



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 842 8777

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1991

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1991

- 1 -

GOVT NOT IN FAVOUR OF A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND

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THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND HAS NOT CHANGED SINCE THE SUBJECT WAS LAST DEBATED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON JULY 10 THIS YEAR, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, SAID.

SPEAKING AT A MOTION DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR CHAN REITERATED: "WE CONTINUE TO HAVE MAJOR RESERVATIONS ABOUT A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND, IN PARTICULAR ABOUT ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ECONOMY AND THE FINANCIAL MARKET.

"WE WOULD VERY MUCH PREFER TO ADOPT OTHER SOLUTIONS, THAT IS TO SAY SOLUTIONS OTHER THAN A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND, TO PROVIDE THE COMMUNITY-WIDE RETIREMENT PROTECTION WE NEED," HE SAID.

MR CHAN OPINED THAT TODAY'S DEBATE SHOULD HAVE MADE IT ABUNDANTLY CLEAR TO THE COMMUNITY THAT RETIREMENT PROTECTION IS A COMPLEX MATTER REQUIRING CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF MANY ISSUES, SOME OF WHICH ARE HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL OR TECHNICAL IN NATURE, AND THAT THERE ARE NO QUICK AND EASY ANSWERS.

HE THANKED MEMBERS WHO HAD SPOKEN ON THE ISSUE FOR PROVIDING USEFUL REFERENCE AND GUIDANCE TO THE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP ON RETIREMENT PROTECTION WHICH WAS SET UP LAST MONTH TO EXAMINE WAYS OF MEETING THE GREATER NEED FOR COMMUNITY-WIDE RETIREMENT SCHEMES, INCLUDING VARIOUS FORMS OF COMPULSORY RETIREMENT SCHEMES.

THE WORKING GROUP HAS SO FAR SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLETED THE FIRST TWO PHASES OF THE FOUR-PHASED WORK PROGRAMME IT HAS SET ITSELF.

THESE TWO PHASES CONSISTED OF THE COLLECTION AND EXAMINATION OF FACTUAL INFORMATION REGARDING EXISTING RETIREMENT SCHEMES, BOTH IN HONG KONG AND OVERSEAS, AND THE IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES REQUIRING DETAILED CONSIDERATION.

MR CHAN SAID: "WE ARE NOW ABOUT TO ENTER THE THIRD PHASE, WHICH IS TO EXAMINE THE VARIOUS ISSUES WE HAVE IDENTIFIED AND TO STUDY POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL BODIES AND EXPERTS AS REQUIRED. EVENTUALLY, THE WORKING GROUP AIMS TO FORMULATE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS AS A BASIS FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON A WIDE SCALE.

"AS OF NOW, IT IS NOT YET POSSIBLE TO SET A PRECISE AND DEFINITIVE TIMETABLE FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE WORKING GROUP'S TASK.

"BUT I HOPE AND BELIEVE THAT, BY NOVEMBER NEXT YEAR, WE SHALL HAVE DEVELOPED A SUITABLE FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY-WIDE RETIREMENT SCHEMES, HAVE SOUGHT PUBLIC VIEWS ON OUR PROPOSALS AND BE IN A POSITION TO START DRAFTING THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION."

HE UNDERTOOK THAT ONCE THE WORKING GROUP HAD DEVELOPED CONCRETE PROPOSALS, THE PUBLIC WOULD BE WIDELY CONSULTED BEFORE ANY FIRM DECISIONS WERE MADE.

/TURNING TO .....

TURNING TO PUBLIC CONCERNS ABOUT THE SECURITY OF EMPLOYEES' BENEFITS IN THE EVENT THAT A PRIVATE SECTOR OPERATED RETIREMENT PROTECTION SCHEME WENT BANKRUPT OR WAS GROSSLY MISMANAGED, MR CHAN SAID LEGISLATION WAS BEING DRAFTED TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE REGULATION AND SUPERVISION OF PRIVATE SECTOR RETIREMENT SCHEMES.

BUT HE POINTED OUT THAT, WHILE HONG KONG HAD SET ITS FACE AGAINST A MASSIVE CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND, IT SHOULD NOT ENVISAGE GOING TO THE OTHER EXTREME OF HAVING AN ENDLESS MULTITUDE OF VERY SMALL INDIVIDUAL SCHEMES EACH CATERING FOR A SMALL NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES.

"IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HONG KONG, WHERE THE VAST MAJORITY OF EMPLOYERS ARE SMALL BUSINESSES IN TERMS OF THE NUMBERS EMPLOYED, WE BELIEVE THAT THE SENSIBLE THING TO DO WOULD BE TO PROMOTE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUMBER OF PROFESSIONALLY MANAGED POOLED SCHEMES AMONG WHICH INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYERS COULD CHOOSE TO JOIN," MR CHAN SAID.

"THERE HAVE BEEN SUGGESTIONS THAT SOME FORM OF GUARANTEE AGAINST FAILURES OF INDIVIDUAL RETIREMENT SCHEMES SHOULD BE PROVIDED, PREFERABLY BY THE GOVERNMENT. THIS IS A DIFFICULT AND COMPLEX ISSUE WHICH WILL REQUIRE THE MOST CAREFUL CONSIDERATION.

"ONE IMPORTANT FACTOR TO BEAR IN MIND IS THAT ITS VERY EXISTENCE MIGHT LEAD TO OR EVEN ENCOURAGE THE KIND OF IRRESPONSIBLE FUND MANAGEMENT THAT IT IS DESIGNED TO GUARD AGAINST."

THE SECRETARY ALSO SPOKE OF THE NECESSITY TO DRAW A CONCEPTUAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN RETIREMENT PROTECTION SCHEMES AND SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES.

BY ITS VERY NATURE, A RETIREMENT SCHEME IS RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT PRIOR TO RETIREMENT WHILE SOCIAL SECURITY IS ESSENTIALLY A SAFETY NET PROVIDED BY THE COMMUNITY AGAINST UNDUE HARDSHIP OR POVERTY AMONGST ITS INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS.

"RETIREMENT SCHEMES AND SOCIAL SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS USUALLY EXIST SIDE BY SIDE, AND MAY EVEN BE COMBINED IN SOME COUNTRIES, BUT IN ESSENCE THEY ARE DIFFERENT THINGS SERVING DIFFERENT PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES," MR CHAN SAID.

HE SAID THE WORKING GROUP WAS KEEPING AN OPEN MIND ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF THOSE OUTSIDE THE LABOUR FORCE BEING ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN A RETIREMENT SCHEME, PERHAPS ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS.

"IT IS ALSO EXAMINING SCHEMES WHICH PROPOSE A WIDER COVERAGE TO SEE IF THEY MIGHT MEET OUR OBJECTIVES OR AT LEAST CONTAIN ELEMENTS WHICH COULD BE ADAPTED TO MEET OUR NEEDS," MR CHAN ADDED.

GOVT'S COMMITMENT IN SEWAGE STRATEGY REAFFIRMED

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THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR GRAHAM BARNES, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) REAFFIRMED THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT AND DETERMINATION IN TACKLING SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

SPEAKING IN THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON THE STRATEGIC SEWAGE DISPOSAL SCHEME, MR BARNES HIGHLIGHTED THE ENORMOUS PUBLIC EXPENDITURE EARMARKED FOR SEWAGE CONSTRUCTION WORKS.

HE ASSURED THE COUNCIL THAT THE AMOUNT AND VALUE OF SEWERAGE CONSTRUCTION WORK NOW BEING CARRIED OUT TERRITORY-WIDE WAS ENORMOUS AND WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE WATER QUALITY IN THE HARBOUR AND ELSEWHERE.

SOME OF THE MAJOR SCHEMES OUTLINED ARE:

- \* THE \$1.3 BILLION NORTH WEST KOWLOON SEWAGE TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL SCHEME TO BE COMPLETED NEXT YEAR;
- \* THE \$0.5 BILLION STAGE I EFFLUENT EXPORT SCHEME FROM SHA TIN AND TAI PO TO VICTORIA HARBOUR, EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED IN 1993;
- \* THE AWARD OF CONTRACTS TOTALLING \$0.8 BILLION FOR IMPROVING SEWAGE DISPOSAL ON HONG KONG ISLAND;
- \* THE EAST KOWLOON SEWERAGE IMPROVEMENT SCHEME TO COMMENCE EARLY NEXT YEAR; AND
- \* THE NORTH WEST NEW TERRITORIES SEWERAGE SCHEME, SERVING THE TIN SHUI WAI AREA, COSTING \$2.2 BILLION.

