



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Transcript of media session by Director of Administration

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Following is the transcript of the media session by the Director of Administration, Mr Richard Hoare, after the Joint Liaison Group expert talks on the Court of Final Appeal on June 1, 1995:

Hoare: I am sorry to keep you all waiting. It's been a long day for us as well as you. As Mr Chen has said, today the British side gave a positive response to the package of proposals that he put to us two days ago. And the situation is now that we are waiting for, or we will be waiting for Chinese's response to our positive response so to speak, and as Mr Chen has said, we hope that this would be forthcoming next week.

Q: Does this mean you are holding more talks?

Hoare: That's correct. That's Mr Chen has said.

Q: We did not understand Mr Chen, so.....

Hoare: Yes, as Mr Chen said, we hope to have the Chinese response next week, and then we will then obviously meet again to discuss that.

Q: inaudible ....

Hoare: We don't have any specific date yet for that meeting. I'm afraid there's nothing else I can say to you at this stage.

Q: What are the difficulties left at this stage? Will the Government put forward the Bill on schedule this month?

Hoare: I'm afraid I can't make any more comment at this stage. Thank you.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

Governor's question-and-answer session in LegCo

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Following is a transcript of the question-and-answer session by the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, in the Legislative Council today (Thursday):

Governor: Mr President, I'd like to begin by saying a few words about the Court of Final Appeal. When we proposed the Court of Final Appeal as one of the topics for discussion this afternoon, we had anticipated that this week's expert talks would have finished by now. As Members will know they were originally scheduled to last for two days, and we'd anticipated as well that I would therefore be able to report to the Council in broad terms what progress had been made. However, as Honourable Members may know, the talks are continuing today and indeed are taking place as I speak. In these circumstances I'm sure that Members will recognise that I'll need to be more than usually constrained, a polite word, in what I say on this topic this afternoon.

It's been our objective all along, as Members know, to proceed with a Court of Final Appeal Bill with China's agreement. We're engaged in detailed talks with the Chinese side to that end. I very much hope they will bear fruit. Members have urged the Administration to proceed with the Bill as soon as possible. So we have a common purpose in this respect at least. I would not wish anything said this afternoon to prejudice the possibility of a successful outcome to the talks in any way and I'm sure that Members would share that wish. However, I do of course recognise this Council's understandable desire to be kept closely informed of developments on this important issue. I can assure Members that the Administration will make a full statement on the outcome of the talks the moment we are in a position to do so.

Mr Lee Cheuk-yan (through interpreter): Thank you, Mr President. In the recent Hang Seng Report, an authoritative report, it indicates that this year the unemployment rate in Hong Kong will be 3.2 per cent and the report is of the view that imported workers compete for jobs with local workers. Therefore, various parties are concerned about unemployment rate pushed high up because of imported labour and we have been having workers being laid off.

So will the Government consider taking the following steps immediately: first, announcing immediately that for the general importation of labour scheme, it will be suspended immediately so that of the 25,000 imported workers, they will fade out in two years' time? And at present we have some 4,000 imported workers whose employers have already got a quota but they have not been imported into Hong Kong yet. Will the Governor immediately take action so that these imported workers will not be imported into Hong Kong? Thank you, Mr President.

Governor: I'm not so naive as to suggest that there is no relationship between the overall level of unemployment in Hong Kong and the importation of workers to Hong Kong, but nor am I so naive as to believe that there is a precise relationship between the importation of labour and the level of unemployment. In the early 80s when unemployment was far higher in Hong Kong than it is today, there was no importation of labour scheme, which is one example out of many of the fact that there are other reasons for the recent unwelcome increase in unemployment in Hong Kong and that we need to take, if I may say so, a rather more comprehensive view of the issue than is being suggested by the Honourable Member. Because if we were merely to follow his prescription I think we could finish up seeing unemployment continue to rise. We wouldn't be addressing some of the real issues.

Why is unemployment going up at the moment? I think there are two principal reasons and the one aggravates the other. First of all, there's been a slow down in consumer spending for a variety of reasons, into which we can go later if Honourable Members would like, and that has had an impact on employment in retailing, in interior decoration, in the catering industry and similar activities. Secondly, that has happened while there continues to be industrial restructuring in Hong Kong with some firms, particularly in the manufacturing sector but also in the service sector today, moving jobs to mainland China or elsewhere. Those two factors are, I believe, the main reasons for the level of unemployment in Hong Kong. There's also of course a mismatch between the jobless and the job vacancies. We have jobless figures of about 80,000, job vacancy figures of about 60,000 but we're not moving the jobless to the vacancies as adroitly and swiftly as any of us would like.

There are a range of issues that we have got to look at therefore in the areas of illegal immigration, in the area of abuse by foreign domestic helpers of their employment in Hong Kong. We've got to look at job placement, we've got to look at retraining and training and we've also, as I've made clear to the Honourable Member, we've also got to look at the importation of labour as well. We've proposed two measures. First of all we were previously under an obligation to review the general importation scheme by the end of the year. We've brought that review forward by three months, if we can do it more rapidly than that we will and we'll of course be discussing the outcome with the LegCo Manpower Panel and with the LAB in due course. Secondly, we've said that until that review is complete, they'll be no new quota allocated and that we've made abundantly clear, both to employers and to unions as well. I don't think that it would be sensible to suspend the general importation scheme before we've completed that review and I don't think it would be sensible to break what amount to contractual agreements already made with employers who are bringing in labour under the last quota.

But there are concerns expressed by unions about the way the scheme works. Some of those concerns have also been expressed by employers representatives. There are concerns about occasional abuses of the system. We have to look at those points in particular but we also have to look at the long-term relationship between the importation of labour and Hong Kong's competitiveness. What would be absolutely senseless would be to take short-term measures for short-term political gain at long-term economic cost to the community and I don't think that would be to anybody's advantage.

Mr Lee Cheuk-yan (through interpreter): I heard that we're going to have comprehensive strategies to tackle unemployment. Now I would like to know what immediately would be done? I just want to know what will the immediate measures be? In particular, next week we're going to have a summit, will the Government have any new proposals?

Governor: The principal purpose of that summit will be twofold and the purposes are similar to those of previous summit's we have had on subjects like the transport needs of those with disabilities, the employment needs of those with disabilities, drug abuse, all of which have, I think, proved worthwhile and have helped us to shape comprehensive strategies in those areas. The first purpose of the meeting I've called for next week is to try to develop a dialogue between the Administration, employers and unions, so that we can have a serious discussion rather than a shouting match over what is to the whole community an extremely important issue. I hope that we can promote a dialogue. I know that one or two Honourable Members have been suggesting this for some time rather than provoke an argument. Secondly, we will, of course, put forward our thoughts but we hope that unions and employers will put forward their ideas too. We don't think that we have a monopoly of wisdom in this area. We do think there are steps that we have to take straight away. I've mentioned some of them in the areas of job placement, in the areas of retraining. We have to take tougher measures against those who at present are working illegally. Those are all measures that we have to take as a matter of urgency but I hope in taking those measures and others, we won't lose sight of the overwhelming importance of retaining Hong Kong's competitiveness because unless we do that we'll see unemployment rising higher than it is today and that's something that all of us want to avoid.

Mr Henry Tang: Mr President, Governor, good afternoon. My question regards voter registration in the 21 old functional constituencies. I am sure today is the last day for registration as a voter and I do not expect that registration of the 21 old functional constituencies, with the exception of those who do not have to re-register, such as teachers, will be ideal. In fact it is substantially less than ideal. And I think there are a couple of reasons - and I also have a question after it.

I think one of the reasons is, for those working persons, about 2.7 million working persons who are in Hong Kong, are now registered under the nine new functional constituencies, and they all received this letter urging them to register in the old 21 FCs. And I don't know whether you personally have read this letter or not but this letter is mentally challenging, to say the least. My wife has a university degree; she received one of these - she read it twice and couldn't understand what it was talking about. So, she brought it home to me and I supposedly know quite a lot about this; I read it twice and I had to call up the enquiry number to make sure my understanding is correct. So I do urge you to read it, I think it will make very interesting reading.

But the result of it is that because it is a very confusing letter, so a lot of people just simply don't understand what is required of them, because what is required of them is positive action, not negative action like the nine new functionals. The nine new functionals, if a person is already a registered voter and the employer enters his name on the roster, then he needs to do nothing. He receives a letter from the Electoral Office saying that he is now registered in one of the nine new functionals. But at the same time, everybody in the old functional constituencies, the 21, have been cancelled, so therefore you have to take positive action to re-register yourself in one of the 21 old functionals.

