



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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GOVT WILL PRESS ON FLOOD CONTROL MEASURES

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THE GOVERNMENT FULLY RECOGNISES THE SEVERITY OF RECENT FLOODING INCIDENTS AND WILL IMPLEMENT THE NECESSARY FLOOD CONTROL MEASURES AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

WINDING UP THE MOTION DEBATE ON FLOODING PROBLEM IN WESTERN AND NORTHERN NEW TERRITORIES, MR EASON SAID BOTH PREVENTION AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE CONSTANTLY REVIEWED AND IMPROVED AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.

HOWEVER, HE SAID THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS WERE UNABLE TO SUPPORT THE MOTION FOR TWO REASONS.

"FIRST, DESPITE OUR DETERMINATION TO COMMENCE WORKS ON THE SHENZHEN RIVER PROJECT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR GOVERNMENT TO GIVE AN UNDERTAKING TO IMPLEMENT THE PROJECT IN MID 1994 WHEN IT IS CLEAR THAT AT BEST WORKS COULD NOT START BEFORE LATE 1994.

"SECONDLY, WHILE THE ADMINISTRATION WILL KEEP UNDER REVIEW THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND, THE ADMINISTRATION IS UNABLE TO PRE-EMPT THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND COMMITTEE AND THEREFORE SUPPORT THE PROPOSAL THAT ANY IMPROVED MEASURES SHOULD HAVE RETROSPECTIVE EFFECT."

MR EASON SAID THE FLOODING PROBLEM IN THE NORTH NT WOULD BE ALLEVIATED TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT WHEN THE SHENZHEN RIVER WAS TRAINED UNDER A JOINT PROJECT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE SHENZHEN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.

THE MAIN FEATURES OF THE PROJECT IS DIVIDED INTO THREE STAGES. STAGE I INVOLVES THE STRAIGHTENING OF THE BENDS AT LOK MA CHAU AND LIU POK; STAGE II COVERS THE STRETCH OF THE RIVER FROM LO WU TO THE ESTUARY; AND STAGE III COVERS THE REMAINING STRETCH OF THE RIVER FROM LO WU UPSTREAM TO MUK MU.

"BOTH GOVERNMENTS HAVE ACCEPTED THE NEED FOR STAGES I AND II WORKS TO PROCEED FIRST. WE HAVE EARMARKED FUNDS FOR THESE TWO STAGES," HE SAID.

PREPARATORY WORK HAS ALREADY BEEN AGREED BY THE TWO SIDES AND IS IN PROGRESS.

IT INCLUDES A LAND SURVEY, SITE INVESTIGATION AND HYDRAULIC MODEL TEST REQUIREMENTS TO ASCERTAIN THE POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF THE STAGES I AND II WORKS ON THE LO WU RAILWAY BRIDGE, AND AN BIA STUDY FOR STAGE I AND II OF THE PROJECT.

MR EASON SAID SUBJECT TO THE RESULT OF THIS WORK AND OTHER NECESSARY PROCEDURES, SUCH AS LAND RESUMPTION AND FUNDING APPROVAL FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE, STAGE I WORKS WOULD MOST LIKELY START IN 1995.

/HE SAID

HE SAID THE FULL EIA FOR BOTH STAGES I AND II OF THE PROJECT WOULD TAKE SOME 15 MONTHS TO COMPLETE IN ORDER TO COVER THE POSSIBLE CHANGES IN HYDRAULIC SITUATIONS IN THE FOUR SEASONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE ECOLOGY OF MAI PO.

HOWEVER, THE EIA CONSULTANTS WILL BE SUBMITTING A PRELIMINARY REPORT SIX MONTHS AFTER THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE STUDY, HE SAID.

AT THAT STAGE, IT MAY WELL BE POSSIBLE TO DETERMINE THE ENVIRONMENTAL ACCEPTABILITY OF THE PROJECT AS A WHOLE AND CONFIRM THAT THE STAGE I WORKS CAN PROCEED.

IF SO, THE DESIGN OF STAGE I CAN BE FINALISED AND, ONCE THE PROJECT COSTS ARE KNOWN, FUNDING APPROVAL WILL BE SOUGHT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE TO ENABLE THE STAGE I WORKS TO PROCEED.

"DESPITE OUR INTENTION TO PROCEED WITH THE PROJECT AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE, IT IS SIMPLY NOT FEASIBLE TO COMPLETE ALL THE PREPARATORY WORKS AND HAVE THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTED IN MID-1994.

"BUT IF WE CAN BRING COMMENCEMENT OF THE PROJECT FORWARD AT ALL, WE WILL," HE SAID.

MR EASON SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD LONG ACCEPTED THAT A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMME OF RIVER TRAINING WORKS AND DRAINAGE CHANNEL PROJECTS WAS REQUIRED.

THE TERRITORIAL LAND DRAINAGE AND FLOOD CONTROL STRATEGY STUDY WAS COMMISSIONED IN NOVEMBER 1988 AND PHASE I OF THE STUDY COMPLETED IN 1990 RECOMMENDED A SERIES OF FLOOD CONTROL PROJECTS AND MEASURES FOR THE WESTERN AND NORTHERN NT.

CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS AND RESOURCES HAVE BEEN COMMITTED SINCE THEN TO IMPLEMENT THESE PROJECTS.

HE SAID THE RECENTLY COMPLETED PHASE II OF THE STUDY HAD FURTHER RECOMMENDED A THREE-TIER APPROACH IN TACKLING FLOODING:

* PROACTIVE FLOOD MITIGATION MEASURES, INCLUDING RIVER TRAINING AND CONSTRUCTION OF PUMPING STATIONS;

* REACTIVE FLOOD MITIGATION MEASURES, INCLUDING FLOOD PROOFING, FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM AND EMERGENCY DRAINAGE CLEARANCE SERVICES; AND

* IMPROVED LAND USE PLANNING AND CONTROL.

ORGAN DONATION MOTION DEBATE

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FOLLOWING IS THE SPEECH BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, DR S H LEE, IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON ORGAN DONATION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS EVENING:

MADAM DEPUTY,

I THANK MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL FOR THE VIEWS THEY HAVE EXPRESSED TODAY. ORGAN DONATION IS THE GIFT OF LIFE, BUT IN HONG KONG IT IS STILL AN ISSUE THAT AROUSES EMOTIVE REACTIONS FROM ALL THOSE IT TOUCHES.

ORGANS FOR DONATION COME FROM TWO SOURCES -- FROM LIVING DONORS (USUALLY A RELATIVE OF THE RECIPIENT) AND FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE DONATED THEIR ORGANS UPON DEATH. THESE ARE CALLED CADAVERIC DONATIONS.

THE MEDICAL (THERAPY, EDUCATION AND RESEARCH) ORDINANCE PROVIDES THAT CADAVERIC DONATIONS MAY BE MADE IN THREE WAYS.

FIRST, BY THE DONOR IN WRITING AT ANY TIME. THIS IS THE PROVISION ON WHICH OUR ORGAN DONOR CARD SCHEME IS BASED. THE ORGAN DONATION CARD IS AN ACCEPTABLE LEGAL DOCUMENT FURTHER CONSENT BY NEXT OF KIN IS NOT REQUIRED.

SECONDLY, A DONOR MAY GIVE CONSENT ORALLY DURING HIS LAST ILLNESS. AS A SAFEGUARD, CONSENT MUST BE GIVEN IN THE PRESENCE OF TWO OR MORE WITNESSES.

THIRDLY, IF THE DONOR HAS NOT CONSENTED DURING HIS LIFETIME HIS REGISTERED NEXT OF KIN MAY GIVE CONSENT AFTER HIS DEATH. AS A SAFEGUARD, THE DOCTOR MUST MAKE ENQUIRIES FROM THE REGISTERED NEXT OF KIN AND BE SATISFIED THAT THE DECEASED PERSON HAD NOT EXPRESSED ANY OBJECTION TO DONATION AND THAT THE DECEASED'S SURVIVING SPOUSE, PARENT OR CHILDREN DO NOT OBJECT.

IT IS THEREFORE A MISCONCEPTION THAT OUR ORGAN DONATION SYSTEM RELIES SOLELY ON DONATIONS FROM PEOPLE WHO CARRY ORGAN DONATION CARDS. IT IS FAR MORE FLEXIBLE THAN THAT, YET ALSO PROVIDES GOOD SAFEGUARDS TO ENSURE THAT ORGANS ARE NOT REMOVED WITHOUT PROPER CONSENT.

TO HAVE ANY OTHER KIND OF ORGAN DONATION SYSTEM COULD BE DRACONIAN IN THE EYES OF THE HONG KONG COMMUNITY. AN OPTING-OUT SYSTEM, OF THE KIND PROPOSED BY SOME MEMBERS, WOULD IMPLY A TOTALITARIAN APPROACH. IT PRESUMES THAT SILENCE MEANS CONSENT WITH WHATEVER THE GOVERNMENT CHOOSES TO DO.

