING THIS QUESTION WITH TREPIDATION SINCE I HADN'T REALISED BEFORE I CAME TO HONG KONG HOW MUCH POLITICAL PASSION COULD BE ENGENDERED BY A LICENCE PLATE. I'M ALSO INCLINED TO DEFER TO MY HONOURABLE FRIEND THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY WHO HAS VIEWS ON THESE MATTERS WHICH HE'S ACTED ON. I DON'T THINK THAT ANYBODY IS ARGUING SERIOUSLY THAT THE MORALE OF THE POLICE IS WHOLLY DEPENDENT ON THE NUMBER ON THE COMMISSIONER'S CAR. BUT IF THERE IS A VIEW IN THE POLICE THAT THIS COULD HAVE SOME IMPACT THEN I THINK ALL OF US WHO WANT TO GIVE THE POLICE EVERY SUPPORT HAVE TO TAKE THAT INTO ACCOUNT. I THINK THAT THERE ARE FACTORS WHICH ARE MUCH MORE IMPORTANT IN DETERMINING POLICE MORALE. I THINK THE POLICE HAVE TO FEEL THAT THEY ARE GETTING THE RESOURCES WHICH THEY REQUIRE AND THAT'S WHY WE'RE SPENDING SEVEN BILLION MORE IN RECURRENT EXPENDITURE ON THE POLICE THAN WE WERE LAST YEAR. I THINK THE POLICE HAVE TO FEEL THAT THEY'RE GETTING THE EQUIPMENT WHICH THEY NEED, I THINK THEY HAVE TO FEEL THAT THEY HAVE THE RECRUITMENT WHICH GIVES THEM THE NUMBERS REQUIRED TO DO THE JOB THE COMMUNITY EXPECTS OF THEM. I THINK THEY HAVE A RIGHT NOT TO HAVE THEIR PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT ENDLESSLY QUESTIONED WHEN THEY HAVE TO EXERCISE IT VERY OFTEN IN HARROWING CIRCUMSTANCES WITH SPLIT SECOND TIMING AND HAVE TO SHOW THE SORT OF BRAVERY THAT MOST OF US AREN'T REQUIRED TO DISPLAY IN OUR DAY TO DAY LIVES. SO, THE POLICE I THINK LOOK TO OTHER MATTERS TO BOLSTER THEIR MORALE AND I SUSPECT ABOVE ALL THE RECOGNITION THAT THEIR MISSION AND WHAT THEY ARE DOING IS CENTRAL TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY. WHEN I SPEAK ABOUT THE POLICE IN THOSE TERMS I'D LIKE TO REFER AS WELL TO THE OTHER DISCIPLINED SERVICES. I SPENT AN EVENING RECENTLY WITH SOME OF THE SENIOR OFFICERS IN THE FIRE SERVICE, I DOUBT WHETHER THERE IS A BETTER FIRE SERVICE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD. SO, MORALE I THINK GOES BEYOND NUMBER PLATES. IF NUMBER PLATES HAVE A PART IN MORALE, SO BE IT.

MRS SELINA CHOW: THANK YOU MR PRESIDENT. GOVERNOR, IN THE FACE OF APPARENT RISING CORRUPTION, AS REFLECTED IN THE NUMBER OF REPORTS, PARTICULARLY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, WHAT SPECIFIC MEASURES ARE BEING TAKEN OR WILL BE TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT TO STRENGTHEN PREVENTION, PARTICULARLY IN THE CIVIL SERVICE?

GOVERNOR: THE HONOURABLE MEMBER IS BOTH RIGHT AND NOT QUITE RIGHT. RIGHT TOTALLY IN THE PRIORITY WHICH SHE ACCORDS TO THIS SUBJECT, RIGHT IN SAYING THAT THERE HAS BEEN A PERCEPTIBLE INCREASE IN THE PROBLEM, A 30 PER CENT INCREASE IN REPORTS OF CORRUPTION OVER THE FIRST HALF OF THIS YEAR. NOT WHOLLY RIGHT IN THE DISTINCTION WHICH SHE DRAWS BETWEEN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS BECAUSE IF YOU LOOK AT THE INCREASE IN REPORTING, IT'S BEEN PRETTY MUCH THE SAME FOR BUSINESS AS IT HAS BEEN FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR THOUGH THE ABSOLUTE FIGURES MAY BE A LITTLE DIFFERENT. I THINK THAT FIRST OF ALL WE HAVE TO ENSURE THAT THE ICAC IS PROPERLY RESOURCED. THAT DOESN'T MEAN ANYMORE THAN IT DOES FOR THE POLICE THAT ONE CAN THROW OUT OF THE WINDOW ANY OF THE NORMAL TECHNIQUES AND PRACTICES OF GOOD MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENT FINANCING THAN ONE WOULD APPLY ANYWHERE ELSE BUT IT DOES MEAN THAT THE IMPORTANT FUNCTIONS OF THE ICAC SHOULDN'T BE LIMITED BY LACK OF RESOURCING. SECONDLY IT MEANS THAT WE HAVE TO ENSURE THAT THE PREVENTIVE WORK UNDERTAKEN BY THE ICAC AND THE EDUCATIONAL ROLE THAT IT CARRIES OUT IN THE COMMUNITY ARE BOTH PURSUED DILIGENTLY. THIRDLY, WE HAVE TO TRY TO ENSURE THAT WE'RE ABLE NOT ONLY TO INVESTIGATE BUT TO PROSECUTE AS FREQUENTLY AS POSSIBLE. WE ALSO IN MY VIEW HAVE TO IMPROVE OUR COMMUNICATIONS WITH CHINA. I'M PLEASED THAT THE ICAC HAVE DEVELOPED A GOOD INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PROCURATURE IN CHINA. I THINK THAT'S IMPORTANT BOTH FOR CHINA AND FOR US. FIGHTING CORRUPTION IS A JOINT CHALLENGE TO CHINA AND HONG KONG AND I THINK WE COULD BOTH DO OURSELVES SOME GOOD BY TACKLING IT JOINTLY. FINALLY, AS I INDICATED EARLIER, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY OR FOR LEADERS OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY TO GIVE A LEAD IN UNDERLINING THAT CORRUPTION WHEREVER IT COMES FROM IS UNACCEPTABLE. THE HOME BASE OF A COMPANY, THE CONTACTS WHICH A COMPANY OR INDIVIDUAL MAY HAVE, NONE OF THOSE THINGS SHOULD MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE WHEN IT COMES TO RIGOROUSLY ROUTING OUT CORRUPTION, PREVENTING IT SEEPING IN TO HONG KONG AND DOING THE SORT OF DAMAGE WHICH WE ALL WANT TO AVOID IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.