Now, in some of the old functionals there's actually an accumulation of three elections, from 1985, 1988 and 1991, so therefore, first of all, why does the Electoral Office actually expect that an accumulation of three elections, of three registration exercises, what is the reason for cancelling, just taking everybody off the Electoral Roll, rather than just sending a letter to those who are registered in two - one of the old ones and one of the new ones - and asking them to elect which one do you wish to register in?

Governor: I won't dwell on some of the inherent virtues and perhaps difficulties of a system of functional constituencies, though I know that some Honourable Members, particularly one whose body-language we all much appreciate, have strong views on this subject. But if I can say at the outset, what I think has been interesting about the voter registration in the functional constituencies is that where we were told we would be facing insuperable problems, things have gone reasonably well. Not as well as anybody could have liked because everybody would like a hundred per cent registration, but things have actually gone reasonable well. Where, apparently, there was no difficulty or problem there have been larger challenges, including mental challenges. In the new functional constituencies we will have registered - which given that the geographical registration has to be, I think, the basis for our Electoral Roll - we will have registered somewhere around 900,000, maybe rather more when the books are finally closed. What that will actually mean is that with the older functional constituencies we will have about a million registered, which is I think fourteen times as many as were registered in functional constituencies the last time there were elections, which I regard - I'm sure everybody regards - as a welcome increase in participation by the community in voting in Hong Kong.

If one then turns to the older functional constituencies, the problem isn't quite, I think, as the Honourable Member mentioned, because the problem arises not in all the older functional constituencies but in those functional constituencies where previously there was corporate voting and we have insisted on individual voting. In the old functional constituencies where there was and remains individual voting, registration is higher; higher for doctors, higher for teachers, higher for all those other groups like engineers and accountants. I think in almost every sector the number who have actually registered to vote has increased. In some of the constituencies where there was corporate voting before, for example the one covering social welfare, the one covering labour, the number looks as though it will be higher. The problem arises in about half-a-dozen of the old functional constituencies where some Honourable Members used to complain, understandably, about the consequences of corporate voting, for example one person having the opportunity of casting many votes, and about the complications of multiple directorships.

I think that what the problems that we have encountered indicate above all, maybe that we need to look even harder at the way we explain the electoral arrangements in these constituencies. But what I think these problems with about half-a-dozen constituencies have underlined is how right we were to change the voting system where previously there was corporate voting, to individual voting. Because I think the scale of what may have been happening before is manifest when you compare the electoral registers. We have made considerable efforts in some of the industrial and commercial constituencies to which the Honourable Member referred, with Members of this Honourable Chamber, to actually encourage people to vote, and very often, I think we have not been able to succeed not because of the complexities involved but because of the fact that some of the directors of many companies haven't actually resided in Hong Kong for seven years. I think that one or two Honourable Members could give us some anecdotal evidence about what was done to register corporately in one or two constituencies in the last elections, not always with the objectives achieved that people had in mind.

But what I emphasise - what I emphasise - is that where we have individual voting in those older constituencies, following on from previous individual voting, the figures look encouraging. The problem is with half-a-dozen constituencies. We've tried very hard to spread the good news about what is now available - for bankers, for companies in the tourist industry, for the commercial and industrial constituencies which are represented in this Chamber, and if the results aren't as good as we would like, while I am sure that we have lessons to learn about communication, I think the real problems lie elsewhere.

I would just add one other word. At every stage, in the last couple of years, at every stage of our electoral cycle, people have said that we'd fall flat on our face. We had District Board Elections on a wholly democratic basis for the first time, and what was the result? More people voted in District Board Elections than ever before in Hong Kong. We had Municipal Council Elections for the first time on the basis of total democracy, and what was the result? More people voted in Municipal Council Elections than had ever voted in Municipal Council Elections before in Hong Kong. I'm sure that the Legislative Council Elections this September will be equally successful, even if not everybody in this Chamber is equally successful. And part of the credit for that should go to Mr Justice Woo and his colleagues on the Boundary and Election Commission who have, I think, done a superb job in often difficult circumstances and have done that job while retaining the respect of the whole community. We have, in Hong Kong, incredibly complicated electoral arrangements. It is part of our unique intellectually exciting progress towards democratisation, and after 1997, when the community can move swiftly to total democracy, it will all be much easier. In the meantime, with the Election Committee, with the functional constituencies, with registration across the board which attempts to be fair all round, there are complications but it is a mark of the maturity and good sense of the people of Hong Kong that they make these arrangements work so successfully. And nobody should be surprised that more and more and more of them wish to go and cast their ballots.

Mr Henry Tang: Mr President, Governor, actually, what you have mentioned about the old corporate voting, it's actually not a company who walked into the Electoral Office and cast its vote - but rather a nominee of the corporation - and this nominee --

Governor: They sometimes cast more than one vote.

Mr Henry Tang: Yes. No, actually he only had one vote. If he cast his vote in one of the old FCs, then he cannot cast his vote for another company in another FC, he can only vote once in the FC - unless he's an engineer, then he can have another vote in the engineering one. Actually, I do put it to you that that person is a real person of the company, so that person is already a registered voter. So there is actually very little reason to remove that person or to de-register him in this new exercise, because effectively, having deregistered him, if he were it is very likely that he will now become a new functional - the nine new functional voters - rather than the old one, simply because he would have to take positive action to become an old one rather than remain as a new one.

Governor: I am prepared to follow this slightly archaic point with the Honourable Gentleman outside the Chamber, but I think what he is suggesting is that whereas for other functional constituencies it would still be necessary to be on the geographical roll in order to be a functional constituency voter, in the old corporate constituencies I think the Honourable Member is suggesting that people should automatically be on the functional constituency register if they were on it before. One of the problems is that some of those who were clearly on the Corporate Voting Register before, don't qualify, for other reasons, to vote in Hong Kong. I think that has turned out to be a problem in a number of those constituencies. I assure the Honourable Member that while we are always happy to learn - and that goes, I know, for the BEC - they have tried very hard in those old functional constituencies, where the problem should inherently be less considerable than in the new functional constituencies. They have worked phones, they have written letters, they have contacted individual business organisations and individual LegCo Members. But it is interesting, at the end of the day we have found it easier to register 900,000 plus people in the new functional constituencies than to register a few thousand in the old Corporate Functional Constituencies, and that, I think, raises a number of exceptionally interesting questions.

Mr Ngai Shiu-kit: According to the official data the average registration rate of new functional constituencies is 40 per cent. That is far from the authorities' expectation. Is the Governor satisfied with this registration rate? Does the low registration rate mean that the election will lack representiveness?

Governor: Well, as I said a moment or two ago, any democrat like me would like to see 100 per cent registration and anything less than that is regrettable. What we've seen in Hong Kong in the geographical constituencies is a substantial increase in registration and we've set out to register in these functional constituencies and in my judgement, the Boundary and Election Commission have done pretty well to get as high as they have.

There are difficulties in carrying through the task. Not least because you have to be on the geographical register in order to qualify for a functional constituency vote. I don't think that's unreasonable. It's been the situation since 1985. We haven't started it afresh but what is fair? At the end of polling day, 14 times as many people will have had a chance in 1995 of voting in functional constituencies as voted in functional constituencies in 1991. I think that represents a considerable advance. We'll have about a million people voting in those functional constituencies, maybe a few more, maybe a few less and I hope it will be many more in functional constituency elections thereafter.

Mr Michael Ho (through interpreter): Mr President, I would like to ask a question that is related to my motion debate on itemised charges for hospital fees. The Secretary for Health and Welfare said something that was rather puzzling. The Secretary said that the median household income will be used as the basis for calculation of fees for hospitals. For those who have high income, they may have to pay itemised charges. I can offer a copy of the reply to the Governor for reference. For such a way of charging, it differs very greatly from the existing practice in principal. At present the hospital maintenance fee includes everything. If in future we have itemised charges and if the median household income is to be used as the basis for calculation, then too many low income families they'll have to pay high medical fees.

Mr Governor, I know that on the part of the Government it is debating the subject behind closed doors. There will not be another public consultation exercise on the subject. So Mr Governor, how can you set the mind of LegCo Members and members of the public at ease? We know that in September, after discussion in the Branch, how can we ensure that the proposal that comes out then will not mean that even those who are poor will have to pay itemised charges? Because at present for the median household income, it is at quite a low level. Many people cannot afford expensive medical fees.

Governor: I wasn't expecting to answer a question about itemised charges this afternoon but with my customary generosity of spirit I'm delighted to take this opportunity of answering and I hope not avoiding the Honourable Gentleman's question. I would just like to commend him for his good fortune yesterday. I understand the fact that I called a meeting at Government House in the early evening meant that he won his debate rather than lost it by one vote. I'm assuming of course, I hope correctly, that the three Government Members would have voted for the Administration.