/AN OPTING-OUT

AN OPTING-OUT SYSTEM WOULD REQUIRE EVERYONE'S PARTICULARS TO BE RECORDED AND THEIR MOVEMENTS MONITORED. THE SYSTEM WOULD HAVE TO BE FOOL-PROOF TO ENSURE THAT THE RECORD OF SOMEONE WHO HAD OPTED OUT WAS NOT ACCIDENTALLY OR DELIBERATELY LOST AND HIS ORGANS REMOVED BY MISTAKE AT THE TIME OF HIS DEATH. THE BURDEN OF PROOF WOULD BE THEN ON THE NEXT OF KIN TO PROVE THAT THE DECEASED HAD IN FACT OBJECTED. THERE IS POTENTIAL FOR GRAVE ABUSE.

THE CORNEA MAY BE REMOVED FROM PATIENTS WHO ARE STONE-COLD DEAD. HOWEVER, THE HEART, KIDNEYS, LIVER MAY BE REMOVED FROM A PERSON WHO HAS BEEN CERTIFIED BRAIN DEAD ALTHOUGH HIS HEART MAY STILL BE BEATING. WE ALL KNOW THAT MODERN TECHNOLOGY CAN SUSTAIN A PERSON'S BODILY FUNCTIONS FOR A LONG TIME WHEN HE IS IN A COMA. WITH AN OPTING-OUT SYSTEM, WHEN NO FURTHER PERMISSION NEEDS TO BE OBTAINED FROM NEXT OF KIN, WHERE IS THE SAFEGUARD? WHAT ENSURES THAT DOCTORS WILL WAIT UNTIL A PERSON REALLY IS DEAD BEYOND HOPE OF RECOVERY BEFORE HIS ORGANS ARE REMOVED? LET US REMEMBER THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS OFTEN BEEN ASKED FOR SAFEGUARDS ON ORGAN DONATION TO PREVENT ORGAN TRADING. THIS IS THE PURPOSE OF THE HUMAN ORGAN TRANSPLANT BILL NOW BEING STUDIED BY AN AD-HOC GROUP OF THIS COUNCIL.

DO HONG KONG PEOPLE REALLY WANT AN OPTING-OUT SYSTEM WHICH GIVES THE GOVERNMENT ABSOLUTE POWER? POWER TO CONTROL A PERSON'S FREEDOM AND PRIVACY WHEN HE IS ALIVE; POWER TO CONTROL HIS BODY AND ORGANS WHEN HE IS DEAD? I CANNOT IMAGINE THAT ANYONE IN HONG KONG WOULD LIKE TO THINK SO.

I SHARE THE CONCERN OF MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF SHORTAGE OF ORGANS. BEING A DOCTOR MYSELF, I AM ESPECIALLY AWARE OF THOSE PATIENTS WHOSE HOPES OF RECOVERY DEPEND ON THE AVAILABILITY OF SUITABLE ORGANS. HOWEVER, SHORTAGE OF ORGANS FOR DONATION IS A WORLDWIDE PHENOMENON. EVERY YEAR THERE ARE MORE PEOPLE WHO NEED REPLACEMENTS FOR DISEASED OR DAMAGED ORGANS THAN THERE ARE ORGANS AVAILABLE. HENCE THERE IS NEED FOR A CONTINUING AND VIGOROUS PROGRAMME OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN HONG KONG EMPHASISING THE BENEFITS OF ORGAN DONATION TO THOSE WHOSE LIVES DEPEND ON THEM.

WE BELIEVE THAT ORGAN DONATION SHOULD BE BASED ON THE SPIRIT OF VOLUNTARISM. THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY AND VARIOUS NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE HONG KONG EYE BANK AND RESEARCH FOUNDATION, THE HONG KONG EYE FOUNDATION, THE HONG KONG KIDNEY FOUNDATION, THE HONG KONG HEART FOUNDATION AND THE HONG KONG LIVER FOUNDATION ARE ACTIVELY PROMOTING VOLUNTARY ORGAN DONATION UNDER THE EXISTING SCHEME. LAST YEAR'S MAJOR PUBLICITY AND HEALTH EDUCATION CAMPAIGN SUCCEEDED IN AROUSING COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF THE NEED FOR ORGAN DONATION. THIS YEAR'S CAMPAIGN WILL CONTINUE TO DRIVE HOME THE MESSAGE. AT THE SAME TIME, WE ARE PROMOTING THE NECESSITY FOR EVERYONE TO MAINTAIN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE, SO AS TO AVOID THE ILLNESSES WHICH COULD LEAD TO THE NEED FOR TRANSPLANT.

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AS A RESULT OF OUR EFFORTS, THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WILLING TO DONATE THEIR ORGANS AFTER DEATH HAS BEEN STEADILY INCREASING IN RECENT YEARS. WHERE IN 1989 ONLY ONE IN TEN PEOPLE WAS WILLING TO DONATE, THE FIGURE HAS NOW RISEN TO AN AVERAGE OF ONE IN THREE. COMPARED WITH 1991, THE NUMBER OF CARD-CARRYING DONORS HAS NOW DOUBLED. HOWEVER, WHILST MANY PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO DONATE, THEIR RELATIVES OFTEN FRUSTRATE THIS BY OBJECTING. TO OVERCOME THIS PROBLEM, I URGE RELATIVES TO RESPECT THE DONOR'S WISHES. DOCTORS HAVE LEGAL AUTHORITY TO REMOVE ORGAN FROM THOSE WHO HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR WISHES TO DONATE. IN TURN, PEOPLE WHO WISH TO DONATE SHOULD OBTAIN A DONOR CARD. THEY SHOULD SIGN IT AND SHOW IT TO THEIR RELATIVES AS PROOF OF THEIR WISH TO DONATE. THEY SHOULD CARRY THEIR DONOR CARD WITH THEIR ID CARD OR DRIVING LICENSE WHEREVER THEY GO. LIKE THE HONOURABLE MR HUI YIN-FAT I ALSO CARRY AN ORGAN DONATION CARD SIGNED BY MYSELF.

WE NEED MORE DONORS, BUT WE WANT ONLY WILLING ONES. WE WANT TO DEVELOP A COMMUNITY WHICH DONATES BECAUSE IT CARES. WE DO NOT WANT A SYSTEM WHICH FORCES PEOPLE AGAINST THEIR WILL. ONLY BY WORKING TOGETHER WITHIN THE EXISTING ORGAN DONATION SYSTEM CAN WE ALL HELP TO GIVE THE GIFT OF LIFE TO THOSE WHO NEED IT. I AM SURE THAT THROUGH TODAY'S DEBATE, WE WILL BE ABLE TO AROUSE MORE POPULAR SUPPORT FOR ORGAN DONATION AND SHOW THAT HONG KONG REALLY IS A CARING COMMUNITY.

I AM MOST GRATEFUL TO MEMBERS FOR EXPRESSING THEIR VIEWS AND OPINIONS IN THIS COUNCIL TODAY. I WILL GIVE FURTHER CONSIDERATION TO HOW BEST ORGAN DONATION CAN BE PROMOTED, AND CONSULTED AS NECESSARY TO FIND WAYS THAT ARE SUITABLE AND ACCEPTABLE TO THE COMMUNITY.

THANK YOU MADAM PRESIDENT.

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HEAVY PENALTY FOR SMUGGLERS

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A BILL THAT SEEKS TO STRENGTHEN THE ABILITY TO TACKLE SMUGGLING BY MAKING THE MAJOR SMUGGLING OFFENCES TRIABLE ON INDICTMENT WITH INCREASED MAXIMUM PENALTIES IS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE IMPORT AND EXPORTS (AMENDMENT) NO. 2) BILL 1993, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID THE BILL PROPOSED THE MAXIMUM PENALTIES OF SEVEN YEARS' IMPRISONMENT AND A FINE OF \$2 MILLION FOR MAJOR SMUGGLING OFFENCES.

THE EXISTING PENALTIES OF TWO YEARS' IMPRISONMENT AND A FINE OF \$500,000 FOR SUMMARY CONVICTION WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED, MR ASPREY SAID.

THE CURRENT PENALTIES WERE INADEQUATE FOR SERIOUS SMUGGLING OFFENCES AND DID NOT PROVIDE A SUFFICIENT DETERRENT, HE EXPLAINED.

"SMUGGLING CAUSES SERIOUS SECURITY PROBLEMS TO HONG KONG FEEDING ORGANISED CRIME, GENERATING CAR THEFT AND POSING A DANGER TO LEGITIMATE MARINE TRAFFIC," HE SAID.

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MEASURES INCLUDING LEGISLATION, ENFORCEMENT AND LIAISON WITH CHINA HAD BEEN TAKEN TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM, HE ADDED.

"OUR STRATEGY HAS ACHIEVED CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS.

"WHILE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR HUGE PROFITS REMAINS, SMUGGLING IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE."

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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TRANSFER OF POWER TO MAKE SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION

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THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSES THAT THE POWER TO MAKE SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION FOR THE CONDUCT OF STATISTICAL SURVEYS SHOULD BE TRANSFERRED FROM THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL TO THE POLICY SECRETARY CONCERNED.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES, MR TAM WING-PONG, SAID THE TRANSFER OF SUCH POWER SHOULD NOT APPLY TO THE CONDUCT OF A CENSUS OF POPULATION.

THIS IS BECAUSE UNLIKE STATISTICAL SURVEYS WHICH ONLY INVOLVE SAMPLES OF HOUSEHOLDS OR BUSINESS FIRMS, CENSUS-TAKING IS AN OPERATION WHICH WILL AFFECT THE COMMUNITY VERY WIDELY.