MRS PEGGY LAM: THANK YOU MR PRESIDENT. I'D LIKE TO ASK MR GOVERNOR THIS QUESTION, AND IT HAS TO DO WITH LAW AND ORDER. RECENTLY, IT SEEMS THAT VIOLENT CRIMES IN HONG KONG HAVE BEEN ON THE INCREASE. I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHETHER THE GOVERNOR IS GOING TO STUDY WHY ARE THEY ON THE INCREASE. FOR INSTANCE, RECENTLY THERE HAVE BEEN TWO MURDERS AND THEY WERE NOT ONLY SIMPLY MURDERS, BUT THE BODIES WERE BEING VERY BRUTALLY HANDLED, AND SO I THINK WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT IS GOING TO THINK OF WAYS TO STOP SUCH BRUTAL CRIMES, AND WHAT DETERRENT MEASURES WILL BE THOUGHT OF BY THE GOVERNMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, WHETHER CAPITAL PUNISHMENT WOULD BE CONSIDERED?

GOVERNOR: CAN I FIRST OF ALL, REFERRING BACK TO AN ANSWER I GAVE EARLIER, SAY THAT I MAY HAVE, SO I'M ADVISED BY ONE OF MY COLLEAGUES, ALONG THE WIRES, I MAY HAVE SAID THAT EXPENDITURE ON THE POLICE THIS YEAR WAS SEVEN BILLION DOLLARS MORE THAN LAST YEAR. IF I DID, I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID THAT. RECURRENT EXPENDITURE ON THE POLICE THIS YEAR, LEAVING OUT CAPITAL, IS SEVEN BILLION DOLLARS WHICH HAS, AMONG OTHER THINGS, SECURED AN INCREASE OF ABOUT 350 IN THE NUMBER OF POLICE OFFICERS ON THE BEAT. IF I SUGGESTED OTHER THAN THAT EARLIER, THEN I AM HAPPY TO BE CORRECTED BY NAMELESS BUT BLESSED SUPPORTERS. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, I GOT IT RIGHT EARLIER AND THEY ARE WRONG, I'LL HAVE A WORD WITH THEM AFTERWARDS.

VIOLENT CRIME, ANY LEVEL OF VIOLENT CRIME IS TOO HIGH. TRUTH TO TELL, THE FIGURES FOR VIOLENT CRIME IN HONG KONG, UNUSUALLY, IF YOU LOOK AROUND THE WORLD, ARE ACTUALLY FALLING. THE OVERALL LEVEL OF CRIME IN THE LAST QUARTER FELL BY 2% OVER A SIMILAR PERIOD LAST YEAR. THE FIGURE FOR VIOLENT CRIME FELL BY 6%. NOW, THAT IS NOT A MATTER WHICH ANYBODY CAN BE COMPLACENT ABOUT. FOR ANYBODY WHO SUFFERS FROM VIOLENT CRIME, THERE'S A 100% INCREASE, AND PARADING STATISTICS FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY DOESN'T HAVE VERY MUCH EFFECT. SECONDLY, I RECOGNISE THAT INDIVIDUAL CALLOUS BRUTAL CRIMES, MURDERS, RAPES, GREATLY DISTURB THE COMMUNITY AND I SUSPECT THAT THE PICTURES OF SOME OF THOSE CRIMES WHICH APPEARS IN THE MEDIA FROM TIME TO TIME, ALSO RATHER DISTURB THE COMMUNITY. THEY CERTAINLY DISTURB ME. I THINK THAT THE BEST DETERRENT TO VIOLENT CRIME IS TO CATCH THOSE WHO COMMIT IT, WHICH IS WHY I'M GOING TO CONTINUE TO GIVE SUPPORT FOR THE POLICE SUCH A HIGH PRIORITY. I ALSO THINK THAT WE HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT THE SENTENCES PASSED ON THOSE WHO COMMIT THESE CRIMES ARE ADEQUATE TO THE OFFENCE; AND I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SHOULD HAVE THE POWER, AS HE DOES, TO APPEAL AGAINST SENTENCES WHEN THEY SEEM INAPPROPRIATE. INAPPROPRIATE IN EITHER DIRECTION, OF COURSE, BUT CERTAINLY INAPPROPRIATE IF TOO LENIENT AND IF RAISING SERIOUS ISSUES OF PRINCIPLE AND CONCERN TO THE OVERALL COMMUNITY. I REALISE THAT PROBABLY IN HONG KONG, AS WAS THE CASE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, MY OWN PERSONAL MORAL OBJECTIONS TO CAPITAL PUNISHMENT ARE NOT SHARED BY THE MAJORITY. I THINK THE MAJORITY OF THIS CHAMBER PROBABLY SHARES MY VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT, BUT I'M NOT SURE THAT THAT IS NECESSARILY TRUE OF THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE. BUT THERE ISN'T, IN MY JUDGMENT, WHATEVER ONES VIEWS ABOUT THE MORAL ARGUMENT FOR CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, THERE ISN'T MUCH EVIDENCE, WHEN YOU LOOK AROUND THE WORLD OF ANY CORRELATION BETWEEN THE AVAILABILITY OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AND THE LEVEL OF VIOLENT CRIME. WERE IT OTHERWISE, THEN THE UNITED STATES, I GUESS, COULD LOOK AT LEVELS OF VIOLENT CRIME SUBSTANTIALLY BELOW THOSE THAT EXIST IN HONG KONG, WHERE OUR OVERALL LEVEL OF CRIME IS NOW PROBABLY LESS THAN IN TOKYO, SINGAPORE, OR ALMOST ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD. SO I DON'T THINK THAT THERE IS A SORT OF MECHANICAL ARITHMETICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AVAILABILITY OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AND A DECLINE IN VIOLENT CRIME. THERE ARE CRIMES, I REPEAT, WHICH GREATLY AFFECT THE COMMUNITY. I THINK THAT SOME OF THE RAPES WHICH HAVE AFFECTED ONE PART OF OUR COMMUNITY RECENTLY MUST HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY DISTURBING. WE MUST ALL HOPE THAT THE POLICE ARE ABLE TO DEAL WITH THOSE ATTACKS AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE. RAPE IS, OF COURSE, AN ESPECIALLY DISGUSTING AND DEGRADING CRIME, AND SHOULD HAVE NO PART IN ANY SORT OF CIVILISED SOCIETY.

MR MARTIN BARROW: SIR, HAVING BEEN IN EUROPE OVER THE PAST WEEK, IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE REMAIN INTERNATIONAL MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT OUR STATE OF LAW AND ORDER. AS YOU'VE JUST SAID, WE MUST NOT BE COMPLACENT, BUT COULD YOU TELL US WHAT STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO PUT OVER THE MESSAGE INTERNATIONALLY THAT HONG KONG IS A SAFE CITY WITH LOWER TOTAL AND VIOLENT CRIME RATES THAN IN MANY OTHER SIMILAR CITIES?