The Honourable Member has raised a serious point and we've been trying to address it in two ways. First of all, by looking at those groups which can be particularly disadvantaged financially by a regime of charges. People like the chronically ill. Secondly, we've been considering ways in which existing resources, for example, through the Samaritan Fund, can be used to alleviate the burden of charges on some people who find themselves facing unexpectedly large bills for medical treatment. In deciding on the best way forward we'll, of course, want to take account of the views expressed in the Legislative Council yesterday. We'll of course want to take account of the views expressed outside this Chamber, for example the recent petition and we'll want to take account of the views of the Hospital Authority.

I don't think that this Council would be wise to argue for completely eliminating charges. I suspect that in this community, as in others over the coming years, we're going to find ourselves faced with the difficult consequences of a growing financial burden for health care and a growing reluctance on the part of the community to actually pay what is required for the technological and other advances in health care and I don't think it would be sensible to completely eliminate one small resource which helps to finance health care at the moment, that is charges. I think it makes more sense to try to rationalise charges and to ensure that nobody who is in need is either prevented from receiving medical treatment because of cost or is financially crippled as a result of needing medical treatment because of the high cost of charges. We must try to strike a balance but I think that balance would have been best struck in the amendment which unfortunately my honourable friends didn't have the opportunity of voting for yesterday.

Mr Michael Ho (through interpreter): Mr President, first of all I would like to thank the Governor for his support for my motion yesterday. Well yesterday night I learnt about the reply and I felt that there would be a change in the policy, that's why I asked the Governor the question today.

Now, as regards the concept of itemised medical charges I would like to say that we are now going to turn the collective responsibilities at present to a burden that is to be shared by individual households. I want to have a public consultation exercise on this change of policy. Can you tell me, from now on to September you will ask relevant government departments to conduct some kind of public consultation?

Governor: Well of course we're taking account of the views of the public, we're taking account of the views of the Hospital Authority and others. Unless we listen to what the community is saying we won't be able to come off with a policy in the Autumn which has the broadest possible support. What we all know, is that nobody much cares for charges for anything but we do have to find a way of funding the continuing development and improvement of our health service and at the margins, and it is at the margins, charges will I'm sure continue to have a role to play. But I repeat what I said earlier about the importance of dealing with particular groups and particular individuals in need, both by policy changes and by the resources allocated through things like the Samaritan Fund.

Dr Yeung Sum (through interpreter): Thank you, Mr President. As regards electoral registration, there may not be an increase in the number of registered voters but there is an increase in the number of people unemployed. Last night a bank announced 3.2% as the unemployment rate. I think it is just reasonable for us to stop importation of labour. I think the Governor should check what his officials said in the past. His officials somehow said that unemployment was not related to importation of labour. So I really hope that the Government will stop importing labour.

Now in your policy address in the coming October, I hope you will consider some points. Can the Government take the lead to employ certain retrained workers, because the Government is the biggest employer in Hong Kong? If you can take that lead you can encourage more people to follow suit. That is to employ retrained workers. Can you consider that?

Secondly, financial support. Can you relax the eligibility criterion for CSSA and can you also increase the CSSA amount? So can you consider moving in those two directions?

Governor: I gave quite a long, conceivably excessively long, answer on unemployment and the importation of labour earlier, so I don't want to repeat any of those points that I made. But while I know from looking at the press, from what people say to me, from the anecdotes I hear from Honourable Members and others, while I know that there is a gut feeling in the community that the rise in unemployment has something to do with the level of importation of labour, I do beg this Chamber not to take quite such a simplistic view. I don't believe there is a precise mechanistic relationship between the importation of labour and the level of unemployment. If you look at the figures for the importation of labour, I think you will find that under the general scheme there's actually been a fall in the number of workers in Hong Kong at the same time as unemployment itself has been rising. I don't seek to argue that there is no relationship between import of labour and unemployment but I don't think the relationship is quite as precise as some of the political arguments suggest.

The Honourable Member is entirely correct to draw attention to the importance of retraining and I think, if I may say so, that it's a particular challenge and particularly important for female employment in the labour market. If the Government were to particularly prioritise in taking on one group of workers or another, I don't quite understand how it would increase the total number who were employed. There's only a finite number of people who can be employed by Government and this Council would rightly criticise the Government if we took on more than were needed to discharge public services. If we prioritise one particular group it doesn't create more jobs. It merely redistributes jobs around the community. But we should give as much encouragement as possible to retraining and the best way of encouraging retraining is to make sure that we're retraining people for real jobs rather than retraining them for jobs that alas don't exist. That's why we want to try to tailor-make retraining and relate it much more closely to job vacancies and I think we have to work with unions and employers to accomplish that objective.

On CSSAs. I think the Honourable Member would be surprised, though doubtless gratified, if I were to announce this afternoon what I intend to say in my speech to the Legislative Council in the autumn. But my honourable friend, the Financial Secretary, has been discussing the next Budget with Honourable Members, I think we have an idea of the priority which many Honourable Members attach to CSSAs and I think Honourable Members must have some notion themselves of the fiscal parameters within which we work and intend to continue to work as a matter of good macro-economics and prudent financial management. But I think that all I can say beyond that is that the Honourable Member should watch this space.

Dr Yeung Sum (through interpreter): Well Mr President, in that case the Government doesn't have any concrete solution for the unemployed workers. The Government is always talking about reviews and reviews which have become a procrastinating tactic. So are we being told that we are to wait for the outcome of reviews calmly?

Governor: Well, I hope that whatever the Honourable Member and others do will be calm. I am challenged by the Honourable Member to repeat myself. There are things that we're doing and not just considering doing. There are actions we're taking and not just matters that we're reviewing. We're extending the job placement scheme from five local employment services to all nine local employment services across Hong Kong. It's a scheme that we only started recently. It's a scheme that we started with the intention of monitoring it and seeing if it needed to be extended later, but we've decided to extend it straightaway to the whole of the community and we hope that it puts more people in touch with job vacancies more rapidly. Secondly, we're attempting to relate retraining to vacancies in our existing programmes and I want to make it clear to the Honourable Member that so far as I'm concerned and so far as we're concerned, none of our efforts in the retraining field will be constrained by shortage of resources. Thirdly, we've doubled the number of people who were involved in trying to catch those who are illegally employed and we've also sharpened the penalties, stiffened the penalties for illegal employment. So those are three measures that have been taken straightaway and we intend to take more.

In the longer term what is the answer to the continuing export of some manufacturing and service jobs to other places in the region and to mainland China? The answer isn't to stop that process any more than it would have been five years or 10 years or 20 years ago. The answer is to try to ensure that we re-skill and upgrade the skills of the Hong Kong workforce and remain a competitive environment for investors and that we intend to do.

Hong Kong has gone through an industrial restructuring, a move from being a primarily manufacturing economy to a primarily service based economy without any of the high unemployment or long-term unemployment or social upheaval that has occurred in other similar developing economies or other developed economies and I want to see us continue to apply those lessons here in Hong Kong. I'm told that it's not just manufacturing industry or the more sophisticated service industries which have been exported. I'm told that now the majority of the "dim sum" that are eaten in Hong Kong are actually made outside Hong Kong, are actually made in mainland China. When that is happening it's a reminder of the importance of us being competitive in every sector and that must be the principal priority of the Government. But I want to repeat something I said earlier. I recognise the real passionate concern that Honourable Members, like the Honourable Member who has asked the question, feel about unemployment even though unemployment by international standards is, thank god, reasonably low. That is no argument for complacency; it's every argument for the Administration listening carefully to people like the Honourable Member and trying to convince him and others that the approach we're taking is the right one.

Miss Christine Loh: Thank you, Mr President. Governor, I would like to ask you a question on the Court of Final Appeal, knowing that discussions are on-going. However, I think you are well aware that the last sitting of this Council is going to be I think on the 26th July. Today is the 1st June. Many Members here have not actually had the benefit of really scrutinising the existing draft and if you are successful in negotiating something with the Chinese then presumably there will be areas of amendment. What do you think is the last day you can bring a Bill to us giving us still sufficient time to scrutinise the Bill during this session?

Governor: That's a very fair question to which I'm going to respond at a level of generality which the Honourable Member may not regard as entirely satisfactory. Soon.

Miss Christine Loh: Well, Governor, I think we can kind of also work backwards. But even if you were to gazette the Bill, let's say next week, and we expedite the hearing process, I mean you know we are already talking about perhaps the second week of June, so with time for CSA and so on, at the very most you're not going to give us more than three or four weeks effectively, maybe four weeks, to look at the Bill, if you brought it next week. But since you gave me such a short answer, perhaps the President would allow another question for me to make up.