"THE ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERS, THEREFORE, THAT THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL'S SPECIFIC APPROVAL SHOULD STILL BE REQUIRED FOR THE LAUNCHING OF A CENSUS OF POPULATION," MR TAM SAID.

AT PRESENT, UNDER THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS ORDINANCE, THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL MAY, BY ORDER IN THE GAZETTE, DIRECT THAT A CENSUS OF POPULATION OR A STATISTICAL SURVEY BE CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR CENSUS AND STATISTICS.

AS PART OF AN ON-GOING EXERCISE TO STREAMLINE THE OPERATION OF EXCO, THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS ORDINANCE HAS BEEN REVIEWED TO IDENTIFY ANY MINOR POWERS CURRENTLY VESTED IN THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL THAT MAY BE DEVOLVED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILLS OF LADING AND ANALOGOUS SHIPPING DOCUMENTS BILL INTRODUCED

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A BILL TO REFORM THE LEGAL REMEDIES AVAILABLE UNDER CONTRACTS OF CARRIAGE OF GOODS BY SEA TO ENSURE THAT HONG KONG REMAINS A LEADING COMMERCIAL AND SHIPPING CENTRE WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILLS OF LADING AND ANALOGOUS SHIPPING DOCUMENTS BILL, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, SAID THE BILL WAS TECHNICAL BUT THE REAL BENEFIT IT WOULD PROVIDE TO THE COMMERCIAL COMMUNITY IN HONG KONG COULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED.

"UNDER THE COMMON LAW, ONLY THE TWO PARTIES TO A CONTRACT OF CARRIAGE COULD SUE OR BE SUED UNDER THE CONTRACT.

"WHERE, AS OFTEN HAPPENED, GOODS WERE SOLD AND RESOLD DURING THE COURSE OF SEA TRANSIT, THE BUYER WAS UNABLE TO SUE ON THE CONTRACT OF CARRIAGE FOR LOSS OR DAMAGE TO HIS GOODS," HE SAID.

WHILE THE CURRENT BILLS OF LADING ORDINANCE GOES SOME WAY TO OVERCOME THIS PROBLEM, MR MATHEWS SAID THE BILL, WHICH WAS BASED ON THE UNITED KINGDOM CARRIAGE OF GOODS BY SEA ACT 1992, ADDRESSED THE LEGAL PROBLEMS WHICH STILL EXISTED.

"IT OVERCOMES THE DIFFICULTY ASSOCIATED WITH THE PASSING OF OWNERSHIP OF GOODS BY SIMPLY PROVIDING THAT ANY LAWFUL HOLDER OF A BILL OF LADING HAS THE RIGHT TO SUE THE CARRIER.

"IT THEREFORE SEVERS THE LINK BETWEEN THE PASSING OF OWNERSHIP OF GOODS AND THE RIGHT TO TAKE LEGAL PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE CONTRACT OF CARRIAGE," HE SAID.

TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM THAT THE EXISTING LEGISLATION DOES NOT APPLY TO DOCUMENTS SUCH AS SEA WAYBILLS AND DELIVERY ORDERS, WHICH ARE WIDELY USED IN THE SHIPPING INDUSTRY, THE BILL GIVES RIGHTS OF ACTION TO A PERSON IDENTIFIED IN A SEA WAYBILL AND TO THE PERSON ENTITLED TO DELIVERY UNDER A SHIP'S DELIVERY ORDER.

MR MATHEWS ADDED: "AS REGARDS OBLIGATIONS, THE BILL PROVIDES THAT ANY PERSON ENTITLED TO SUE AND WHO MAKES A CLAIM AGAINST THE CARRIER IS PLACED UNDER THE SAME LIABILITIES AS IF HE HAD BEEN AN ORIGINAL PARTY TO THE CONTRACT OF CARRIAGE."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE BILL WOULD EMPOWER THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY TO MAKE REGULATIONS RELATING TO ELECTRONIC DATA INTERCHANGE.

"IN THE FUTURE, DOCUMENTS SUCH AS BILLS OF LADING WHICH ARE NOW TRANSMITTED IN DOCUMENTARY FORM COULD BE REPLACED BY COMPUTER GENERATED ALTERNATIVES TRANSMITTED BY ELECTRONIC DATA INTERCHANGE.

"WHEN THIS OCCURS, THE LEGISLATION COULD BE ADAPTED TO ACCOMMODATE FUTURE TRADING PRACTICES WITHOUT THE NEED FOR PRIMARY LEGISLATION," HE ADDED.

MR MATHEWS SAID THE BILL HAD RECEIVED WIDE SUPPORT FROM LEGAL, SHIPPING AND INSURANCE INTERESTS.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

MANUFACTURERS NOT DOUBLE-CHARGED FOR SEWAGE TREATMENT

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MANUFACTURERS WHO INSTALL THEIR OWN TREATMENT FACILITIES WILL NOT BE DOUBLE-CHARGED UNDER THE PROPOSED SEWAGE CHARGING SCHEME, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON NGAI SHIU-KIT, MR EASON SAID: "AS THE TRADE EFFLUENT SURCHARGE WILL BE CALCULATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STRENGTH OF THE EFFLUENT RELEASED, THE BETTER ITS TREATMENT BEFORE RELEASE, THE LOWER THE SURCHARGE WILL BE."

HE SAID THERE WOULD NOT BE ANY DOUBLE-CHARGING OF MANUFACTURERS WHO INSTALL TREATMENT FACILITIES OR ANY UNFAIRNESS.

"RATHER, THE TRADE EFFLUENT SURCHARGE WILL SEND THE CORRECT ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNAL TO INDUSTRY: THE BETTER YOU TREAT YOUR EFFLUENT, THE LESS YOU PAY," HE SAID.

THE SURCHARGE WILL REFLECT THE COST OF TREATING THE MORE POLLUTING EFFLUENTS FROM SOME INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL PREMISES TO BRING THEM DOWN TO THE AVERAGE STRENGTH OF DOMESTIC SEWAGE (AT 250 MG/L BOD OR ITS EQUIVALENT).

"THE IMPOSITION OF SUCH A SURCHARGE HAS ALREADY BEEN AGREED IN PRINCIPLE WITH INDUSTRY AND TAKES ACCOUNT OF HONG KONG'S PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES.

"SOME OPERATORS MAY NOT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE TREATMENT FOR THEIR EFFLUENTS BEFORE DISCHARGE ON AN ECONOMIC BASIS BECAUSE OF THE RESTRICTIONS ON SPACE AND FLOOR LOADING WHICH EXIST IN SOME FLATTED FACTORY BUILDINGS," MR EASON SAID.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULES BEING EXAMINED

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THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION IS CONSIDERING WHETHER MORE FLIGHTS CAN BE SCHEDULED BETWEEN 6.30 AM AND 10 AM, WHERE THERE ARE STILL AVAILABLE TIME-SLOTS, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MR GORDON SIU, SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO EXPLORING, IN CONSULTATION WITH AIRLINES, THE FEASIBILITY OF RESCHEDULING LANDINGS AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO 9 PM IN ORDER TO CUT DOWN AIRCRAFT NOISE LATER IN THE EVENING, HE ADDED.

THE MOVES WERE ANNOUNCED WHEN MR SIU REPLIED TO A QUESTION BY THE HON FREDERICK FUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THERE ARE NOW HARDLY MANY TIME-SLOTS AVAILABLE FOR LANDINGS AND TAKE-OFFS BETWEEN 10 AM AND 9 PM.

THE NUMBER OF FLIGHT MOVEMENTS BETWEEN 9 PM AND MIDNIGHT WILL NOT BE INCREASED AS A RESULT OF THE SUSPENSION OF THE "OPPOSITE RUNWAY" MODE.

"THE REASON FOR DISCONTINUING THE 'OPPOSITE RUNWAY' MODE OF OPERATION AT KAI TAK BETWEEN 9 PM AND MIDNIGHT IS AVIATION SAFETY," MR SIU SAID.

THE CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT TOOK THE DECISION ON THE ADVICE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL INSPECTORATE THAT THE MODE OF OPERATION POSES A DEFINITE HAZARD TO FLIGHT SAFETY, HE ADDED.

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NEW LAW TO DEAL WITH BUS SERVICE DEFICIENCIES

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THE GOVERNMENT IS PLANNING TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR MUCH STIFFER FINANCIAL PENALTIES TO BE IMPOSED ON THE BUS COMPANIES SHOULD THEY FAIL TO REMEDY SERVICE DEFICIENCIES, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR HAIDER BARMA, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN HIS REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ZACHARY WONG WAI-YIN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR BARMA SAID THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE HAD BEEN CONSULTED AND HE INTENDED TO INTRODUCE THE NEW LAW EARLY NEXT YEAR.

HE SAID SINCE THE CITYBUS COMMENCED SERVICES ON THE 26 ROUTES ON SEPTEMBER 1 THIS YEAR, A TOTAL OF 258 COMPLAINTS REGARDING ITS SERVICES HAD BEEN LODGED WITH THE TRANSPORT COMPLAINTS UNIT OVER THE LAST TWO MONTHS: 177 IN SEPTEMBER AND 81 IN OCTOBER.