GOVERNOR: THE HONOURABLE MEMBER IS ENTIRELY RIGHT BOTH ABOUT THE NEED TO PUT THE CASE ACROSS AND ABOUT ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SOME OF OUR PROPER ATTEMPTS AT SELF-PROMOTION, NOT LEAST AN AREA WHICH THE HONOURABLE MEMBER KNOWS MORE ABOUT THAN ANY OF US, NOT LEAST IN RELATION TO TOURISM. WHEN ONE READS AT THIS TIME OF YEAR, SOME OF THE STORIES OF ATTACKS, MURDERS OF TOURISTS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD, NOT LEAST, OF COURSE, IN THE UNITED STATES, IT DOES MAKE ONE REALISE HOW MUCH WE HAVE TO OFFER TOURISTS. ALL OF US, I GUESS, WHO HAVE HAD THE EXPERIENCE OF BRINGING UP TEENAGE CHILDREN IN HONG KONG AND OUTSIDE HONG KONG WILL KNOW HOW MUCH SAFER WE FEEL THEY ARE IN HONG KONG THAN MOST OTHER PLACES THAT WE'VE EVER LIVED. SO IT'S AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO GET ACROSS. I THINK WE SHOULD LOOK AT WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN SPREAD THAT MESSAGE THROUGH OUR INFORMATION EFFORT ABROAD, AND PERHAPS SHOULD WORK MORE CLOSELY WITH THE TOURIST AUTHORITY IN GETTING ACROSS THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT HONG KONG WHICH, I REPEAT, IS ONE OF THE VERY FEW PLACES ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD, WHICH CAN ACTUALLY POINT, WITHOUT ANY COMPLACENCY AT ALL, TO A FALLING LEVEL OF CRIME.

PRESIDENT: IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDERS, I NOW ADJOURN THE SITTING UNTIL WEDNESDAY 21ST JULY 1993.

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NEW SCHEME OF CONTROL AGREEMENT FOR HEC
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THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT AND THE HONGKONG ELECTRIC COMPANY LIMITED (HEC) AND ITS PARENT COMPANY HONGKONG ELECTRIC HOLDINGS LIMITED TODAY (THURSDAY) SIGNED A NEW SCHEME OF CONTROL AGREEMENT (SCA) WHICH SETS OUT THE OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOTH SIDES.

TAKING PART IN THE SIGNING CEREMONY WERE THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MR GORDON SIU AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HONGKONG ELECTRIC COMPANY LIMITED, MR SIMON MURRAY.

MR SIU SAID THE NEW AGREEMENT, WHICH WILL START IN JANUARY 1994 AND EXTEND UNTIL THE END OF DECEMBER 2008, DEMONSTRATED THE CONTINUING COMMITMENT OF THE COMPANIES TO A PROSPEROUS FUTURE FOR HONG KONG.

IT ALSO PROVIDED A SOUND BASIS FOR FUTURE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COMPANIES, HE ADDED.

DISCUSSIONS ON RENEWAL OF THE CURRENT SCHEME OF CONTROL AGREEMENT, WHICH LAPSES AT THE END OF DECEMBER 1993, BEGAN LAST YEAR.

"THE CURRENT SCHEME OF CONTROL AGREEMENT HAS WORKED WELL," MR SIU SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT UNDER THE CURRENT SCA, HEC'S CONSUMERS ENJOY ONE OF THE MOST RELIABLE ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES IN THE REGION, WHILE TARIFFS HAVE REDUCED BY AROUND 40 PER CENT IN REAL TERMS OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS.

"THE COMPANIES HAVE INVESTED OVER \$22 BILLION IN ASSETS DURING THE COURSE OF THE CURRENT SCA," MR SIU ADDED.

HE ALSO NOTED THAT HEC HAD SET UP CUSTOMER LIAISON GROUPS TO HELP MAKE THE COMPANY MORE ACCOUNTABLE TO CONSUMERS AND HAD TAKEN STEPS TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF POWER GENERATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT, FOR EXAMPLE BY INSTALLING EQUIPMENT TO REDUCE TO A MINIMUM EMISSION OF SULPHUR DIOXIDE FROM ITS NEW GENERATING UNITS.

"THE KEY PROVISIONS OF THE NEW AGREEMENT REMAIN BASICALLY UNCHANGED. OUR AIM IS TO MAINTAIN AN EQUITABLE BALANCE BETWEEN THE INTERESTS OF SHAREHOLDERS AND CONSUMERS," MR SIU SAID.

UNDER ITS TERMS THE COMPANIES UNDERTAKE TO PROVIDE A SERVICE THAT IS NOT ONLY ADEQUATE TO MEET DEMAND BUT IS ALSO EFFICIENT, OF HIGH QUALITY, AT THE LOWEST REASONABLE COST AND TAKES ACCOUNT OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION POLICIES.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE AGREEMENT PROVIDES FOR SHAREHOLDERS OF THE COMPANIES TO RECEIVE A REASONABLE RETURN ON THEIR INVESTMENT, SO AS TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO CONTINUE TO MAKE NECESSARY INVESTMENTS.

"IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURES AGREED IN THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT LIAISON GROUP A COPY OF THE NEW DRAFT AGREEMENT WAS PASSED TO THE CHINESE SIDE," MR SIU SAID.

"THE CHINESE SIDE HAS CONFIRMED THAT THEY HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THE TERMS OF THE NEW AGREEMENT OR TO ITS SIGNATURE," HE SAID.

"THUS THE FUTURE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO ACCEPT THE RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE NEW AGREEMENT AFTER JUNE 30, 1997."

AS PART OF THEIR OBLIGATIONS THE COMPANIES WILL CONTINUE TO SUBMIT, FOR GOVERNMENT SCRUTINY AND APPROVAL, THEIR FORECASTS OF DEMAND, DETAILS OF THE INVESTMENTS WHICH THEY CONSIDER NECESSARY TO MEET THAT DEMAND AND THE TARIFFS WHICH THEY BELIEVE NEED TO BE CHARGED OVER THE FORECAST PERIOD.

IMPORTANT NEW PROVISIONS, INCLUDING THOSE RELATING TO THE INTRODUCTION OF TECHNICAL AUDIT AND A PROGRAMME TO REDUCE THE GROWTH IN PEAK DEMANDS, HAVE ALSO BEEN INCORPORATED IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN GOVERNMENT'S MONITORING PROCEDURES AND TO REQUIRE THE COMPANIES TO PROMOTE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC CAN NOW OBTAIN A COPY OF THE NEW SCA FOR HEC FROM THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE AT CONNAUGHT PLACE, CENTRAL.