I'm wondering, in your attempts to go back to the negotiating table you've decided to accept rather than to say you would consider some of the suggestions by the Preliminary Working Committee. You certainly did not afford this Council the same courtesy of asking us. So I'm just wondering why you would accept the PWC's suggestions straightaway without ever bothering even to come to us to consult us?

Governor: Can I add to soon, we would have liked to have been able to bring the Bill to this Council a great deal earlier. I would have liked to have brought the Bill to the Council back in February or March. The reason that we haven't is because, and I had the impression from the debate recently that this is perhaps an objective which most Honourable Members share, we didn't bring the Bill to the Council because we hadn't yet got the endorsement of the Chinese side for a Bill which in our judgement faithfully reflects the 1991 agreement. I would greatly prefer, the Chief Secretary would greatly prefer, the whole community would greatly prefer to be in a position in which we can legislate on a basis of consensus. But what I think this Chamber and I hope the community feels, is that we can't go on like this indefinitely and that's why we've made it absolutely clear that we intend to put legislation before this Council in this session.

On the Honourable Member's other point. In all the legislation that we bring forward we take account of views that are put by this Legislative Council and we don't always need a formal exchange with the Council in order to have a pretty clear idea of what its views are. We had, I'm bound to say much to my predecessor's and my chagrin, the initial views of the Council on the 1991 agreement in 1991. We've had the views of the Council more recently. We've taken account of the views of the legal profession which have often reflected the views of some individual Legislative Council Members. So I don't think that we can be accused of having closed our ears and eyes to the debate that's been going on in the community about the Court of Final Appeal. At the end of the day I hope that we can go ahead with a Bill which has the broadest possible support in ensuring that Hong Kong continues to enjoy a jurisdiction similar, the same, as that at present discharged by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. That's my simple objective. Working within the context of the agreement between Britain and China in 1991.

Mrs Peggy Lam: (through interpreter) Thank you Mr President. Mr Governor, all along you have been saying that the Hong Kong Government is an open and fair government that treats people fairly and equally. But recently, some residents feel that that is not borne out by certain facts. The question is: in Hong Kong we do have cottage areas - I don't know whether the areas of cottage areas should be included in this session but a moment ago, the Governor allowed Mr Ho to ask a question outside the five topics, so my question is as follows.

In Ching Man Tsuen and Wesley Village we have cottage areas, and recently, because of dangerous slopes in the vicinity, the Government asked the occupiers to move out. But when they move out they don't get compensation. For these people, they purchased their accommodation several decades ago. Their accommodation was put up by churches to accommodate fire victims and so on but then the residents purchased their accommodation but now the Government asked them to move out, but no compensation will be paid and therefore many occupiers were not happy; they have been lodging complaints with us. So my question to the Governor is:

For Tiu Keng Leng or Rennie's Mill, for the cottage areas there the residents got ex gratia payments, so why is it that the same cannot be done for the residents in the areas I've mentioned. The residents have been living there happily for long periods of time and now they are asked to move out by the Government. In the beginning they purchased their accommodation. Why is it that no compensation is paid to them? So, Mr Governor, how can you tell these residents that the Hong Kong Government is fair and open?

Governor: The Honourable lady has demonstrated how unwise I was to answer the admiral question from Mr Ho. But just to show how open and fair I am, I will respond briefly to the Honourable lady in a way which I hope is eventually, if not initially helpful. The Honourable lady will know and will, I'm sure, have explained to her constituents, what the long-standing arrangements of the Hong Kong Government are for compensating those who are moved because of the requirements of resettlement policy or for other reasons. Most of my senior secretaries have spent parts of their public service career dealing with resettlement cases in various parts of the territory and will be as familiar as the Honourable lady is with the difficulties involved, not least because people always want more financial compensation than is offered; it's part of the human story.

The particular problems associated with the cottage areas to which the Honourable lady refers have not, I have to confess, alas, been brought to my notice on previous occasions but I will write to the Honourable lady a comprehensive reply on the issue which I hope will satisfy her, and it would be nice if it satisfied those concerned as well but I will leave that to the formidable eloquence of the Honourable lady.

Dr C H Leong: Thank you Mr President. Governor, it would be ungentlemanly and perhaps not the right thing to ask you, are you happy with the Democratic Party and the itemised charges, or are you happy with the Administration, but I'm going to change the subject and I'm going to ask about, to follow up on what Mr Henry Tang has mentioned about elections and the registration of voters.

Mr Tang did mention and you answered rightly that there has been a lot of, perhaps, previous confusion which has been settled in the so-called corporate votes. But even in the older functional constituencies which are concerned with individual voting there are lots of, perhaps, areas which have not been settled and which have produced a lot of problems. I am referring to my own older functional - not the oldest profession - the older professional constituency.

Because of the fact that doctors also belong to the public service and because of the fact that a lot of doctors, basically, are employees - for example they are employees of the Hospital Authority - a lot of them are therefore listed for one reason or another into the ninth new functional constituency. The result is that even up to a few weeks ago there were still some 4,000 registered doctors and dentists who were not yet registered. I wonder if the Governor would consider looking at this and extend the date of registration so that some of these could be ironed out. On my part we have been sending out letters to them to clarify the matter and I think Government has done the same thing, but still there is a lot of confusion.

Governor: Despite that, I know that the Honourable Member will be pleased that the registration in a constituency whose perceptiveness and wisdom in electoral matters I'm sure the Honourable Member would endorse, that registration in that constituency is up by about ten per cent in the overall figure, from last time. Where members of a profession or another group could vote in more than one functional constituency, the Honourable Member knows the arrangements which are open to them. It may be that we need to look at those arrangements anew after this election and try to make them even more user or voter friendly. But I think there are quite strong arguments against extending the registration period beyond June 1 because we are only a couple of months away - yes, a couple of months away - from nominations opening for the LegCo Elections and I think that people, frankly, will want to get on with the job of preparing for those elections without having a longer period for registration. But we may need to look at the arrangements for the future.

Dr C H Leong: Thank you Mr President. I would just like to remind the Governor that ten per cent is a very small number in my constituency simply because of the fact that there has been a lot of new graduates since the last registration. After all, there was no voting in 1991.

Governor: That is perfectly true, though I doubt whether there are many, except the very brightest of the Honourable Member's constituents, who have come on to the Register as doctors because of our reduction in the voting age from 21 to 18. But we will certainly look at the points that the Honourable Member made.

Mr Roger Luk: Thank you Mr President. My question is on employment. Governor, the focus of retraining has been on assisting displaced manufacturing workers to take up employment in the service sector. But with the recent developments in the service sector, in particular the closure of major hotels and department stores, will the Government review the retraining policy in this light?

Governor: Yes, certainly. We do need to ensure that retraining deals adequately with the needs of an economy which is now so heavily service based. It doesn't mean that manufacturing isn't important. I suppose about 14% of our workforce is still working in manufacturing. But given the importance of services to the economy, we have to make sure that retraining reflects that. And if I may say so, in reviewing the Labour Importation Scheme we have to consider what is happening in both manufacturing employment and service employment. So I hope we can be as positive and sensible as the Honourable Member has suggested.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

Governor's media session on proposals to beat drug

\* \* \* \* \*

The following is a transcript of the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten's media session after receiving a report on proposals to beat drugs today (Thursday):

Governor: Good afternoon. As you know, at the Drug Summit that I hold in March, we set out details of our Thirty Million Programme for beating drugs. We set out our ideas in a number of areas: law enforcement, preventive education, treatment and rehabilitation and research. But we didn't just set out our own ideas, we asked for other people's and the participants at the Summit gave us over 90 ideas of their own for continuing the campaign more comprehensively against drug abuse in Hong Kong.

I said at the time that I would ask the Chairman of ACAN and the Commissioner for Narcotics to look at those proposals as a matter of urgency and report back to me within three months, and I am delighted to say that they have done that in rather more rapid time than we had expected. We've got their report today and they will be publishing it and letting you have copies, letting everyone involved in the Campaign Against Drug Abuse have copies, and I think they are giving a briefing in the Commissioner's office for those of you who wish to attend later on this afternoon.

They set out, endorsed by ACAN, their views on how we can pick up some of the ideas that were put at the Summit. Some of them are ideas for Government, some of them are ideas for Government and Voluntary Agencies, some of them are ideas for Voluntary Agencies themselves, but they are another indication of the fact that all of us have a contribution we can make to this campaign.