MR BARMA SAID 159 OF THE COMPLAINTS WERE RELATED TO IRREGULAR OR INADEQUATE SERVICES OR MISSING TRIPS.

"THIS RELATES TO BUSES NOT KEEPING TO TIMETABLES, COMMUTER EXPECTATION OF MORE BUSES AND THE COMPANY'S INABILITY TO MEET THE SCHEDULED FREQUENCY."

THE REST OF THE COMPLAINTS RELATE TO INADEQUATE PASSENGER INFORMATION AND FACILITIES, UNSATISFACTORY STAFF ATTITUDE AND PERFORMANCE, UNSATISFACTORY CONDITION OF BUSES AND INAPPROPRIATE ROUTEING AND LOCATION OF BUS STOPS.

HE SAID THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WOULD CONDUCT REGULAR AND SPOT CHECKS AT BUS TERMINI ON THE NUMBER OF TRIPS, ON BUS OCCUPANCY AND FREQUENCY, AND ON VEHICLE TURNOUT AND DEPLOYMENT.

"STAFF FROM THE DEPARTMENT WILL ALSO BOARD BUSES UNANNOUNCED TO OBSERVE SERVICE SITUATIONS AND PASSENGER REACTION."

/IN ADDITION,

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IN ADDITION, HE SAID, TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE TO HOLD MONTHLY MEETING WITH THE TOP MANAGEMENT OF CITYBUS TO REVIEW OPERATIONAL MATTERS SUCH AS DRIVER ESTABLISHMENT AND RECRUITMENT, MAINTENANCE CAPABILITY AND PASSENGER FEEDBACK.

"AS PART OF THE FRANCHISE CONDITIONS, CITYBUS WILL BE REQUIRED TO INSTALL A COMPUTER TERMINAL IN THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS SO THAT ON-LINE MONITORING IS POSSIBLE."

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PREPARATION FOR SHENZHEN RIVER REGULATION PROGRESSING
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THE PREPARATORY WORK FOR THE SHENZHEN RIVER REGULATION PROJECT IS PROCEEDING AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MICHAEL HO MUN-KA, MR EASON SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE SHENZHEN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT AND AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED ON THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS:

- * THE BROAD SCOPE OF THE PROJECT;
- * PROJECT FINANCING;
- * THE LAND SURVEY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE STAGE I WORKS AREA;
- * SITE INVESTIGATION AND HYDRAULIC MODEL TEST REQUIREMENTS TO ASCERTAIN THE POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF THE STAGE I AND II WORKS ON THE LO WU RAILWAY BRIDGE; AND
- * THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR STAGE I AND II OF THE PROJECT.

MR EASON SAID: "DESIGN WORK IS IN PROGRESS AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT IS ABOUT TO START."

"FUNDING APPROVAL WILL BE SOUGHT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE ONCE THE DESIGN IS FINALISED AND THE ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS ARE KNOWN."

"ALTHOUGH THE VARIOUS COMPLEX TECHNICAL ISSUES NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH A PROJECT OF THIS SIZE AND NATURE WILL NEED TO BE RESOLVED, I DO NOT SEE ANY REASON WHY THE PROJECT SHOULD BE DELAYED," HE SAID.

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COST RECOVERY RATE FOR DEGREE COURSES REASONABLE

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THE RECENT FEE INCREASE BY TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IS NOT EXPECTED TO CREATE A BURDEN ON STUDENTS QUALIFYING FOR GRANTS AND LOANS, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID.

HE SAID THIS WAS BECAUSE UNDER THE LOCAL STUDENT FINANCE SCHEME, THE LEVELS OF MAXIMUM GRANTS AND LOANS PROVIDED TO QUALIFIED STUDENTS WERE ADJUSTED ANNUALLY TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE ACTUAL INCREASE IN TUITION FEES, AS WELL AS THE PROJECTED INCREASES IN ACADEMIC AND LIVING EXPENSES.

CITING STATISTICS, MR LEUNG SAID THE AVERAGE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS FOR THE PERIOD 1991/92 TO 1993/94 HAD INCREASED FROM \$16,594 TO \$36,430, AN INCREASE OF 119.5 PER CENT, ALTHOUGH THE TERTIARY TUITION FEES FOR DEGREE COURSES HAD RISEN BY 70 PER CENT FROM \$10,000 TO \$17,000.

ALSO, THE NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS FOR GRANTS AND LOANS IN THIS PERIOD HAS RISEN 123 PER CENT AND 81.8 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY WHEREAS THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF FUNDS DISBURSED FOR GRANTS AND LOANS HAS INCREASED EVEN MORE SHARPLY FROM \$197 MILLION TO \$786 MILLION, AN INCREASE OF 299 PER CENT.

"IT IS OBVIOUS, THEREFORE, THAT THE AVERAGE STUDENT QUALIFYING FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE HAS ACTUALLY ENJOYED REAL INCREASES IN GRANTS AND LOANS OVER THE PERIOD," MR LEUNG SAID WHEN REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LEE WING-TAT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ASKED ABOUT THE RATIONALE FOR RECOVERING 18 PER CENT OF THE RECURRENT COST OF TERTIARY EDUCATION, THE SECRETARY SAID IT AIMED TO ACHIEVE A MORE EQUITABLE SHARE BETWEEN THE STUDENTS' FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY ON THE COST OF EDUCATING THEIR CHILDREN, AS WELL AS TO SEEK A REASONABLE CONTRIBUTION FROM THOSE WHO COULD AFFORD TO PAY.

HAVING TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE GENERALLY HIGHER COST RECOVERY RATES PREVAILING IN OTHER COUNTRIES, THE ENHANCED FUNDING FOR THE ACCELERATED EXPANSION OF TERTIARY EDUCATION, AND THE AVAILABILITY OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY STUDENTS, THE POLICY TARGET OF ACHIEVING AN 18 PER CENT RECOVERY RATE BY 1997/98 IS CONSIDERED TO BE REASONABLE AND IS COMPARABLE WITH ACCEPTED RATES ELSEWHERE, MR LEUNG SAID.

JLG DISCUSSING IMMIGRATION PROPOSALS

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THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO AMEND THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE, BY GRANTING PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS TO PERSONS NOT OF CHINESE NATIONALITY, TO BRING IT IN LINE WITH THE BASIC LAW.

THE PROPOSALS ARE UNDER DISCUSSION IN THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON LEONG CHE-HUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ARTICLE 24 OF THE BASIC LAW SPECIFIES THOSE CATEGORIES OF PERSONS WHO WILL BE PERMANENT RESIDENTS AND HAVE RIGHT OF ABODE IN THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION.

THIS DIFFERS IN SEVERAL RESPECTS FROM THE PRESENT DEFINITION OF PERMANENT RESIDENT IN THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE.

"IT IS OUR INTENTION TO AMEND THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE TO BRING IT IN LINE WITH THE BASIC LAW. WE HAVE PUT PROPOSALS TO THIS EFFECT TO THE CHINESE IN THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP."

MR ASPREY SAID THE PROPOSALS INCLUDED THE GRANT OF PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS TO PERSONS NOT OF CHINESE NATIONALITY.

UNDER ARTICLE 24 OF THE BASIC LAW, PERSONS NOT OF CHINESE NATIONALITY ARE ELIGIBLE TO BECOME PERMANENT RESIDENTS OF THE HONG KONG SAR IF THEY HAVE ENTERED HONG KONG WITH VALID TRAVEL DOCUMENTS, HAVE ORDINARILY RESIDED IN HONG KONG FOR A CONTINUOUS PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN SEVEN YEARS AND HAVE TAKEN HONG KONG AS THEIR PLACE OF PERMANENT RESIDENCE.

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GOVERNMENT HEADS TO NOMINATE "GREEN MANAGERS"

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HEADS OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND BRANCHES HAVE BEEN CALLED UPON TO NOMINATE THEIR "GREEN MANAGERS" BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MRS PEGGY LAM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR EASON SAID THE "GREEN MANAGERS" WOULD PREFERABLY BE APPOINTED AT DIRECTORATE LEVEL.

HE SAID WRITTEN GUIDELINES WOULD BE ISSUED AND A WORKING GROUP FROM AMONG THE "GREEN MANAGERS" WOULD BE ESTABLISHED FOR EXCHANGING VIEWS AND EXPERIENCE, AND MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHEME.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1993

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MORE URBAN HOSTELS FOR STREET SLEEPERS

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THE URBAN HOSTEL SCHEME FOR STREET SLEEPERS WILL BE EXPANDED TO PROVIDE MORE FACILITIES AND SERVICES, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, DR S H LEE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHIM PUI-CHUNG, DR LEE SAID SEVEN ADDITIONAL URBAN HOSTELS HAD BEEN PLANNED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE ANOTHER 230 PLACES.

BETWEEN JANUARY AND SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR, 62 STREET SLEEPERS HAD MOVED OFF THE STREET TO PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES, TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS, PRIVATE HOUSING, URBAN HOSTELS, RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES OR TEMPORARY SHELTERS.

AS AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR, THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT RECORDED 1,069 STREET SLEEPERS IN HONG KONG.