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REFUSE TRANSFER STATION FOR NT

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT TODAY (THURSDAY) SIGNED A CONTRACT FOR THE SHA TIN TRANSFER STATION, THE FIRST REFUSE TRANSFER STATION TO BE BUILT IN THE NEW TERRITORIES UNDER THE LONG-TERM WASTE DISPOSAL STRATEGY.

ITS CAPITAL COST IS ABOUT \$190 MILLION AND THE ANNUAL OPERATION COST IS ROUGHLY \$20 MILLION.

/THE CONTRACT

THE CONTRACT WAS AWARDED TO SWIRE BFI WASTE SERVICES LTD, A 50/50 PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN SWIRE PACIFIC LTD AND BROWNING FERRIS INDUSTRIES INC.

SWIRE PACIFIC LTD IS A WELL-ESTABLISHED CORPORATION IN HONG KONG WHILE BROWNING FERRIS INDUSTRIES INC IS A MAJOR INTERNATIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT COMPANY BASED IN THE USA.

SIMILAR TO OTHER WASTE MANAGEMENT PROJECTS, THE STATION WILL BE DEVELOPED UNDER A DESIGN, BUILD AND OPERATE CONTRACT ARRANGEMENT. THE CONTRACTOR WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OPERATING THE STATION FOR 15 YEARS.

IT WILL BE BUILT TO VERY HIGH ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS AND BE CAPABLE OF PROCESSING 1,200 TONNES OF REFUSE DAILY.

A WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT AND ODOUR REMOVAL EQUIPMENT WILL BE INSTALLED INSIDE THE FACILITY TO ENSURE THAT NO NUISANCE IS CAUSED TO NEIGHBOURING RESIDENTS.

THE DEPARTMENT'S ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, MR MIKE STOKOE, SAID: "THE CONCEPT OF TRANSFERRING WASTE TO LANDFILL IN SEALED CONTAINERS HAS BEEN PROVEN TO BE ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND AND COST EFFECTIVE."

"THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS HAS BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL AND THE PROVISION OF THE SHA TIN TRANSFER STATION WILL ENHANCE THE EFFICIENCY OF REGIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT'S WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE."

"THE PROJECT IS PART OF THE DEPARTMENT'S CONTINUING EFFORT TOWARDS IMPLEMENTING THE WASTE DISPOSAL STRATEGY SET OUT IN THE 1989 WHITE PAPER," HE SAID.

THE WEST NEW TERRITORIES LANDFILL CONTRACT WAS SIGNED LAST MONTH AND, AS A FURTHER PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE WASTE DISPOSAL STRATEGY, TWO MORE LANDFILL CONTRACTS WOULD BE AWARDED THIS YEAR WHILE TWO REFUSE TRANSFER STATION CONTRACTS WOULD BE AWARDED NEXT YEAR, MR STOKOE SAID.

THE SHA TIN TRANSFER STATION IS THE THIRD STATION AMONG A NETWORK OF REFUSE TRANSFER STATIONS SERVICING THREE STRATEGIC LANDFILLS.

TWO TRANSFER STATIONS AT KOWLOON BAY AND ISLAND EAST HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY COMMISSIONED IN 1990 AND LAST YEAR RESPECTIVELY.

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TAXPAYERS URGED TO BE HONEST

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THE COMMISSIONER OF INLAND REVENUE, MR ANTHONY AU-YEUNG, URGED TAXPAYERS, PARTICULARLY PROFESSIONALS, TO MAKE AN HONEST EFFORT TO COMPLY WITH THE LAW AND PAY THE CORRECT TAX.

"IF WE ARE TO MAINTAIN THE EQUITY AND INTEGRITY OF OUR TAXATION SYSTEM IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT ALL TAXPAYERS PAY THEIR CORRECT TAX," HE SAID.

/HE POINTED

HE POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG'S REPORTING REQUIREMENTS WERE NOT ONEROUS AND THE TAX RATES WERE AMONG THE LOWEST IN THE WORLD.

ADDRESSING THE ESTATE DOCTORS ASSOCIATION'S SEMINAR TODAY (THURSDAY), MR AU-YEUNG OUTLINED THE FIELD AUDIT PROGRAMME INTRODUCED IN JUNE 1991 AIMING TO GET FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE OF THE ACTUAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF BUSINESSES.

FIFTY-FOUR AUDITORS ARE NOW DEPLOYED TO VISIT THE BUSINESSES TO CHECK THE BOOKS AND RECORDS.

LAST YEAR THE FIELD AUDITORS EXAMINED THE RETURNS OF QUITE A DIVERSE GROUP OF BUSINESSES.

MR AU-YEUNG NOTED THAT SOME RETURNS FROM MEMBERS OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION HAD ATTRACTED THE AUDITORS' ATTENTION.

HE SAID IN ASSESSING THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF PENALTIES TO BE APPLIED, A NUMBER OF FACTORS WOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT:

* CO-OPERATION OF THE TAXPAYER

IN RECOGNITION OF THE CO-OPERATION OF THE TAXPAYER IN HELPING TO QUANTIFY HIS CORRECT ASSESSABLE PROFITS, A LOWER LEVEL OF PENALTY WILL BE CONSIDERED.

* TIME INVOLVED

PENALTY LEVELS WILL BE INCREASED TO REFLECT THE TIME TAKEN TO COMPLETE THE AUDIT.

* DEGREE OF CULPABILITY

PENALTIES WILL BE INCREASED WHEN THE LEVEL OF CULPABILITY IS GREATER.

* COMMERCIAL RESTITUTION

THE PENALTY LEVEL WILL REFLECT AN ELEMENT OF COMMERCIAL RESTITUTION TO COMPENSATE THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE LOSS OF THE USE OF THOSE UNDERCHARGED TAX.

"UNTIL NOW, THE PENALTIES IMPOSED IN AUDIT CASES MAY, OVERALL, HAVE BEEN LESS THAN THOSE IMPOSED WHEN A FULL INVESTIGATION IS CARRIED OUT.

"THERE IS NO REASON WHY FIELD AUDIT PENALTIES MUST REMAIN AT THESE LOWER LEVELS, AND IF I FIND THAT THEY ARE NOT HAVING THE REQUIRED DETERRENT EFFECT, THEY CAN BE INCREASED," HE SAID.

ANY PERSON WHO WILFULLY MAKES AN INCORRECT RETURN WITH THE INTENTION OF EVADING TAX PLACES HIMSELF AT THE RISK OF PROSECUTION IN THE COURTS.

UPON CONVICTION, IN ADDITION TO A HEAVY FINE OF UP TO THREE TIMES THE TAX UNDERCHARGED, THERE IS THE RISK OF A CUSTODIAL SENTENCE OF UP TO THREE YEARS.

EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL FIGURES FOR MARCH

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THERE WAS CONTINUED GROWTH IN EMPLOYMENT IN THE WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS SECTOR AND THE FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR IN MARCH OVER A YEAR EARLIER.