I am delighted that this afternoon Andy Lau is making clear his own commitment to our Beat Drugs Campaign and that is something which will be welcomed. There is a role for everyone in the community in this important campaign.

In the document which you will see there are a number of proposals we are intending to take forward. For example, an improvement and an enhancement of education about drugs in our schools, targeting more of our efforts and activities on those children who we think may be particularly at risk, and - and it is an issue that was raised with me at one of our rehabilitation centres recently - we are also going to ensure that young people who have recovered from drug-abuse are able to slip back into the school system more easily than has been the case in the recent past.

Some of the ideas that we are putting forward involved reallocating resources or using resources more effectively. Some may involve new resources and we will be taking account of those bids for additional financial assistance in our public expenditure discussions within Government. There is one particular proposal which I know has attracted a great deal of interest and that is the suggestion that we should set up an anti-drugs fund, a special fund to help to finance activities in our Beat Drugs Campaign. And it is further suggested that we should put into that fund the confiscated assets of those who have been found guilty of drug-running and so on, that we should put the results of their confiscated assets into a fund to deal with drug-abuse and to fund anti-drug activities. There are problems with that proposal, some of which were referred to at the Summit. For example, it is not a very sure way of financing a fund. But nevertheless, we think the idea of a fund has a good deal of inherent merit and we are proposing to come back ourselves with a workable proposal for a fund as soon as we can. So we want to take that idea forward positively.

I will, of course, be continuing to take an active interest in the work that is done by the Commissioner, by ACAN and by others. We are, I think, putting together a good and comprehensive programme but it needs a great deal of energy and drive from all concerned and I will continue to make visits to activities associated with the Beat Drugs Campaign, one of the features of my diary, in the coming weeks and months.

Question: How real a possibility is it that confiscated assets from drugs could be re-diverted into this fund and what will the fund be made up of (inaudible)?

Governor: It is a real possibility but as your question implies, topping-up a fund with an amount of cash which is by definition variable, doesn't have all the certainty which is required if you are using a fund for recurrent financing or for providing cash to support projects in a regular way. So we need to look at the other basis for a fund. But I do think that there are attractions and merits in the idea, so we are going to try to work out how it could work positively and we are very pleased that ACAN themselves are going to look at the idea and give us the benefit of their advice.

Question: Do you think that a workable solution might be to have a concrete basis for a fund and then for it to be topped-up by confiscated assets?

Governor: I think that is one of the ways forward. That is one of the ways we need to look at.

Question: Do you think it might have a considerable effect on the morale of law enforcement agencies (inaudible) and agencies as well, if the direct proceeds of (inaudible)?

Governor: Yes I do. I think one of the attractions of the idea of using confiscated assets in that way is to allow people to see, not least those in the law enforcement area, that there is a direct and positive effect of their activities, not just in locking-up criminals and those people who engage in this obscene trade, but also actually providing some positive assistance for those who are suffering.

Question: It occurs to me there is going to be an increase in the current Government expenditure on a regular basis for agencies involved (inaudible)

Governor: That is what we are considering as part of our public expenditure discussions.

Question: How much more money?

Governor: That is what we are considering as part of our public expenditure discussions.

Question: So where (inaudible) to provide the basis for this fund? What kind of sources would (inaudible)?

Governor: Government is one of them but there may be others as well. But I don't want to give you a comprehensive reply on that until we have heard from ACAN who are themselves looking at it at the moment and I want to get the benefit of their advice. But I would just like to underline the point that this campaign is for the Government, as it is I believe for the community, a real priority, and that when you have got a priority like this you have - to use a rather vulgar expression - to put your money where your mouth is.

Question: Do you think the drug problem is very serious in the territory right now?

Governor: I think the problem has been getting worse. It is not as serious as it is in some other communities but that is no reason for complacency, because the figures in particular for drug-abuse by the young, have risen and are worrying and that is one of the reasons why we have given the campaign this priority. And it is one of the reasons as well, why we are delighted that somebody with all the prestige of Andy Lau is associating himself in a very positive way with the campaign.

Question: Considering all these proposals when will the Government make a final decision?

Governor: The final decision, I suppose, will be in our public expenditure discussions this summer. But you will see that quite a lot of these ideas involve other people as well as the Government, so I think it will be an ongoing business.

Question: Bearing in mind that (inaudible) two years (inaudible) are there any guarantees (inaudible)?

Governor: We have to carry the community with us, we have to carry neighbourhoods with us. It is a problem that we have experienced, not just in this area, it is a problem we have also experienced, as you know, in carrying through as rapidly as we wanted our programme to help those with handicaps. But I'm sure we will get there.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

#### Environmental Impact Assessment Bill discussed

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The Land and Building Advisory Committee (LABC) held its 37th meeting today (Thursday) and discussed the proposed Environmental Impact Assessment Bill.

Chaired by Mr Cheng Hon-kwan, the Committee was briefed that the bill sought to make it a requirement that an Environmental Permit should be issued by the Director of Environmental Protection for a list of Designated Projects considered to be of significant environmental impact.

The project proponent should prepare an Initial Environmental Report based on which the Director of Environmental Protection would determine the environmental acceptability of the project and whether a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment study would be required.

To carry out Designated Projects without a Permit, or not in accordance with the conditions on the Permit would be liable to a maximum fine of \$5 million and a custodial sentence.

It was expected the bill would be introduced to the Legislative Council in late 1995.

Members were also briefed on the Buildings (Amendment) (No.2) Bill 1995 which was introduced to the Legislative Council yesterday (Wednesday). The bill seeks to introduce new measures to ensure safety on construction and demolition sites.

The bill also provides for a new system of registration for contractors in two categories: general and specialist. A key requirement will be that the contractors' qualifications, experience and competence will be assessed by a statutory committee, whose membership will include representatives of the concerned industry associations and professional bodies. In addition, registration will be personal to an individual.

The Committee noted that although the professions and the industry welcomed the clearer definition of statutory duties among the parties concerned, it was concerned that amendment should be extremely well considered so as not to confuse or distort the balance of duties and responsibilities between the Authorised Person, Registered Contractor and Owner.

Noting the Director of Buildings' undertaking to consult all parties concerned on details, the Committee set up an ad hoc committee under the chairmanship of the Deputy Secretary for Planning, Environment and Lands to facilitate early dialogue.

The Committee was also briefed on the recommendations on the streamlining of the Town Planning Board procedures.

These recommendations included the setting up of committees to hear objections to Outline Zoning Plans, the provision of a legal adviser in Town Planning Board meetings, the establishment of an independent Secretariat and expansion of the Secretariat.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

### Governor receives report on anti-drugs proposals

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The Government is considering the idea of setting up a special fund for financing anti-drugs activities, the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, said today (Thursday).

This was one of the 92 proposals put forward by participants at a summit meeting on drugs held on March 6. It would build on the \$30 million 26-point package announced by the Governor at the end of the summit.

All the proposals made at the summit meeting have been studied carefully by a special action group led by the Chairman of the Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN), Professor C N Chen, and the Commissioner for Narcotics, Mr Alasdair Sinclair.

Professor Chen and Mr Sinclair today presented to the Governor a report on the results of their examination of the proposals.

The Governor welcomed the report which, he said, outlined the sensible and worthwhile nature of many of the proposals and suggested how they might be taken forward.

He pledged to keep a very close watch on progress of the Government's consideration of the recommendations in the report.

Mr Patten noted that the report had suggested that a special drugs fund could be financed by recycling confiscated assets.

"This is not straightforward, not least because of the unpredictable nature of topping up a fund on this basis. But we will look at this idea again, together with other possible ways of financing a special fund; and we will certainly come up with a clear and workable proposal," he said.

"I understand that ACAN will be examining this recommendation at their meeting later this month," he said: "I would very much welcome any further views they may have."

The 92 proposals put forward at the summit meeting comprise 17 on law enforcement, 44 on preventive education, 18 on treatment and rehabilitation, and 13 on research.

After receiving the report in person from Professor Chen and Mr Sinclair at the Government House today, the Governor commented: "I am most grateful to ACAN and others for putting together the report so quickly."

Examples given by the Governor of action to be taken by Government stemming from the report were:

- \* Promoting preventive drug education in schools and checking that it is provided.
- \* Identifying children at risk and making sure that preventive programmes are targeted at them.
- \* Ensuring that young people recovering from drug abuse are able to re-enter the school system if they wish to do so.

Other recommendations in the report included providing factual information on drug abuse and trafficking to every school in the territory.

A recommendation was also made on the need to ensure that children and young people undergoing residential treatment and rehabilitation did not miss out on their education.