ASKED WHETHER CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN TO ACCOMMODATING STREET SLEEPERS IN VACANT BOAT PEOPLE CENTRES, DR LEE SAID THEY WERE MOST UNLIKELY TO BE ACCEPTABLE BECAUSE THESE CENTRES WERE LOCATED IN REMOTE AREAS.

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GOVT SEEKS INTERNATIONAL HELP TO SOLVE VIET PROBLEM

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL SEEK TO SECURE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY THE COMMITMENTS NECESSARY TO BRING ABOUT AN EARLY RESOLUTION OF THE VIETNAMESE MIGRANT PROBLEM, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON TANG SIU-TONG, MR ASPREY SAID THIS WOULD BE DONE IN A MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF ACTION TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE IN GENEVA IN JANUARY NEXT YEAR.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) WAS COMMITTED TO MEETING THE COST OF THE CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF THE VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS IN HONG KONG.

"HOWEVER, THEY HAVE FAILED FULLY TO DISCHARGE THIS OBLIGATION," MR ASPREY SAID.

AT THE END OF LAST MONTH, THE UNHCR OWED THE GOVERNMENT \$837 MILLION.

MR ASPREY SAID THERE WAS NO PRECISE TIMETABLE FOR THE REPAYMENT OF THE DEBT.

/THE GOVERNMENT

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THE GOVERNMENT HAD RECENTLY BEEN REASSURED THAT THE UNHCR REMAINED COMMITTED TO HONOURING THEIR OBLIGATIONS AND THEY WOULD CONTINUE TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO RAISE FUNDS TO REPAY THE OUTSTANDING AMOUNT.

IN THIS FINANCIAL YEAR, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE VIETNAMESE MIGRANT PROBLEM WILL COST THE GOVERNMENT ABOUT \$1 BILLION.

THE EXPENDITURE, IN COMMON WITH ALL SUCH PUBLIC EXPENDITURE, IS CLOSELY MONITORED, MR ASPREY SAID.

THE UNHCR ESTIMATED THAT THEIR ACTUAL EXPENDITURE ON THE MIGRANTS IN HONG KONG THIS YEAR WILL BE \$226 MILLION.

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MOST COMPENSATION CASES RESOLVED FOR KOWLOON WALLED CITY

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OF THE 14,639 COMPENSATION OFFERS MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT IN THE KOWLOON WALLED CITY CLEARANCE, ONLY 123 HAVE NOT BEEN RESOLVED, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON CONRAD LAM KUI-SHING, MR EASON SAID: "IN 32 OF THE UNRESOLVED CASES, GOVERNMENT'S OFFER OF COMPENSATION HAD NOT BEEN ACCEPTED AND NO REVIEW OF THE OFFER HAD BEEN APPLIED FOR."

"IN 67 CASES, CLAIMS FOR HIGHER COMPENSATION WITH SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS OR APPEALS AGAINST GOVERNMENT'S OFFER OF COMPENSATION HAD BEEN SUBMITTED AND WERE BEING REVIEWED.

"IN THE REMAINING 24 CASES, ALTHOUGH THE RESULTS OF APPEALS AGAINST GOVERNMENT'S OFFER OF COMPENSATION WERE KNOWN, YET THE DECISION HAD NOT BEEN ACCEPTED AND, THE COMPENSATION NOT COLLECTED," HE SAID.

MR EASON SAID IN ALL CASES WHERE DOCUMENTS HAD BEEN SUBMITTED, A FINAL OFFER WAS EXPECTED TO BE MADE BY MARCH 31 NEXT YEAR.

"ANY REMAINING APPEALS SHOULD BE DECIDED BY MARCH 31, 1995, BUT THE EXACT TIMING WILL DEPEND ON HOW MANY APPEALS ARE LODGED.

"THERE IS A TIME LIMIT OF FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE WHEN THE AMOUNT OF COMPENSATION IS FINALLY DETERMINED FOR COMPENSATION TO BE COLLECTED," HE SAID.

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LRT SAFETY MEASURES ENHANCED

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MEASURES HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED DURING PEAK HOURS AT LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (LRT) BUSY STOPS TO IMPROVE PASSENGER SAFETY, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR HAIDER BARMA, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ZACHARY WONG WAI-YIN, MR BARMA SAID: "TO ENHANCE PASSENGER SAFETY AND MINIMISE OVERCROWDING AT THE BUSIEST STOPS, SEPARATE STOPPING POSITIONS ARE MARKED OUT FOR DIFFERENT ROUTES."

"IN ADDITION, A PASSENGER QUEUING SCHEME HAS BEEN INTRODUCED AT BUSY STOPS WITH PLATFORM ASSISTANTS ON HAND TO HELP WITH CROWD CONTROL DURING THE MORNING PEAK RUSH," HE SAID.

MR BARMA SAID OF THE 122 LRT PLATFORMS, 111 WERE AT LEAST THREE METRES WIDE AND 40 METRES LONG.

HE SAID ADDITIONAL PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS WERE PROVIDED AT FOUR OF THE NARROWER PLATFORMS SO THAT PASSENGERS CAN CROSS THE ROAD AT EITHER END OF THE PLATFORM.

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NO POLICY TO ENCOURAGE MORE USE OF BLASTING

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THERE IS NO POLICY TO ENCOURAGE MORE FREQUENT USE OF BLASTING IN DEMOLITION AND CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS, THE SECRETARY FOR WORKS, MR JAMES BLAKE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"FOR GOVERNMENT DEMOLITION OR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS, ALL PRACTICAL METHODS WILL BE CONSIDERED, AND THE MOST SUITABLE TECHNIQUE, WILL BE SELECTED.

"IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR THE USE OF BLASTING FOR DEMOLITION WORK IS CONSIDERED BY THE BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS.

"IT WOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE MERITS OF ADOPTING SUCH METHOD, THE AVAILABILITY OF THE NECESSARY EXPERTISE, AND THE ABILITY TO COMPLY WITH ALL THE SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS," HE SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHIM PUI-CHUNG, MR BLAKE SAID DEMOLITION BY BLASTING WAS MORE COST EFFECTIVE.

HOWEVER, IN DENSELY POPULATED AREAS WHERE A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF PROTECTIVE MEASURES NEED TO BE TAKEN, THE BLASTING METHOD MIGHT BE MORE COSTLY THAN CONVENTIONAL METHODS, HE SAID.

ACCORDING TO GOVERNMENT RECORDS, THE ONLY DEMOLITION PROJECT THAT EMPLOYED A BLASTING TECHNIQUE IN THE PAST THREE YEARS WAS THE DEMOLITION OF THE DESALTER CHIMNEYS AT LOK ON PAI.

/HOWEVER, BLASTING

HOWEVER, BLASTING WAS EMPLOYED IN A NUMBER OF CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS LIKE SITE FORMATION, EXCAVATION AND TUNNELLING, BOTH IN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR.

GOVERNMENT RECORDS SHOW THAT 88 BLASTING PERMITS WERE ISSUED BETWEEN JANUARY 1991 AND OCTOBER THIS YEAR.

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SYSTEM TO CONTROL CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN PLACE

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THE HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY AND THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION HAVE IN PLACE A SYSTEM REGARDING CONTROLS OF DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THEIR MEMBERS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LAU CHIN-SHEK.

MR EASON SAID: "THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY REQUIRE ITS MEMBERS, INCLUDING THE CHAIRMAN, TO REGISTER THEIR PECUNIARY INTERESTS IN WRITING TO THE SECRETARY WITHIN 30 DAYS OF THEIR APPOINTMENT, AND THEREAFTER BETWEEN 1 AND 30 APRIL IN EVERY ENSUING YEAR."

THE STANDING ORDERS ALSO STIPULATE PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH SITUATIONS WHERE A POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST MAY ARISE.

FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN ANY MEMBER HAS A DIRECT PERSONAL OR PECUNIARY INTEREST IN ANY MATTER UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE AUTHORITY, HE MUST, AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE AFTER HE HAS BECOME AWARE OF IT, DISCLOSE THIS TO THE AUTHORITY.

EXPERIENCE OVER THE YEARS HAS SHOWN THAT MEMBERS HAVE RESPONDED TO THIS REQUIREMENT IN A RESPONSIBLE WAY.

POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST IN THE DISCHARGE OF PUBLIC DUTIES ARE ALSO CONSIDERED IN THE APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE AUTHORITY.

"IF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC HAVE ANY COMPLAINTS REGARDING DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, THEY CAN LODGE THEM WITH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OR THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS," HE SAID.

AS REGARDS THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, MR EASON SAID: "SECTION 6(1) OF THE FIRST SCHEDULE OF THE LDC ORDINANCE PROVIDES THAT A MEMBER OF THE CORPORATION WHO IS IN ANY WAY DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INTERESTED IN A CONTRACT MADE OR PROPOSED TO BE MADE BY THE CORPORATION SHALL DISCLOSE THE NATURE OF HIS INTEREST AT A MEETING OF THE CORPORATION.

/THE DISCLOSURE

THE DISCLOSURE SHALL BE RECORDED IN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION, AND THE MEMBER SHALL NOT WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIRMAN TAKE PART IN ANY DELIBERATION OF THE CORPORATION WITH RESPECT TO THAT CONTRACT AND SHALL NOT IN ANY EVENT VOTE ON ANY QUESTION CONCERNING IT.