MEANWHILE EMPLOYMENT IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR AND ON CONSTRUCTION SITES DECLINED FURTHER.

THE FALL IN MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT MAINLY REFLECTED THE CONTINUING STRUCTURAL CHANGE IN THE ECONOMY, IN CONNECTION WITH THE RELOCATION OF INDUSTRIAL PROCESSES TO CHINA.

VACANCIES IN MOST OF THE SERVICES SECTORS RECORDED INCREASES OF VARIOUS MAGNITUDES IN MARCH 1993 OVER A YEAR EARLIER. ON THE OTHER HAND, VACANCIES IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR AND ON CONSTRUCTION SITES FELL FURTHER.

IN THE MONTH, EARNINGS OF PERSONS ENGAGED CONTINUED TO SHOW FURTHER INCREASES IN MONEY TERMS OVER A YEAR EARLIER IN ALL MAJOR SECTORS. AFTER ADJUSTING FOR INFLATION, THERE WAS STILL AN INCREASE IN REAL TERMS OF EARNINGS OF PERSONS ENGAGED FOR MOST SECTORS.

THESE ARE FINDINGS OF SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

THERE WERE 531,900 PERSONS ENGAGED IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR IN MARCH 1993, REPRESENTING A DECREASE OF 12.1% FROM MARCH 1992.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS SECTOR, AT 911,300 IN MARCH 1993, WAS 5.6% HIGHER THAN IN MARCH 1992.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR, AT 313,900, WAS UP BY 3.4%.

EMPLOYMENT ON CONSTRUCTION SITES, AT 60,000, WAS 3.3% LOWER THAN IN MARCH 1992.

THE EMPLOYMENT FIGURES FOR MARCH 1993 IN SELECTED MAJOR ECONOMIC SECTORS, WITH COMPARISON WITH THE CORRESPONDING FIGURES FOR MARCH 1992 AND DECEMBER 1992, ARE:

/PERSONS ENGAGED

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SELECTED MAJOR SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY	PERSONS ENGAGED (EMPLOYMENT)			PERCENTAGE CHANGE	
	MAR 92	DEC 92	MAR 93	MAR 93 OVER MAR 92	MAR 93 OVER DEC 92
MANUFACTURING	605,200	565,100	531,900	-12.1	-5.9
CONSTRUCTION (MANUAL WORKERS ON CONSTRUCTION SITES ONLY)	62,100	59,500	60,000	- 3.3	+0.9
WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS	863,200	914,800	911,300	+ 5.6	-0.4
FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES	303,400	314,500	313,900	+3.4	-0.2

THE STATISTICS FOR SELECTED MAJOR SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY IN MARCH 1993 WERE DERIVED FROM THE QUARTERLY SURVEY OF EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL AND THE QUARTERLY EMPLOYMENT SURVEY OF CONSTRUCTION SITES CONDUCTED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

THE SURVEY ON THE RETAIL TRADE EXCLUDED HAWKERS AND PERSONS WORKING AT RETAIL PITCHES BUT INCLUDED THOSE WORKING IN MARKET STALLS.

THE TWO SURVEYS ALSO PROVIDE THE VACANCY STATISTICS FOR SELECTED MAJOR SECTORS. THE VACANCY DATA TOGETHER WITH COMPARISON WITH THE CORRESPONDING FIGURES FOR MARCH 1992 AND DECEMBER 1992 ARE:

/NUMBER OF

SELECTED MAJOR SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY	NUMBER OF REPORTED VACANCIES			PERCENTAGE CHANGE	
	MAR 92	DEC 92	MAR 93	MAR 93 OVER MAR 92	MAR 93 OVER DEC 92
MANUFACTURING	25,060	17,690	18,490	-26.2	+ 4.5
CONSTRUCTION (MANUAL WORKERS ON CONSTRUCTION SITES ONLY)	770	480	420	-45.8	-13.5
WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS	35,340	33,550	35,720	+ 1.1	+ 6.4
FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES	10,240	8,830	11,010	+ 7.5	+24.7

VACANCIES IN MOST MAJOR SERVICES SECTORS CONTINUED TO INCREASE IN MARCH 1993 OVER A YEAR EARLIER. IN THE WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS SECTOR AND THE FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR, THE NUMBER OF VACANCIES INCREASED BY 1.1% AND 7.5% RESPECTIVELY.

HOWEVER, VACANCIES IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR AND ON CONSTRUCTION SITES FELL BY 26.2% AND 45.8% RESPECTIVELY.

THE MARCH 1993 NOMINAL INDICES OF PAYROLL PER PERSON ENGAGED IN SELECTED MAJOR SECTORS AND THE CORRESPONDING REAL INDICES (AFTER ALLOWING FOR THE EFFECTS OF PRICE CHANGES) ARE:

/NOMINAL INDEX

SELECTED MAJOR SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY	NOMINAL INDEX OF PAYROLL PER PERSON ENGAGED (MARCH 1991 = 100)		PERCENTAGE CHANGE
	MAR 92	MAR 93	MAR 93 OVER MAR 92
MANUFACTURING	111.0	128.4	+15.7
WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS	115.7	122.9	+ 6.2
FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES	108.5	124.8	+15.0

SELECTED MAJOR SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY	REAL INDEX OF PAYROLL PER PERSON ENGAGED (MARCH 1991 =100)		PERCENTAGE CHANGE
	MAR 92	MAR 93	MAR 93 OVER MAR 92
MANUFACTURING	101.4	108.8	+ 7.3
WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS	105.7	104.2	- 1.4
FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES	99.1	105.8	+ 6.8

BETWEEN MARCH 1992 AND MARCH 1993, AVERAGE EARNINGS IN ALL MAJOR SECTORS, AS MEASURED BY PAYROLL PER PERSON ENGAGED, RECORDED FURTHER INCREASES IN MONEY TERMS.

AN INCREASE OF 15.7% WAS REGISTERED IN THE NOMINAL INDEX FOR THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR.

FOR THE WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS SECTOR, THE INCREASE WAS 6.2%.

FOR THE FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR, THE INCREASE WAS 15.0%.

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AFTER DISCOUNTING FOR INCREASES IN CONSUMER PRICES BETWEEN MARCH 1992 AND MARCH 1993, THE REAL INDEX OF PAYROLL PER PERSON ENGAGED IN MARCH 1993, AS COMPARED WITH THAT IN MARCH 1992, INCREASED BY 7.3% FOR THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR AND 6.8% FOR THE FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR.

HOWEVER, THE REAL INDEX DECREASED BY 1.4 % FOR THE WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS SECTOR, PROBABLY AFFECTED BY THE HIGH BASE OF COMPARISON IN MARCH LAST YEAR.