The Governor said: "I will be asking my officials in the relevant branches and departments of government to let me have detailed proposals for future action across the board. I will make sure that all those who attended the summit are kept in the picture on progress.

"As far as Government action is concerned, we will be taking the proposals forward energetically."

"We cannot afford to ease up on the growing problem of drug abuse. If we keep at it, we can beat it," Mr Patten stressed.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

### Investigation into aircraft accident taking place

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The Director of Civil Aviation, Mr Peter Lok Kung-nam, who is also the Chief Inspector of Accidents announced today (Thursday) that an Inspector's investigation was taking place into the cause of the serious accident which occurred on May 28 (Sunday) at the Hong Kong International Airport to a Boeing 747-400 aircraft VR-HOX registered and operated by Cathay Pacific Airways.

A public notice will be published in the local press calling for representations on the cause of the mishap.

On Sunday night shortly after take-off, the Frankfurt-bound aircraft returned to the airport when its No. 2 engine caught fire.

Any persons interested in making representation as to the circumstances or cause of the incident should write to the Chief Inspector of Accidents c/o The Civil Aviation Department, 46th Floor, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway within 14 days of the notice.

Alternatively, they can telephone the department's Investigation Team at 2769 8896 within a fortnight.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

### Wong Wai Tsak Tong Bill gazetted

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The Government gazetted today (Thursday) the Wong Wai Tsak Tong (Renewal and Extension of Sub-leases) Bill.

The Bill seeks to resolve the disputes between the Wong Wai Tsak Tong and its sub-lessees on Cheung Chau by regulating the relationship between the two parties.

The Bill proposes that all sub-leases which expire before the commencement of the legislation and in the past had been registered in the Land Registry, will be deemed to have been renewed from the date of expiry.

New sub-leases will be deemed to be granted from the date of commencement of the legislation to June 27, 2047.

The Bill also proposes that government rent will payable directly to the Government by the sub-lessees whose sub-leases are renewed under the Bill.

From July 1, 1997, the government rent will be set at three per cent of the rateable value of the property as provided in Annex III to the Joint Declaration.

Certain sub-leases are excluded from the renewal and payment of government rent provisions. These are sub-leases which have been granted or renewed for terms extending beyond November 9 last year and under which the Tong and the sub-lessee have agreed on the amount of rent payable to the Tong after June 30, 1997.

These sub-leases are excluded because the Government does not see the need to interfere with private contracts freely entered into.

In addition, the Bill proposes that the Director of Lands may approve applications from sub-lessees for modifications and exchanges of the sub-leased land.

Unless the Tong puts forward valid grounds of objection, it will be deemed to have agreed to the application and will be entitled to charge sub-lessees an amount equal to 10 per cent of the premium payable to the Government in respect of the modifications and exchanges.

If the Bill is enacted, sub-lessees will have certainty as to their sub-leases through to June 27, 2047. They will pay government rent direct to the Government.

The Tong will not be able to delay development proposals requiring modifications and exchanges. As a result, the source of much of the friction between the sub-lessees and the Tong should be removed.

A Government spokesman said: "The Bill provides an objective, practical and fair solution to the disputes between the Tong and its sub-lessees. It will be introduced to the Legislative Council on June 7, 1995."

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

Research provides the basis for policy formulation

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The Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN) regards research as providing the indispensable basis for effective policy formulation, the Commissioner for Narcotics, Mr Alasdair Sinclair, said today (Thursday).

"Throwing money at the drug problem, or any other problem, is unlikely to achieve very much unless you understand the problem and know what sort of action stands the best chance of succeeding," he said.

In a speech entitled "Understanding illicit drug abuse: the search for solutions" delivered at a luncheon meeting hosted by the Rotary Club of Hong Kong North, Mr Sinclair said Hong Kong was fortunate to have a very good Central Registry of Drug Abuse, one of the most comprehensive and longest established in the world.

The Commissioner revealed that among other research projects to be started this year by the Research Sub-committee of ACAN would be a study to review treatment programmes.

"The outcome of the study will help ACAN to advise on the future direction of service provision," he said.

"There are many different treatment programmes in Hong Kong, run by a variety of government and non-government organisations, adopting a number of approaches.

"We will be looking at their objectives, their modes of operation, the characteristics of their clients, and their performance."

However, Mr Sinclair noted that as each programme had its own objectives, it was not meaningful to draw up a league table of success rates.

"We prefer to examine rehabilitation programmes in a wider perspective without going into relative effectiveness," he said.

Mr Sinclair said there were six other research projects being planned for the year. They are:

- \* a study of drug progression patterns;
- \* an analysis of the characteristics of methadone patients;

- \* a follow-up study of former clients of the Society for the Aid and Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers;
- \* a study of female drug abusers;
- \* a comparison of the drug abuse situation in Hong Kong and selected countries in the region and in the west; and
- \* an evaluation of the impact of anti-drug messages presented at school talks.

The Research Sub-committee is set up under ACAN to identify and conduct research projects which will be helpful for policy development and to monitor relevant research carried out by other agencies, locally and overseas.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

#### Appointments to the Securities and Futures Commission

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The Financial Secretary is pleased to appoint Messrs Paul Gallagher, Liang Xiao-ting, Leong Ka-chai and Patrick Wang as members of the Advisory Committee to the Securities and Futures Commission (SFC) from June 1, 1995, to May 31, 1997, the Secretary for Financial Services, Mr Michael Cartland, announced today (Thursday).

Eight of the current members are re-appointed for a further term. They are Messrs Henry Cheng Kar-shun, Henry Cheong Ying-chew, Victor L L Chu, Henry Fan Hung-ling, Paul Fan Chor-ho, Philip J S Gray, Kevin A Westley and Dr Alex Wu Shu-chih.

The appointments have been made by the Financial Secretary acting under delegated authority from the Governor in respect of section 10 of the SFC Ordinance.

The membership of the Advisory Committee also includes two executive directors appointed by the SFC, while the Chairman of the SFC presides at the Committee's meetings.

"The members are drawn from a cross-section of the securities and futures industries, as well as other professional fields, to advise the SFC on matters of policy and market development," Mr Cartland said.

Mr Cartland also thanked the retiring members, Messrs Richard Margolis, Wataru Yamaguchi, Lincoln Yung and Zhou Zhen-xing for their work on the Committee.

"Their contribution to the SFC has been greatly appreciated by all at the Commission and in the Administration," Mr Cartland said.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

#### Board to review Outline Zoning Plan

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The Governor-in-Council has referred the Tsing Yi Outline Zoning Plan (No. S/TY/10) to the Town Planning Board for further consideration and amendments to take account of changing circumstances and the latest planning proposals, a spokesman for the Board announced today (Thursday).

The plan was last approved by the Governor-in-Council last year.

"The Board will revise the plan, which, after incorporating the latest amendments, will be exhibited for public inspection in due course," the spokesman said.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

#### Mui Wo Fringe Outline Zoning Plan published

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The Town Planning Board today (Thursday) announced the publication of the draft Mui Wo Fringe Outline Zoning Plan (No. S/I-MWF/1).

"The plan area, which is about 242 hectares, is currently covered by the approved Mui Wo Fringe Development Permission Area Plan.

"The Outline Zoning Plan replaces the Development Permission Area Plan and provides a more detailed framework for the use and development of the land in the Mui Wo fringe area," a spokesman for the Board said.

On the plan, about 12 hectares of land have been zoned "Village Type Development". They include four recognised indigenous villages of Pak Ngan Heung, Mui Wo Kau Tsuen, Tai Tei Tong and Luk Tei Tong, as well as their adjoining land for village expansion.

Meanwhile, about 27 hectares of land have been zoned "Residential (Group D)". Within this zone, redevelopment of the existing temporary domestic accommodations with permanent materials is encouraged for general upgrading of the living environment.

To safeguard good quality agricultural land currently under active farming and to promote rehabilitation of good quality fallowed farmland, about 28 hectares of land have been zoned "Agriculture".

To encourage developments of active recreation and tourism in the Mui Wo fringe area which is already a popular holiday spot, about 18 hectares of land have been zoned "Recreation".

Another nine hectares of land have also been reserved for the development of local government and community facilities and open space to serve the population.

The remaining areas, measuring about 145 hectares, are mainly well vegetated foothills and isolated knolls. They have been zoned "Green Belt" to reflect their existing character and to protect them from development.

The draft plan is available for public inspection until August 1 at:

- \* Planning Department,  
16th floor, Murray Building,  
Garden Road, Hong Kong
  
- \* Lantau and Islands District Planning Office,  
10th floor, Leighton Centre,  
Leighton Road, Causeway Bay,  
Hong Kong; and
  
- \* Islands District Office,  
20th floor, Harbour Building,  
Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

Any person affected by the draft plan may submit written objection to the Secretary of the Town Planning Board, c/o Planning Department, 13th floor, Murray Building before August 1.