MR EASON SAID THE OPERATIONS OF THE LDC WERE CLOSELY MONITORED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

IN THE CASE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST, THE LDC ORDINANCE SETS OUT CLEARLY THAT MEMBERS SHALL NOT, WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIRMAN, TAKE ANY PART IN ANY DELIBERATION OF THE CORPORATION WITH RESPECT TO THE PARTICULAR CONTRACT OR MATTER AND SHALL NOT IN ANY EVENT VOTE ON ANY QUESTION CONCERNING IT.

MR EASON SAID THE PUBLIC COULD LODGE COMPLAINTS REGARDING DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST WITH THE CHAIRMAN, LDC OR THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS.

"ANY SUCH COMPLAINTS WILL BE INVESTIGATED HAVING REGARD TO THE LDC ORDINANCE AND THE NEED TO MAINTAIN HIGH STANDARDS IN THE CONDUCT OF LDC'S BUSINESS," HE SAID.

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WAITING TIME FOR PATIENTS STIPULATED
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PATIENTS ATTENDING GOVERNMENT CLINICS FOR TREATMENT OF EPISODIC ILLNESSES ARE GIVEN APPOINTMENTS AT THE CLINICS AND ARE ATTENDED TO WITHIN ONE HOUR OF THE APPOINTMENT TIME.

AND PATIENTS WITH CHRONIC DISEASES ARE GIVEN ADVANCED APPOINTMENTS FOR FOLLOW-UP AND ARE SEEN WITHIN 30 MINUTES OF THE APPOINTMENT TIME.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, DR S H LEE, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LEE WING-TAT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

DR LEE POINTED OUT THAT THE MAXIMUM WAITING TIMES FOR PATIENTS AT GOVERNMENT CLINICS HAD ALREADY BEEN STIPULATED AND PUBLICISED AS A PERFORMANCE PLEDGE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

THE DEPLOYMENT OF STAFF AT GOVERNMENT CLINICS WAS KEPT UNDER REGULAR REVIEW BY THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH AND ADJUSTED AS NECESSARY TO MEET SERVICE NEEDS, HE ADDED.

OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS, THE AVERAGE DAILY NUMBER OF PATIENTS ATTENDING GOVERNMENT CLINICS WAS 13,046, REPRESENTING ABOUT 15 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PATIENTS ATTENDING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE OUT-PATIENT CLINICS.

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LIFEGUARDS MUST POSSESS COMPETENCY CERTIFICATE

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A PERSON CAN BE EMPLOYED AS A LIFEGUARD ONLY IF HE POSSESSES A CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY IN LIFE-SAVING AND FIRST-AID ISSUED BY AN ASSOCIATION APPROVED BY THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS, THE SECRETARY FOR RECREATION AND CULTURE, MR JAMES SO, SAID.

THIS MEANS A VALID BRONZE MEDALLION OR HIGHER QUALIFICATIONS AWARDED BY THE ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY, HE ADDED.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ALBERT CHAN WAI-YIP IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR SO SAID THE LICENSEE OF A PRIVATE SWIMMING POOL WAS RESPONSIBLE UNDER THE LAW FOR ENSURING THAT THE LIFEGUARDS EMPLOYED BY HIM MET THE NECESSARY REQUIREMENTS.

"IF HE HAS DOUBTS ABOUT THE QUALIFICATIONS AND THE AUTHENTICITY OF ANY DOCUMENT HELD BY A LIFEGUARD, HE HAS A DUTY TO SEEK CONFIRMATION FROM THE ISSUING AUTHORITY.

"IF A FORGED DOCUMENT IS DISCOVERED, HE IS ALSO OBLIGED TO REPORT THIS TO THE POLICE," MR SO SAID, ADDING THAT ANY PERSON WHO WAS FOUND USING A FORGED DOCUMENT WAS LIABLE TO PROSECUTION UNDER THE CRIMES ORDINANCE.

UNDER THE SWIMMING POOLS (URBAN COUNCIL) BY-LAWS AND THE SWIMMING POOLS (REGIONAL COUNCIL) BY-LAWS, A LICENSEE OF A PRIVATE SWIMMING POOL IS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE AT LEAST TWO LIFEGUARDS DURING OPENING HOURS, UNLESS EXEMPTED BY THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS.

ANY LICENSEE CONTRAVENING THIS PROVISION IS GUILTY OF AN OFFENCE AND IS LIABLE ON CONVICTION TO A FINE OF \$1,500.

ON THE HEALTH SIDE, DISTRICT HEALTH INSPECTORS OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS INSPECT LICENSED PRIVATE SWIMMING POOLS AT LEAST ONCE EVERY MONTH AND CHECK ON THE LIFEGUARDS AND THEIR QUALIFICATIONS.

SINCE THE DISCOVERY IN SEPTEMBER OF FORGED CERTIFICATES, THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS HAVE STEPPED UP SUCH INSPECTIONS AND HAVE REMINDED LICENSEES OF SWIMMING POOLS OF THEIR LEGAL OBLIGATION.

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INDUSTRIES WILL BE CONSULTED ON COMPETITION STUDIES

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THE CONSUMER COUNCIL HAS UNDERTAKEN TO CONSULT RELEVANT INDUSTRIES OR TRADE BODIES AS APPROPRIATE ON DRAFT REPORTS OF ITS COMPETITION POLICY STUDIES BEFORE FINALISING THEM.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MRS REGINA IP, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON DAVID LI IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE STUDIES ARE CONDUCTED SPECIFIC TO INDIVIDUAL INDUSTRIES, INCLUDING SUPERMARKETS, BROADCASTING, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, GAS SUPPLY AND BANKING SERVICES.

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GOVT ENCOURAGES PAPER RECYCLING

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PROMOTE A PAPER RECYCLING SCHEME IN VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS AND EXPLORE NEW INITIATIVES, THE SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR DONALD TSANG, SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HENRY TANG YING-YEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY); MR TSANG SAID SINCE 1990 GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS HAD BEEN ENCOURAGED TO SEPARATE WASTE PAPER BEFORE COLLECTION FOR RECYCLING.

"OVER 70 DEPARTMENTS AND BUILDINGS ARE NOW ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THIS SCHEME," HE SAID.

LAST YEAR 1.8 MILLION KILOGRAMMES OF WASTE PAPER WERE SEPARATED FOR RECYCLING IN GOVERNMENT OFFICES.

THE ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE IN 1993/94 ON PROCUREMENT OF PAPER FOR USE BY ALL DEPARTMENTS IS \$67.5 MILLION.

USING RECYCLED PAPER WHEREVER PRACTICAL FOR PRINTING WOULD ADD ABOUT \$12 MILLION A YEAR TO GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ON PAPER ALONE, MR TSANG SAID.

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STATISTICAL COMPATIBILITY DEPENDS ON SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

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THE DEGREE OF COMPATIBILITY OF STATISTICS AFTER 1997 THAT WOULD BE ACHIEVED DEPENDS ON THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATISTICAL SYSTEM IN CHINA AS THAT IN HONG KONG BY THAT TIME. ,

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES, MR TAM WING-PONG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ROGER LUK KOON-HOO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"WHILE FULLER COMPATIBILITY OF STATISTICS AFTER 1997 WOULD BE USEFUL, WE MUST BEAR IN MIND THE NEED TO KEEP ABREAST WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS," MR TAM SAID.

HONG KONG ADOPTS STATISTICAL STANDARDS PROMULGATED BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS, SUCH AS THE UNITED NATIONS, INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND AND INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION, IN THE COMPILATION OF VARIOUS OFFICIAL STATISTICS.

GIVEN THE DIFFERENCES THAT EXIST IN THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM AND STRUCTURE BETWEEN CHINA AND HONG KONG, IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT THE TWO STATISTICAL SYSTEMS MAY NOT BE FULLY COMPATIBLE, HE SAID.

/IN ANOTHER

IN ANOTHER WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY MR LUK, MR TAM SAID IT HAD BEEN AN ESTABLISHED PRACTICE FOR HONG KONG TO SUPPLY STATISTICS TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC, WHICH COULD ALSO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS.

"SUCH PRACTICE WILL CONTINUE AFTER 1997," HE SAID.

AS THE NATURE OF STATISTICAL WORK DOES ALLOW ANY DELINEATED TERRITORY OR REGION TO BE TAKEN AS A SEPARATE ENTITY IN THE COMPILATION OF STATISTICS, MR TAM SAID THE ADMINISTRATION DID NOT SEE THE NEED TO TAKE ANY PARTICULAR MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT HONG KONG REMAINED A SEPARATE STATISTICAL ENTITY AFTER 1997.

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LEGCO PASSES NT FLOODING MOTION

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AN AMENDED MOTION ON STEPPING UP FLOOD PREVENTION AND IMPROVEMENT WORKS IN WESTERN AND NORTHERN NEW TERRITORIES AND BETTER EMERGENCY RELIEF ASSISTANCE WAS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AFTER A TWO-HOUR DEBATE.