DETAILED BREAKDOWNS OF THE STATISTICS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE QUARTERLY REPORT OF EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL STATISTICS, MARCH 1993 AND THE QUARTERLY REPORT OF EMPLOYMENT AND VACANCIES AT CONSTRUCTION SITES, MARCH 1993.

THEY ARE NOW AVAILABLE AT \$7 A COPY AND \$10.5 A COPY RESPECTIVELY AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE, GENERAL POST OFFICE BUILDING, GROUND FLOOR, CONNAUGHT PLACE, HONG KONG AND AT THE PUBLICATIONS SECTION OF THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT AT THE 19TH FLOOR, WANCHAI TOWER, 12 HARBOUR ROAD, WAN CHAI, HONG KONG.

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POST REMITTANCE SERVICE TO GO
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THE POST OFFICE HAS DECIDED TO CEASE ITS REMITTANCE SERVICE FROM JANUARY 1 NEXT YEAR BECAUSE OF THE CONTINUED DECLINE IN DEMAND.

MAKING THE ANNOUNCEMENT TODAY (THURSDAY), THE POSTMASTER GENERAL, MR M PAGLIARI, SAID FROM THAT DATE, THE POST OFFICE WOULD NOT ISSUE INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDERS, POST ORDERS OR LOCAL MONEY ORDERS.

"CASH-ON-DELIVERY PARCELS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AND POSTCHEQUES ISSUED BY FOREIGN POST OFFICES WILL NOT BE ENCASHED," HE SAID.

HOWEVER, LOCAL MONEY ORDERS, POSTAL AND MONEY ORDERS ISSUED OVERSEAS ON OR BEFORE THE END OF DECEMBER THIS YEAR FOR PAYMENT IN HONG KONG WILL STILL BE ENCASHED PROVIDED THAT THEY ARE PRESENTED AT POST OFFICES BEFORE THE DATE OF VALIDITY EXPIRES.

MR PAGLIARI ADVISED CUSTOMERS WISHING TO REMIT MONEY LOCALLY OR TO OVERSEAS COUNTRIES AFTER THE REMITTANCE SERVICE CEASES TO USE ALTERNATIVE BANKING FACILITIES COMMONLY AVAILABLE IN THE TERRITORY.

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TEMPORARY VENUE FOR CAR MARKS AUCTION

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PEOPLE WISHING TO GET THEIR FAVOURITE VEHICLE REGISTRATION MARKS SHOULD TAKE NOTE OF THE NEW VENUE FOR THE AUCTIONS FROM NOW UNTIL OCTOBER THIS YEAR.

THE NEW VENUE IS THE LECTURE HALL, SHEUNG WAN CIVIC CENTRE, FIFTH FLOOR, URBAN COUNCIL SHEUNG WAN COMPLEX, 345 QUEEN'S ROAD CENTRAL, HONG KONG. ITS OFFICE CAN BE CONTACTED ON TEL 853 2678.

THE TEMPORARY CHANGE IS NECESSARY BECAUSE THE CITY HALL RECITAL HALL IS DUE FOR RENOVATION FROM JULY TO OCTOBER.

A TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (THURSDAY) THAT THE SHEUNG WAN CIVIC CENTRE WAS CONVENIENTLY LOCATED AND WAS WELL-SERVED BY THE MTR, TRAMS, CHINA MOTOR BUS ROUTES 3A, 4, 5, 7, 10, 37, 71 AND 79M, AND TUNNEL BUS ROUTES 101, 104 AND 105.

"MEMBERS OF PUBLIC WILL MISS A CHANCE TO GET THEIR FAVOURITE MARKS IF THEY GO TO THE WRONG VENUE," HE SAID.

THE AUCTION THIS SATURDAY (JULY 17) WILL START AT 9.30 AM. A TOTAL OF 50 MARKS WILL BE PUT UP FOR AUCTION:

FF2280	FF168	FF911	FF687	AA8602
FF339	FF2333	FF827	FB168	FF7168
*FJ1818	*FM4	*FM900	*FN88	*FL717
AT118	FF1681	FF8113	FF730	FF5222
FF812	AA230	FF228	AA1480	CR3240
DT269	FF180	AC3822	FF277	FF7770
FF866	FF8088	FF328	FF3620	FF1314
*CC2000	*FK5	*613	*FM99	*AA4444
FF128	AT228	FF782	CW1280	FF9295
FF2281	FF322	AH702	FF9338	FF4443

* SPECIAL VEHICLE REGISTRATION MARK (NOT TRANSFERABLE)

SUCCESSFUL BIDDERS MUST PAY BY CHEQUE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE BIDDING.

THE SPOKESMAN REMINDED BIDDERS THAT THE VEHICLE REGISTRATION MARK WOULD BE ASSIGNED ONLY TO A VEHICLE REGISTERED IN THE NAME OF THE SUCCESSFUL BIDDER WITHIN 12 MONTHS OF THE AUCTION.

THE CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION MUST BE PRODUCED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE AUCTION IF THE VEHICLE REGISTRATION MARK IS TO BE REGISTERED UNDER THE NAME OF BODY CORPORATE.

PROCEEDS OF THE AUCTION, AFTER DEDUCTION OF EXPENSES, WILL GO TO THE GOVERNMENT LOTTERIES FUND.

THE COMING AUCTION WILL BE THE 198TH ORGANISED BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SINCE MAY 1973.

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STAMP SHEETLET TO MARK HK '94 EXHIBITION

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THE POSTMASTER GENERAL, MR M PAGLIARI, ANNOUNCED TODAY (THURSDAY) THAT A \$10 DEFINITIVE STAMP SHEETLET (NO.6) WILL BE PUT ON SALE AT ALL POST OFFICES EXCEPT THE AIRPORT POST OFFICE ON AUGUST 12.

THE ISSUE IS TO PUBLICISE THE FIRST-EVER REGIONAL STAMP EXHIBITION - "HONG KONG '94" SCHEDULED FROM FEBRUARY 18 TO 21 NEXT YEAR AT THE HONG KONG CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTRE.

ON THE FIRST DAY OF ISSUE, EACH CUSTOMER IS ENTITLED TO ONLY 10 SHEETLETS.

OFFICIAL SOUVENIR COVERS TO MATCH THE DEFINITIVE SHEETLET, AT \$1 EACH, WILL BE PUT ON SALE AT ALL POST OFFICES EXCEPT THE AIRPORT POST OFFICE FROM AUGUST 5.

A SPECIAL DATESTAMP WILL ALSO BE INTRODUCED.

A HAND-BACK SERVICE WILL BE PROVIDED ON AUGUST 12 TO OFFICIAL AND PRIVATELY-MADE COVERS COMPLEMENTING THE STAMP SHEETLET.