Copies of the draft plan can be bought at the Survey and Mapping Office, Lands Department, 14th floor, Murray Building, and the Kowloon Map Sales Office, ground floor, 382 Nathan Road, Kowloon.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

Notice for removal of grave

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The Government posted today (Thursday) Crown Land Ordinance Notice on the twin Tang clan grave at Nim Wan which has to be moved for the construction of the West New Territories (WENT) Landfill.

The Notice requires any occupier of the land upon which the Tang grave is located to cease such occupation before June 30, 1995.

A Government spokesman said: "If the grave is not removed before June 30, 1995, it will be liable to removal by Government without further notice."

He rejected suggestions that the removal of the grave would be in breach of the laws of Hong Kong and said: "The grave has to be removed to make way for the WENT Landfill and this is not the first time that a grave has had to be removed for a public works project."

The spokesman expressed the hope that the Government might still come to an agreement with the Tangs for voluntary removal of the grave.

He said Government representatives would be happy to discuss the relocation of the grave to an alternative site with their representatives.

He added that the Government had also offered to make ex-gratia payment of about \$1.7 million to enable the villagers to relocate the grave.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

Allocation of spectrum to mobile radiotelephone operators

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The Telecommunications Authority (TA), Mr Alexander Arena, announced today (Thursday) that he had decided to allocate two blocks of 0.6 MHz of cellular spectrum to each of the existing four Public Mobile Radiotelephone Services (PMRS) operators: Hutchison Telephone Co Ltd, Hong Kong Telecom CSL Ltd, Pacific Link Communications Ltd and SmarTone Mobile Communications Ltd.

This allocation is temporary, being for one year from July 1, 1995 to June 30, 1996 in order to meet the consumer demand and to maintain, and improve, the quality of service provided to customers.

"The cellular services in Hong Kong have now passed half a million customers. With a growth rate of four to five per cent per month, more than 20,000 new customers are joining cellular service every month," Mr Arena said.

"However, under the current spectrum plan, there is no available spectrum in the existing PMRS frequency bands to cater for this growth in demand.

"In fact the current plan calls for two blocks of 2.65 MHz of spectrum to be returned by operators on June 30, 1995. This returned spectrum will now be divided up and re-allocated to each operator to alleviate congestion problems.

"Since the temporary allocation of spectrum to the existing PMRS operators will be for one year to mid-1996 and all operators have to adhere to the original spectrum transition plan from the year 1996 to 2000, the up-coming Personal Communications Services should not be unduly affected when they begin to launch commercial service following licensing later this year. The temporary arrangement should be welcomed by the existing customers and the industry as a whole."

A statement has been issued by the TA on this temporary allocation of spectrum and may be obtained from the Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA) (telephone: 2961 6624, fax: 2803 5112) or by dialing into the electronic bulletin board service of OFTA (telephone: 2834 0119).

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

Board amends Mid-Levels West Outline Zoning Plan

\* \* \* \* \*

The Town Planning Board today (Thursday) announced amendments to the draft Mid-Levels West Outline Zoning Plan (No. S/H11/6).

The amendments include the rezoning of four sites of about 0.6 hectare in total around Prince's Terrace and Castle Steps area from "Residential (Group A)" to "Residential (Group C)7" in order to restrict development or redevelopment to a maximum plot ratio of five and a maximum building height of 12 storeys.

The restriction is considered necessary from the view points of traffic, fire safety and convenience because the area has no direct vehicular access.

Technical amendments to the notes of the plan have also been made to take into account the changing circumstances.

The amendment plan (No. S/H11/7) is available for public inspection until June 22 at:

- \* Planning Department,  
16th floor, Murray Building,  
Garden Road, Hong Kong;
- \* Hong Kong District Planning Office,  
11th floor, Leighton Centre,  
77 Leighton Road, Hong Kong; and
- \* Central and Western District Office,  
Public Enquiry Service Centre,  
ground floor, Harbour Building,  
38 Pier Road, Hong Kong.

Any person affected by the amendment plan may submit written objection to the Secretary of the Town Planning Board, c/o Planning Department, 13th floor, Murray Building before June 22.

Copies of the draft plan can be bought at the Survey and Mapping Office, Lands Department, 14th floor, Murray Building, and the Kowloon Map Sales Office, ground floor, 382 Nathan Road, Kowloon.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

Nominations from nine specified arts interests invited

\* \* \* \* \*

The Hong Kong Arts Development Council Ordinance enacted by the Legislative Council on May 3 this year comes into effect today (Thursday).

Under the ordinance, the Council shall consist of a chairman, a vice-chairman, 16 other non-official members each of whom shall be appointed by the Governor, and four ex-officio members.

The 16 non-official members may include up to nine persons nominated by arts organisations for consideration for appointment by the Governor.

The ordinance also enables the Governor to specify, by notice in the Gazette, up to nine organisations or groups of organisations each of which shall be representative of nine specified categories of arts interests, namely: literary arts, music, dance, drama, visual arts, film arts, arts administration, arts education and arts criticism.

A spokesman for the Recreation and Culture Branch noted that the arts community would take some time to organise themselves and to complete the entire specification and nomination process. The Government will also need time to evaluate and process the results.

"It has therefore been decided that for the first term of office of the Council, the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the 16 other members should all be appointed directly by the Governor for a period of seven months with effect from June 1.

"The Council's second term of office will be for two years commencing from January 1, 1996. At that time, it is intended to include up to nine members who will have been nominated by each of the up to nine specified organisations," he added.

Applications are now invited for consideration for specification by the Governor as one of the nine specified organisations or groups of organisations.

Applications should include those documents and evidence which are relevant to the criteria as set out in paragraph 5 of the "Guidelines for Representative Arts Organisations and for their nominees for membership of the Council" issued by the Recreation and Culture Branch early last month.

Enquiries on matters relating to specification can be directed to Assistant Secretary for Recreation and Culture Mr Raymond Tam on tel 2594 5614 (fax 2802 4893) or to Executive Officer (Culture) Mr Benedict Wong on tel 2594 5622.

Applications should be submitted to the Secretary for Recreation and Culture (Attn: Mr Benedict Wong), Recreation and Culture Branch, 40th floor, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong, on or before August 31.

To answer any questions relating to the nomination process, the Recreation and Culture Branch will organise a public forum on June 28 this year.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

#### Improvement road works in Tai Po and Sheung Shui proposed

\* \* \* \* \*

The Government proposes to improve the existing approach roads to Nam Wa Po Bridge, Tai Po, as part of the programme for the Rural Planning and Improvement Strategy.

The works involve realignment and reconstruction of about 160 metres of the approach roads, provision of footpath and construction of related drainage and landscaping works.

The plan and scheme showing the proposed works can be seen at the Central and Western District Office, Central Enquiry Service Centre, ground floor, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central; and at the Tai Po District Lands Office and the Tai Po District Office, both located in Tai Po Government Offices Building, Ting Kok Road, Tai Po, New Territories.

Meanwhile, the Government is also proposing improving the existing access road at Ying Pun, Sheung Shui.

A notice for the proposed works can be seen on the notice boards posted near the site.

The plans of the proposed undertaking can also be seen at the Central and Western District Office, Public Enquiry Services Centre, ground floor, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road; and at the District Lands Office, North, and the North District Office, both located in North District Government Offices, 3 Pik Fung Road, Fanling.

Details of the proposed works in Tai Po and Sheung Shui are notified in the Government Gazette today.

Any person wishing to object the works must send his objection in writing to the Secretary for Transport on or before July 31.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

Access for refuse transfer vessels

\* \* \* \* \*

The Government has proposed carrying out minor dredging and constructing a new jetty in the foreshore and seabed to the north-east of Tai Lei Island near Peng Chau to provide berthing facilities and access for refuse transfer vessels.

The dredging work will start early next year for completion in mid-1997.

The extent of the area affected is gazetted today (Thursday).

The notice and its related plans can be seen on notice boards near the site.

The plan can also be seen at the Lands Department's Survey and Mapping Office, 14th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road; and at the Islands District Office, 20th floor, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central.

Any person who considers that his interest, right or easement in or over the foreshore and seabed involved will be affected, may submit a written objection to the Director of Lands on or before August 1.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

Two lots of land up for auction

\* \* \* \* \*

Two lots of Government land on Hong Kong Island and the New Territories will be offered for sale at a public auction on June 28 (Wednesday), it was notified in the Gazette today (Thursday).