A TOTAL OF 11 MEMBERS SPOKE ON THE MOTION PROPOSED AND AMENDED BY THE HON TIK CHI-YUEN AND REV THE HON FUNG CHI-WOOD RESPECTIVELY. THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, REPLIED FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

ANOTHER MOTION MOVED BY THE HON LAU CHIN-SHEK URGING THE GOVERNMENT TO EVALUATE ORGAN DONATION ARRANGEMENTS AND FORMULATE RELEVANT POLICIES WAS ALSO PASSED AFTER TWO HOURS' OF DEBATE.

A TOTAL OF 14 MEMBERS SPOKE ON THE MOTION. THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, DR S H LEE, SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT.

THREE BILLS WERE PASSED WITHOUT AMENDMENTS. THEY WERE: BOILERS AND PRESSURE VESSELS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993, BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993 AND OVERSEAS TRUST BANK (ACQUISITION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1993

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DUTCH ASSURED OF HK SITUATION

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY-DESIGNATE, MRS ANSON CHAN, IS RE-CONFIRMING TO EUROPEAN BUSINESS LEADERS, ACADEMICS AND POLITICIANS THAT WHILE THERE WILL BE A CHANGE OF SOVEREIGNTY IN 1997, IT WILL BE BUSINESS AS USUAL IN HONG KONG.

"ALL THOSE WHO VISIT, DO BUSINESS AND MAKE THEIR LIVES IN HONG KONG WILL SEE VIRTUALLY NO DIFFERENCE," MRS CHAN TOLD AN AUDIENCE OF 200 DUTCH BUSINESSMEN AND WOMEN AT A GALA DINNER AND CULTURAL PRESENTATION IN THE HAGUE ON TUESDAY NIGHT.

SHE EMPHASISED THAT THIS SIMPLE FACT SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND WHENEVER PEOPLE HEARD, SAW OR DID ANYTHING IN CONNECTION WITH HONG KONG.

IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT THAT INTERNATIONAL INVESTORS FULLY UNDERSTOOD THAT THE RULE OF LAW, AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY AND A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD WOULD BE MAINTAINED IN HONG KONG AFTER THE TRANSITION.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY-DESIGNATE IS CURRENTLY HEADING A MAJOR HONG KONG PROMOTION IN FOUR EUROPEAN CITIES FEATURING BUSINESS SEMINARS, AIRPORT WORKSHOPS, A FILM FESTIVAL, FASHION SHOWS AND A SPECIAL CULTURAL PERFORMANCE.

MRS CHAN SAID SHE HAD BEEN EXTREMELY ENCOURAGED BY THE POSITIVE ATTITUDE, PARTICULARLY OF THE BUSINESS PEOPLE, SHE HAD MET SO FAR ON THE EUROPEAN PROMOTION. THEY HAD A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION IN HONG KONG AND IN MOST CASES WERE ALREADY LOOKING WELL BEYOND 1997.

DURING THE GALA DINNER, THE GUESTS WERE ENTERTAINED BY A TROUPE OF 17 PERFORMERS FROM THE ACADEMY FOR PERFORMING ARTS IN A SPECIAL "HONG KONG IMAGES" PRODUCTION.

THE PERFORMANCE COMBINED DANCE, MUSIC, AND VISUAL IMAGES REFLECTING HONG KONG'S CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT INTO A MAJOR, MODERN INTERNATIONAL CITY.

EARLIER IN THE DAY, MRS CHAN HAD A LIVELY DISCUSSION WITH LEADING ACADEMICS AND PHD STUDENTS AT THE HIGHLY-RESPECTED SINOLOGISTS INSTITUTE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LEIDEN.

THE WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSION COVERED MANY ASPECTS OF THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SCENE IN BOTH CHINA AND HONG KONG.

LATER SHE WAS GUEST AT AN INFORMAL LUNCH HOSTED BY THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN THE HAGUE, SIR DAVID MIERS, WHERE SHE MET SOME OF THE NETHERLANDS' TOP BUSINESSMEN, INCLUDING A NUMBER CONNECTED WITH MAJOR DUTCH DREDGING COMPANIES INVOLVED IN RECLAMATION PROJECTS FOR HONG KONG'S NEW AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT.

/ON WEDNESDAY,

ON WEDNESDAY, MRS CHAN WILL HAVE MEETINGS WITH THE DUTCH FOREIGN MINISTER, PROFESSOR KOOIJMANS, AND THE TRADE MINISTER, MRS VAN ROOY.

SHE WILL THEN GIVE A KEYNOTE LUNCHEON SPEECH IN AMSTERDAM TO ABOUT 300 BUSINESS PEOPLE ATTENDING A HONG KONG WORKS SEMINAR CO-ORGANISED BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT AND THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL.

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CARTLAND HELPS CONCLUDE URUGUAY TALKS

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THE SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES, MR MICHAEL CARTLAND, HAS LEFT FOR GENEVA TO ASSIST, UPON INVITATION, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GATT TRADE NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE IN HIS EFFORTS TO BRING THE URUGUAY ROUND TO A SATISFACTORY CONCLUSION BY DECEMBER 15 THIS YEAR.

MR CARTLAND WILL BE ONE OF A SMALL NUMBER OF "FRIENDS OF THE CHAIR" APPOINTED IN THEIR PERSONAL CAPACITIES ON THE BASIS OF THEIR GATT EXPERIENCE.

THOSE CONTRACTING PARTIES CONTRIBUTING THE SERVICES OF THEIR OFFICIALS IN THIS WAY ARE AUSTRALIA, CANADA, HONG KONG AND URUGUAY.

MR CARTLAND WAS THE HEAD OF HONG KONG'S GENEVA OFFICE FROM 1984 TO 1987 AND WAS HONG KONG'S FIRST PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE GATT WHEN HONG KONG BECAME A SEPARATE CONTRACTING PARTY IN 1986.

HE SERVED AS CHAIRMAN OF THE NEGOTIATING GROUP OF SUBSIDIES IN THE URUGUAY ROUND AND HAS ALSO CHAIRED A NUMBER OF GATT DISPUTE SETTLEMENT PANELS.

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APEC TO BECOME A MODEL OF OPEN REGIONALISM

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HONG KONG IS AN ARDENT ADVOCATE OF THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM AND DISINCLINED TO FOLLOW THE CURRENT FEEL OF BLOCISM, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF TRADE, MR TONY MILLER, TOLD DELEGATES ATTENDING THE ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (APEC) CUSTOMS AND TRADE SYMPOSIUM IN SEATTLE YESTERDAY (TUESDAY).

MR MILLER, WHO IS LEADING THE HONG KONG DELEGATION IN THE APEC SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING, FIRMLY OPINED THAT APEC SHOULD NOT BECOME A TRADE BLOC.

"IT IS NEITHER DESIRABLE, NOR NECESSARY FOR APEC TO BECOME A TRADE BLOC.

"I SAY NOT DESIRABLE BECAUSE BLOCS DISTORT TRADE AND INVESTMENT FLOWS AND MAGNIFY RATHER THAN REDUCE FRICTIONS WITH THOSE OUTSIDE THE BLOC.

"I SAY NOT NECESSARY FOR APEC, ANY MORE THAN IT HAS PROVED NECESSARY FOR THE ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD) IN CONSULTING AMONG ITS MEMBERS ON TRADE AND ECONOMIC ISSUES," HE SAID.

/MR MILLER

MR MILLER HAD CONFIDENCE THAT APEC COULD HELP TO ENHANCE AN ALREADY OPEN AND DYNAMIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN SEVERAL WAYS.

FIRSTLY, HE BELIEVED THAT APEC COULD AND SHOULD BECOME A MODEL OF GENUINELY OPEN REGIONALISM.

MEMBERS SHOULD TAKE UP FULLY AND WITHOUT EXCEPTION BOTH THEIR RIGHTS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TRADE AND TARIFFS (GATT), WHILE NOT DISCRIMINATING AGAINST OTHERS.

THEY SHOULD ALSO PROGRESSIVELY DISMANTLE SUCH BARRIERS TO TRADE AND INVESTMENT WHICH EXIST BETWEEN THEM, WHILE NOT ERECTING OR LEAVING IN PLACE BARRIERS TO OTHERS; AND IN THIS OPENNESS, SERVING AS A MODEL FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD IN CONTRAST TO OTHER CLOSED GROUPINGS.

MR MILLER SAID HE ALSO TOOK APEC AS SOMETHING AKIN TO THE OECD, BUT WITH A REGIONAL FLAVOUR, DEVELOPING REGIONAL INITIATIVE FOR WIDER TRADE REFORMS.

"ONCE THE URUGUAY ROUND IS SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED AT THE END OF THE YEAR, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WILL TURN ITS ATTENTION TO NEW ISSUES, IDENTIFIED BUT NOT DEALT WITH AS PART OF THE URUGUAY ROUND.

"IN THE SAME WAY THAT THE OECD DID SOME OF THE SEMINAL WORK ON, FOR EXAMPLE, TRADE IN SERVICES, APEC SHOULD BE ABLE IN FUTURE TO DO SOME OF THE GROUNDWORK ON THESE NEW ISSUES.

"INDEED APEC MAY BE BETTER PLACED TO SECURE A BROADER CONSENSUS IN SOME AREAS BECAUSE OF ITS MORE ECONOMICALLY AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE MEMBERSHIP.