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AID TO TRAFFIC ACCIDENT VICTIM'S FAMILY

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THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT TODAY (THURSDAY) APPROVED \$48,430 FROM THE TRAFFIC ACCIDENT VICTIMS ASSISTANCE (TAVA) FUND TO THE DEPENDANTS OF A FOREMAN WHO DIED IN A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT IN TAI PO LAST MONTH.

THE VICTIM, AGED 41, WAS SURVIVED BY HIS WIFE AND TWO SONS.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID THE TAVA SCHEME PROVIDED QUICK FINANCIAL HELP TO TRAFFIC ACCIDENT VICTIMS OR THEIR DEPENDANTS REGARDLESS OF THE FAMILY'S MEANS OR THE FAULT ELEMENT IN THE ACCIDENT.

BENEFICIARIES WILL RETAIN THE RIGHT TO MAKE CLAIMS FOR LEGAL DAMAGES OR COMPENSATION FROM OTHER SOURCES IN THE USUAL WAY.

HOWEVER, THOSE WHO RECEIVE OTHER DAMAGES OR COMPENSATION RELATING TO THE SAME ACCIDENT ARE REQUIRED TO REPAY THE AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE ALREADY RECEIVED FROM THE SCHEME.

"BUT IN ANY CASE, THE AMOUNT REPAID WILL NOT EXCEED THE AMOUNT OF DAMAGES OR COMPENSATION AWARDED," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

ENQUIRIES ABOUT THE SCHEME MAY BE MADE OF THE DEPARTMENT'S TAVA SECTION IN ROOM 942, NINTH FLOOR, WU CHUNG HOUSE, 213 QUEEN'S ROAD EAST, WAN CHAI OR ON TEL 892 5526.

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THURSDAY, JULY 15, 1993

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EXHIBITION TO PROMOTE JOBS FOR DISABLED

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THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT WILL MOUNT A THREE-DAY EXHIBITION FROM TOMORROW (FRIDAY) IN CITYPLAZA TO PROMOTE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE WORKING ABILITIES OF THE DISABLED.

"THE EXHIBITION IS PART OF THE DEPARTMENT'S CONTINUOUS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DISABLED," SENIOR LABOUR OFFICER (SELECTIVE PLACEMENT), MRS JENNIE CHOR, SAID TODAY (THURSDAY).

DURING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, THE SELECTIVE PLACEMENT DIVISION RECORDED 1,266 REGISTRATIONS FOR JOBS, RECEIVED 2,265 VACANCIES, MADE 1,569 REFERRALS AND ACHIEVED 636 PLACEMENTS.

"THIS SHOWS THAT THE DIVISION HAS KEPT UP A GOOD PERFORMANCE IN TRYING TO SECURE JOBS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE.

"RESPONSE TO THE EXHIBITION HELD IN KWAI FONG IN MAY HAS BEEN VERY ENCOURAGING AS IT ATTRACTED SOME 6,800 VISITORS," MRS CHOR SAID.

"THROUGH ENHANCED PUBLICITY, WE HOPE THE GENERAL PUBLIC WILL KNOW MORE ABOUT THE ABILITIES OF DISABLED WORKERS AND THAT EMPLOYERS WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO HIRE MORE DISABLED WORKERS," SHE SAID.

THE COMING EXHIBITION WILL INTRODUCE THE DEPARTMENT'S FREE PLACEMENT SERVICE TO THE DISABLED AND FREE RECRUITMENT SERVICE TO EMPLOYERS, ITS PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND FUTURE PLANS.

ALSO ON DISPLAY WILL BE PHOTOGRAPHS SHOWING DISABLED EMPLOYEES ON DIFFERENT KIND OF JOBS.

IN ADDITION, FOUR DIFFERENT VIDEO SHOWS ON THE WORK OF THE SELECTIVE PLACEMENT DIVISION WILL BE PRESENTED DAILY DURING THE EXHIBITION.

LABOUR DEPARTMENT OFFICERS WILL BE ON HAND TO ANSWER ENQUIRIES FROM VISITORS AND TO DISTRIBUTE PAMPHLETS.

THEY WILL ALSO RECORD VACANCY INFORMATION FROM PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS AND PERSONAL PARTICULARS OF DISABLED JOB-SEEKERS FOR FURTHER CONTACTS, SHE SAID.

THE EXHIBITION WILL BE OPEN DAILY FROM 11 AM TO 6 PM UNTIL SUNDAY (JULY 18) AT WEST BRIDGE, LEVEL 2, CITYPLAZA TWO AT TAIKOO SHING.

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BEACH WATER GRADES

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT TODAY (THURSDAY) ANNOUNCED GRADES ON THE BACTERIOLOGICAL WATER QUALITY OF ALL BATHING BEACHES IN HONG KONG.

THE GRADING SYSTEM SERVES TO INFORM SWIMMERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC ABOUT THE STATE OF BACTERIOLOGICAL POLLUTION AT VARIOUS BEACHES.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID THE GRADING WOULD BE ANNOUNCED BIWEEKLY DURING THE BATHING SEASON TO COINCIDE WITH THE FREQUENCY AT WHICH BEACH WATER WAS USUALLY SAMPLED.

THE GRADING IS BASED ON THE MOST RECENT E.COLI DATA OBTAINED BY THE DEPARTMENT IN ITS ROUTINE MONITORING PROGRAMME.

AS WITH LAST YEAR, THE GRADING ALSO INCLUDES AN ESTIMATE OF THE RISK OF SUFFERING SOME MINOR SKIN OR GASTROINTESTINAL COMPLAINTS AS A RESULT OF SWIMMING AT A BEACH THAT HAS SOME DEGREE OF POLLUTION.

THE ESTIMATE IS BASED ON A LARGE BODY OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION GATHERED IN HONG KONG IN RECENT BATHING SEASONS.

THE GRADING OF SOME BEACHES MAY VARY DURING SUMMER. THIS REPRESENTS A NATURAL FLUCTUATION IN THE BACTERIOLOGICAL QUALITY OF BATHING WATER IN MOST CASES, AS RAIN AND TIDES BRING MORE OR LESS POLLUTION TO THE BEACHES.

HOWEVER, THE GRADES GIVE A GOOD GENERAL PICTURE OF THE WATER QUALITY AT BATHING BEACHES AT THE TIME OF REPORTING AND FORM THE BEST AVAILABLE FORECAST FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

"BEACHES WITH HIGHLY DEVELOPED HINTERLANDS ARE LIKELY TO BE MORE POLLUTED THAN THE GRADES SUGGEST DURING AND AFTER HEAVY RAIN.