The auction will start at 2.30 pm in the Concert Hall of the City Hall.

The first lot, located in Shau Kei Wan Main Street East, Shau Kei Wan, has an area of 1,296 square metres for non-industrial purposes, excluding godown, hotel, petrol filling station and service apartment. In particular, the lowest three floors will be for non-industrial purposes while the remaining floors for residential use.

The developer has to complete a gross floor area of not less than 6,690 square metres on or before June 30, 1998.

Located in Area 30, Tai Po, the second lot has an area of 26,310 square metres for private residential use.

The developer has to complete a gross floor area of not less than 12,628 square metres on or before June, 30, 1999.

Full particulars and conditions of sale may be obtained from the Lands Department, 14th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road; and the District Lands Offices, Kowloon, Yau Ma Tei Car park Building, 10th floor, 250 Shanghai Street, Kowloon.

Conditions of sale will also be available at the District Lands Offices of Sha Tin, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long, Tsuen Wan, Sai Kung, Kwai Tsing, Tai Po, North and Islands.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

#### Tuen Mun Bus Only Lane trial scheme

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In response to press enquiries, a spokesman for the Transport Department said today (Thursday) that the Tuen Mun Road Bus Only Lane trial scheme is still in force in its present form until further notice.

Vehicles from Castle Peak Road are still not allowed to join Tuen Mun Road Kowloon bound at Siu Lam Interchange and Tuen Mun Road both bounds at Sham Tseng Interchange.

The date for implementing the modified trial scheme in relation to the traffic management at Sham Tseng Interchange has yet to be fixed pending installation of appropriate traffic signs and other measures. An announcement on the implementation of the modified trial scheme will be made in due course.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

Home Affairs Department expands performance pledge

\* \* \* \* \*

The Home Affairs Department (HAD) will implement the performance pledge on its sub-treasury service starting today (Thursday).

This is an expansion of the performance pledge on the department's public enquiry service which was first put into effect in April 1993.

The performance pledge covers the collection service of the sub-treasuries. The standard waiting time for customers to make payment is targeted at four minutes during non-peak periods and 35 minutes during peak periods.

HAD has set up sub-treasuries in eight district offices in the New Territories. They are located in Kwai Tsing, North, Sai Kung, Sha Tin, Tuen Mun, Tai Po, Tsuen Wan and Yuen Long.

These offices accept payments for rates, Crown rents, water charges, sewage charges, trade effluent surcharges, student loan repayments, fixed penalty for traffic offences and other government demand note payments.

Their opening hours are from 9 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 4 pm on weekdays and 9 am to 11.30 am on Saturdays.

Performance of the sub-treasuries will be monitored against targets set out in the performance pledge. An opinion survey will be conducted annually to obtain public feedback and results will be published.

Comments or suggestions on HAD's sub-treasury service are welcome. These should be addressed to the Senior Executive Officer, Establishment and General Section, Home Affairs Department, 29th floor, Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

### Oral English help from native youths

\* \* \* \* \*

The Deputy Director of Education, Miss Elaine Chung, today (Thursday) said she was impressed by an English programme which employed native youths from the United Kingdom and North America to help local secondary school students improve oral English.

Miss Chung visited the Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club College to see for herself the progress of the Chatteris English Programme which received funding from the Language Fund.

The Chatteris English Programme, which will expand over three years, aims at providing opportunities for secondary school students to learn and speak English outside the classroom by placing native English-speaking youths as English Language Teaching Assistants (ELTAs) in secondary schools.

The programme received \$4.95 million from the Language Fund. The amount pays for over 50 per cent of the costs of the programme.

After her visit, Miss Chung said: "The programme is very innovative. It provides students with valuable chances to contact native speakers in small group tuition which is lacking in Hong Kong. Students have lots of fun in learning English because they learn in a relaxed environment.

"It is a pleasurable and effective way of encouraging students to actively take part in achieving higher standards of oral English. It not only complements, but also reinforces the regular school curriculum."

Miss Chung paid tribute to the Chatteris Educational Foundation for taking concrete steps to enhance English proficiency in Hong Kong.

In early 1995, eight ELTAs were employed. It is expected that the number of ELTAs will increase to 32 in September next year so that a minimum of 16 schools with a total of 16,000 students will benefit from the programme.

Five schools took part in the 1994-95 programme.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

Four VMs return home voluntarily

\* \* \* \* \*

Four Vietnamese Migrants today (Thursday) returned to Vietnam under the Voluntary Repatriation Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Comprising two men, one woman and a boy, they were the 231st batch to go back under the programme.

The group brought to 805 the total number of Vietnamese Migrants who had returned voluntarily this year, and to 44,999 the total number of returnees since the programme started in March 1989.

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

Firing practice scheduled for eight days in June

\* \* \* \* \*

Firing practice will take place at the Ha Tsuen/Castle Peak Range on eight days this month.

The public is advised not to enter the area when red flags are hoisted.

Following are the dates and times for the firing practice:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>
June 1 (Thursday)	8.30 am - 5 pm
June 5 (Monday)	8.30 am - 5 pm
June 6 (Tuesday)	8.30 am - 5 pm
June 12 (Monday)	8.30 am - 5 pm
June 21 (Wednesday)	9 am - 11.59 pm
June 22 (Thursday)	9 am - 11.59 pm
June 23 (Friday)	9 am - 11.59 pm
June 24 (Saturday)	9 am - 11.59 pm

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	2,333	0930	+170
Closing balance in the account	2,383	1000	+170
Change attributable to :		1100	+190
Money market activity	+195	1200	+190
LAF today	-145	1500	+195
		1600	+195

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 118.8 \*+0.7\* 1.6.95

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.67	2 years	2705	6.40	100.74	6.08
1 month	5.68	3 years	3804	6.90	101.62	6.38
3 months	5.71	5 years	5003	7.75	103.69	6.95
6 months	5.75	5 years	M501	7.90	101.92	7.57
12 months	5.82					

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$13,669 million

Closed June 1, 1995

End/Thursday, June 1, 1995

Working group to discuss measures to prevent shark attack

\* \* \* \* \*

The inter-departmental working group on shark attack had met today to discuss measures to prevent shark attack on swimmers, following shark sightings and a shark attack in Sai Kung today (Friday).

Shark warning flags have been hoisted at all the eight gazetted Regional Council beaches in the Sai Kung area.

After the hoisting of the shark warning flags, the public are advised not to enter into the water in these gazetted beaches.

Notices have also been put up in those beaches and announcements have been broadcast to alert swimmers to stay out of the water.

The life guards in these beaches have been alerted to advise swimmers not to swim in the water.

The Police will patrol other areas in Sai Kung to advise people engaged in water activities not to go into the water.

The Government Flying Service will also continue to patrol the area.

The eight beaches are Campers, Clear Water Bay 1st and 2nd beach, Hap Mun Bay, Kiu Tsui, Pak Sha Chau, Sliverstrand and Trio.

A Government spokesman advised the public not to enter into the water whether inside or outside the gazetted beaches in the Sai Kung area. They should also be very cautious when they engage in water activities elsewhere. They should not enter into the water in the early morning or in the evening. They should also avoid murky water, and listen to announcements.

Both the Regional Services Department and the Urban Services Department have already displayed notices on gazetted beaches notifying the public of the shark attack incident in the Sai Kung area. Posters on shark attack prevention have also been displayed to alert swimmers.

All life guards on Regional Council and Urban Council beaches have been have been on full alert to watch out for sharks. Motor boats are patrolling around the boomline area and the surveillance operation will be strengthened.

End/Friday, June 2, 1995

Sha Tin and Ma On Shan to get salt water for flushing

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Works to convert the existing supply of fresh water to salt water for flushing in Sha Tin and Ma On Shan will start later this month for completion by October in three phases, a spokesman for the Water Supplies Department said today (Friday).

Works include the disconnection of fresh water supply to the current flushing water system, and the subsequent connection of salt water supply to the system.

"During the works period, flushing water supply will be temporarily suspended for less than 24 hours to facilitate supply conversion.

"Enquiries can be made by calling a 24-hour hotline 2656 2368," the spokesman said.

Phase one works are scheduled to start on June 21 for completion on the next day. This phase will affect areas to the west of Shing Mun River, including the Sha Tin sewage treatment plant, the Hong Kong Sports Institute, Fo Tan, Sui Wo Court, Wo Che Estate, Lek Yuen Estate, Sha Tin Town Centre and Man Lai Court.

Notices will be posted on the estates or buildings affected in advance to minimise the inconvenience that may be caused.

End/Friday, June 2, 1995