"AND ANY CONSENSUS ACHIEVED AMONG APEC MEMBERS SHOULD ALMOST BY DEFINITION BE MORE READILY ACCEPTABLE TO THE WIDER MULTILATERAL COMMUNITY," HE SAID.

APEC COULD ALSO BE A FACILITATOR OF TRADE.

MR MILLER POINTED OUT THAT CERTAIN PROCEDURAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE IMPEDIMENTS TO TRADE COULD BE REMOVED OR STREAMLINED OR STANDARDISED AT A REGIONAL LEVEL THROUGH THE LESS FORMAL PROCESS OF CONSULTATION AND CONSENSUS AMONG APEC MEMBERS.

"THIS SORT OF REGIONAL CO-OPERATION IS A VITAL COMPLEMENT TO MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS UNDER THE GATT.

"AND LIKE RIPPLES ON A POND CAN EXPAND OUTWARD TO EMBRACE OTHERS ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD," HE SAID.

MR MILLER ALSO PAID TRIBUTE TO THE CONTRIBUTION THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAD ALREADY BEEN MAKING TO THE WORK OF APEC.

HE NOTED THAT THOSE DOING BUSINESS IN THE REGION WERE BEST PLACED TO IDENTIFY THE IRRITATING LITTLE DIFFERENCES IN PROCEDURES, STANDARDS AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS WHICH, ALTHOUGH NOT FORMAL OR DELIBERATE BARRIERS TO TRADE, DID CREATE UNNECESSARY FRICTION AND DELAY.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1993

- 24 -

EUROPEAN BUSINESSMEN SHOW KEEN INTEREST IN HK

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EUROPEAN BUSINESSMEN ARE SHOWING A KEEN INTEREST IN THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG AND CHINA FOR LONG-TERM INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

THIS HAS BEEN THE FEEDBACK FROM DELEGATES TO BUSINESS SEMINARS HELD IN FRANKFURT AND AMSTERDAM AS PART OF THE "HONG KONG '93" PROMOTION IN EUROPE ORGANISED BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT. A THIRD SEMINAR WILL BE HELD IN PARIS ON FRIDAY.

MORE THAN 300 PEOPLE WERE AT TODAY'S SEMINAR IN AMSTERDAM'S RAI CONGRESS CENTRE AND LATER AT A LUNCHEON DURING WHICH THE CHIEF SECRETARY-DESIGNATE, MRS ANSON CHAN, GAVE A KEYNOTE ADDRESS.

SHE NOTED THAT IN A NUMBER OF KEY AREAS, THE NETHERLANDS HAD BEEN THE FIRST TO SIGN BILATERAL AGREEMENTS WITH HONG KONG WHICH WILL CONTINUE BEYOND 1997.

DUTCH COMPANIES WERE ALSO PLAYING A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AT CHEK LAP KOK, PARTICULARLY IN THE FORMATION OF THE AIRPORT PLATFORM.

EMPHASISING HONG KONG'S ROLE AS THE GATEWAY TO CHINA, MRS CHAN SAID THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINA'S ECONOMY AND MARKETS WAS HAVING THE MOST PROFOUND CONSEQUENCES NOT JUST FOR ITS OWN PEOPLE AND HONG KONG, BUT FOR THE WORLD AS A WHOLE.

SINCE ITS OPEN DOOR POLICY BEGAN IN 1978, DUTCH EXPORTS TO CHINA THROUGH HONG KONG HAVE INCREASED BY MORE THAN 1,700 PER CENT. TODAY ABOUT 40 PER CENT OF THE GOODS FLOWING BETWEEN THE NETHERLANDS AND CHINA PASS THROUGH HONG KONG.

ON HONG KONG'S FUTURE, MRS CHAN SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY SIGNED BY CHINA AND BRITAIN RECOGNISED TWO THINGS. NOT JUST THE RETURN TO CHINESE SOVEREIGNTY IN 1997, BUT THAT HONG KONG'S SYSTEM, ITS WAY OF LIFE FOUNDED ON FREE MARKETS OPERATING WITHIN THE RULE OF LAW WOULD ALSO BE PRESERVED!

SHE SAID THE JOINT DECLARATION LAID DOWN THE OVERALL FRAMEWORK FOR HONG KONG'S FUTURE AS A SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION (SAR) OF CHINA, INCLUDING THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE LEGISLATURE OF THE HONG KONG SAR "SHALL BE CONSTITUTED BY ELECTIONS".

ALTHOUGH THE BASIC LAW ELABORATED ON THIS TO SOME DEGREE, THE CURRENT SINO-BRITISH TALKS WERE CONCERNED WITH FILLING IN THE FINER DETAILS OF HOW THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE FUTURE LEGISLATURE TO BE A FULLY ELECTED BODY WAS TO BE MET.

"AS TIME IS NOT UNLIMITED, WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE AN INTENSIFICATION OF THOSE TALKS. AND WE HOPE VERY MUCH THAT AN AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED.

"BUT ANY AGREEMENT WILL NEED TO PROVIDE FOR ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS THAT ARE OPEN, FAIR AND ACCEPTABLE TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG," MRS CHAN SAID.

/"WE BELIEVE

"WE BELIEVE THIS TO BE THE BEST WAY OF ENSURING THE MAINTENANCE OF THE RULE OF LAW, OUR FREE, OPEN AND FAIR MARKETS AND GOOD, CLEAN GOVERNMENT - ALL OF WHICH ARE AT THE VERY HEART OF THE HONG KONG WAY OF LIFE."

MRS CHAN FLIES TO PARIS LATER THIS AFTERNOON WHERE TONIGHT (WEDNESDAY FRENCH TIME) SHE WILL OPEN A HONG KONG FILM FESTIVAL FEATURING 20 FILMS MADE BETWEEN THE EARLY 1980'S AND THIS YEAR AND REPRESENTING THE WORK OF FAMOUS HONG KONG MOVIE DIRECTORS.

TOMORROW (THURSDAY) THERE WILL BE MEETINGS WITH BUSINESS PEOPLE, A GALA DINNER AND FASHION SHOW ARRANGED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, AHEAD OF THE BUSINESS SEMINAR AND AIRPORT WORKSHOP ON FRIDAY.

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PUBLIC HEARING ON AUDIT REPORT

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THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE WILL HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING ON NOVEMBER 22 (MONDAY) FOLLOWING THE TABLING OF THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT'S REPORT NO.21 SETS OUT THE ACCOUNTS OF THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 1993 AND THE RESULTS OF VALUE FOR MONEY AUDITS.

THE HEARING WILL BE HELD IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER AT 9 AM.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO OBSERVE THE PROCEEDINGS FROM THE PUBLIC GALLERY. THEY MAY RESERVE SEATS BY CALLING 869 9492.

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THREE KOWLOON SITES TO LET

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THE LANDS DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR THE SHORT-TERM TENANCIES OF THREE LOTS OF GOVERNMENT LAND IN KOWLOON.

THE FIRST LOT, LOCATED IN WANG CHIU ROAD, KOWLOON BAY, HAS AN AREA OF ABOUT 5,450 SQUARE METRES.

IT IS EARMARKED FOR USE AS A FEE-PAYING PUBLIC PARKING AREA FOR MOTOR VEHICLES.

THE TENANCY IS FOR ONE YEAR, RENEWABLE QUARTERLY.

THE SECOND LOT AT WANG CHIU ROAD AND SHEUNG YEE ROAD, KOWLOON, HAS AN AREA OF ABOUT 1.32 HECTARES. IT IS INTENDED FOR USE AS A FEE-PAYING PARKING AREA FOR MOTOR VEHICLES.

THE TENANCY IS ALSO FOR ONE YEAR, RENEWABLE QUARTERLY.

/THE REMAINING

THE REMAINING LOT AT KING YIP STREET, KWUN TONG, HAVING AN AREA OF ABOUT 6,150 SQUARE METRES, IS DESIGNATED AS A FEE-PAYING PUBLIC PARKING AREA FOR MOTOR VEHICLES, INCLUDING CONTAINERS AND TRAILERS WITH THEIR PRIME MOVERS.

IT CARRIES A TENANCY OF TWO YEARS, RENEWABLE QUARTERLY.

CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDERS IS NOON ON DECEMBER 3.

FORMS OF TENDERS, TENDER NOTICE AND CONDITIONS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, KOWLOON EAST, 10TH FLOOR, YAU MA TEI CAR PARK BUILDING, 250 SHANGHAI STREET, KOWLOON AND THE LANDS DEPARTMENT, 14TH FLOOR, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG.

TENDER PLANS CAN ALSO BE INSPECTED AT THE OFFICES.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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	\$ MILLION

OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	2,180
REVERSAL OF LAF	+820
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	3,000
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	-815
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	2,185
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER	TWI 113.3 *+0.2* 17.11.93

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS		EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS				
TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	2.41 PCT	12 MONTHS	2411	4.625	101.27	3.35
1 MONTH	2.69 PCT	15 MONTHS	2502	4.75	101.55	3.50
3 MONTHS	2.85 PCT	18 MONTHS	2505	3.75	100.05	3.75
6 MONTHS	2.97 PCT	21 MONTHS	2508	4.625	101.25	3.91
12 MONTHS	3.33 PCT	35 MONTHS	3610	4.20	99.32	4.50

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 11,259MN

CLOSED 17 NOVEMBER 1993

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