"BATHERS SHOULD AVOID SUCH BEACHES FOR TWO OR THREE DAYS AFTER A STORM, LONGER IF THE WEATHER REMAINS OVERCAST OR LESS IF THERE IS STRONG SUNSHINE." THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE GRADINGS SYSTEM IS:

- * GRADE "1" INDICATES THAT THE WATER QUALITY IS GOOD. THE E. COLI COUNT IS NO MORE THAN 24 PER 100 MILLILITERS AT EACH BEACH SO GRADED, AND THE EXPECTED RISK OF MINOR ILLNESS TO SWIMMERS IS UNDETECTABLE.
- * GRADE "2" INDICATES THAT THE WATER QUALITY IS FAIR. THE E. COLI COUNT IS NO MORE THAN 180 PER 100 MILLILITERS AT EACH BEACH SO GRADED, AND THE EXPECTED HEALTH RISK IS NO MORE THAN 10 CASES OF MINOR ILLNESS PER 1,000 SWIMMERS.
- * GRADE "3" INDICATES THAT THE WATER QUALITY IS POOR. THE E. COLI COUNT IS NO MORE THAN 610 PER 100 MILLILITERS AT EACH BEACH SO GRADED, AND THE EXPECTED HEALTH RISK IS NO MORE THAN 15 CASES OF MINOR ILLNESS PER 1,000 SWIMMERS.

* GRADE "4" INDICATES THAT THE WATER QUALITY IS VERY POOR. THE E. COLI COUNT IS MORE THAN 610 PER 100 MILLILITERS AT EACH BEACH SO GRADED, AND THE EXPECTED HEALTH RISK IS MORE THAN 15 CASES OF MINOR ILLNESS PER 1,000 SWIMMERS.

THE DECISION ON WHETHER OR NOT TO CLOSE A BEACH TO SWIMMERS IS BASED ON A JUDGMENT OF WHAT DEGREE OF POLLUTION IS ACCEPTABLE.

NORMALLY, THE CLOSURE OF A BEACH WOULD ONLY BE CONSIDERED BY THE URBAN COUNCIL OR REGIONAL COUNCIL IF A GRADE "4" OCCURRED REPEATEDLY, SO THAT THE AVERAGE HEALTH RISK OVER THE BATHING SEASON EXCEEDED 15 CASES PER 1,000 SWIMMERS.

AT PRESENT, TWO BATHING BEACHES, CASTLE PEAK AND OLD CAFETERIA, HAVE BEEN DECLARED UNSUITABLE FOR SWIMMING, BASED ON THE WATER QUALITY DURING PAST SEASONS.

THEY ARE POLLUTED BY FAECAL WASTE. THE PUBLIC ARE ADVISED NOT TO SWIM AT THE TWO BEACHES.

IN ADDITION, ROCKY BAY BEACH HAS BEEN CLOSED FOR SWIMMING BY THE URBAN COUNCIL. THE THREE BEACHES ARE IDENTIFIED BY AN "X" IN THE FOLLOWING LIST.

THE GRADES ON THE BACTERIOLOGICAL WATER QUALITY OF VARIOUS BEACHES IN HONG KONG TODAY ARE:

BEACH	PREVIOUS GRADING ----- (AS AT 1.7.93)	PRESENT GRADING ----- (AS AT 15.7.93)
HONG KONG SOUTH -----		
BIG WAVE BAY	3	3
CHUNG HOM KOK	3	3
DEEP WATER BAY	2	3
HAIRPIN	3	3
MIDDLE BAY	2	2
REPULSE BAY	2	2
SHEK O	3	3
SOUTH BAY	1	2
ST. STEPHEN'S	3	2
TURTLE COVE	2	3
STANLEY MAIN	3	3
ROCKY BAY	X	X
TO TEI WAN*	2	2
TUEN MUN DISTRICT -----		
OLD CAFETERIA	X	X
NEW CAFETERIA	3	3
CASTLE PEAK	X	X
KADOORIE	3	4
BUTTERFLY	2	3

SAI KUNG DISTRICT

CAMPERS	2	1
CLEAR WATER BAY 1ST BEACH	2	2
CLEAR WATER BAY 2ND BEACH	2	2
HAP MUN BAY	1	1
KIU TSUI	2	1
PAK SHA CHAU	2	2
SILVERSTRAND	2	3
TRIO (HEBE HAVEN)	2	2

ISLANDS DISTRICT

CHEUNG SHA UPPER	1	1
CHEUNG SHA LOWER	3	3
DISCOVERY BAY*	2	2
HUNG SHING YEH	1	1
KWUN YAM WAN	2	2
TONG FUK	1	1
LO SO SHING	1	1
PUI O	2	1
SILVERMINE BAY	3	3
TUNG WAN, CHEUNG CHAU	2	2
TUNG O*	2	2

TSUEN WAN DISTRICT

ANGLERS'	4	4
APPROACH	3	3
CASAM	4	4
GEMINI	3	3
HOI MEI WAN	4	3
LIDO	3	3
TING KAU	4	4
TUNG WAN, MA WAN	3	3

NOTE : "X" THE BEACH HAS BEEN CLOSED FOR SWIMMING
 * NON-GAZETTED BEACH

THE FOLLOWING BEACHES HAVE CHANGED GRADING ON THIS OCCASION:

PUI O, CAMPERS AND KIU TSUI FROM "2" TO "1"; ST STEPHEN'S FROM "3" TO "2"; HOI MEI WAN FROM "4" TO "3"; SOUTH BAY FROM "1" TO "2"; DEEP WATER BAY, TURTLE COVE, SILVERSTRAND AND BUTTERFLY FROM "2" TO "3"; KADOORIE FROM "3" TO "4".

THE CHANGES ARE WITHIN THE NORMAL RANGE OF FLUCTUATION OF THE BACTERIOLOGICAL WATER QUALITY OF THE BEACHES. THE GENERAL DETERIORATION AT DEEP WATER BAY, TURTLE COVE, SILVERSTRAND, BUTTERFLY AND KADOORIE BEACHES IS PROBABLY DUE TO THE RECENT HEAVY RAINFALL WHICH WOULD HAVE CAUSED THE POLLUTANTS IN THE BEACH HINTERLAND TO BE FLUSHED INTO THE SEA WATER.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT MR K F TANG ACTING PRINCIPAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OFFICER, ON TEL 835 1234.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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\$ MILLION

OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,927
REVERSAL OF LAF	+873
BALANCE AFTER REVERSL OF LAF	2,800
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	-1,169
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,631
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER TWI 112.6 *-0.2* 15.7.93	

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS		EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS				
TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	2.29 PCT	13 MONTHS	2408	4.375	100.62	3.82
1 MONTH	2.62 PCT	16 MONTHS	2411	4.625	100.91	3.95
3 MONTHS	3.10 PCT	19 MONTHS	2502	4.75	101.02	4.12
6 MONTHS	3.38 PCT	22 MONTHS	2505	3.75	99.05	4.34
12 MONTHS	3.70 PCT					

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 16,642 MN

CLOSED 15 JULY 1993

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