ON THE REMAINING MASTERPLANS, MR BARNES SAID THE GOVERNMENT FULLY ACCEPTED THE NEEDS TO PROCEED WITH THE SEWAGE DISPOSAL STRATEGY AS SOON AS RESOURCES PERMIT.

"BUT THE STRATEGY IS AN INTEGRATED ONE AND, ALTHOUGH THE STAGING IS FLEXIBLE UP TO A POINT, IT IS ALL DIRECTED TOWARDS LEADING OUR TREATED SEWAGE INTO THE SOUTH CHINA SEA.

"SO WE MUST COMPLETE THE STUDIES TO ENSURE THE FEASIBILITY OF THE WHOLE SCHEME AND TO REASSURE THE APPROPRIATE CHINESE AUTHORITIES ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUITABILITY OF THE SCHEME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE," HE SAID.

ON FINANCING, MR BARNES SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS ANALYSING THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS AND THE GENERAL ACCEPTABILITY OF CHARGING FOR DISPOSAL OF SEWAGE OF DIFFERENT KINDS.

"WHEN WE HAVE TAKEN THIS STUDY A LITTLE FURTHER, IT WILL THEN BE FOR DECISION WHETHER IT IS BETTER FOR THE COMMUNITY TO ACCEPT THE ADDITIONAL BURDEN OF CHARGES IN ORDER TO START THE PROJECT EARLIER, OR TO ACCEPT WHAT MAY BE SEVERAL YEARS OF DELAY AND CONSEQUENTLY WORSE POLLUTION OF OUR SEAS," HE ADDED.

NOISE CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 INTRODUCED

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A BILL TO TIGHTEN THE CONTROLS ON NOISE FROM INDIVIDUAL NOISY PRODUCTS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE NOISE CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR GRAHAM BARNES, SAID THE BILL PROPOSED THAT HAND-HELD PERCUSSIVE BREAKERS AND AIR COMPRESSORS USED FOR CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION WORKS WERE THE FIRST GROUP OF EQUIPMENT TO BE BROUGHT UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE NOISE CONTROL ORDINANCE.

"THE NEW REGULATIONS STIPULATE ACCEPTABLE NOISE EMISSION STANDARDS AND SET OUT METHODS OF TESTING AND LABELLING, AND CONTROL THE SALES AND IMPORT OF UNACCEPTABLE PRODUCTS," HE SAID.

MR BARNES POINTED OUT THAT THE PROPOSAL HAD BEEN DISCUSSED WITH AND WAS SUPPORTED BY THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY.

"THE MAJORITY OF THE BREAKERS AND COMPRESSORS AVAILABLE NOW IN THE NEW EQUIPMENT MARKET ARE IN FACT SILENCED TYPES AND THERE SHOULD BE NO DIFFICULTIES FOR THE INDUSTRY TO COMPLY WITH THE CONTROL SCHEME," HE SAID.

THE BILL ALSO CLARIFIES THAT GENERAL TRAFFIC NOISE GENERATED BY A VEHICLE IS NOT SUBJECT TO CONTROL BY WAY OF POLICE SUMMONS ACTION UPON COMPLAINTS.

"SIMILARLY, IT HAS NEVER BEEN THE POLICY INTENT TO CONTROL OPERATIONAL NOISE FROM ONE INDUSTRIAL OR COMMERCIAL PREMISES AFFECTING OTHER INDUSTRIAL OR COMMERCIAL PREMISES AS IT DOES NOT AFFECT THE GENERAL PUBLIC," MR BARNES SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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USE OF BENZODIAZEPINE DRUGS IN EXEMPTED CLINICS

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A BILL WHICH PROVIDES THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH WITH THE DISCRETION TO PERMIT UNREGISTRABLE MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS PRACTISING IN EXEMPTED CLINICS TO SUPPLY, POSSESS AND PROCURE CERTAIN BENZODIAZEPINE DRUGS FOR THE TREATMENT OF THEIR PATIENTS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE DANGEROUS DRUGS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1991, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID PART I OF THE FIRST SCHEDULE TO THE DANGEROUS DRUGS ORDINANCE WAS RECENTLY AMENDED TO INCLUDE ALL BENZODIAZEPINE DRUGS AS DANGEROUS DRUGS.

UNDER THE PRESENT PROVISION OF THE ORDINANCE, SUCH PRACTITIONERS WERE NOT PERMITTED TO USE DANGEROUS DRUGS IN THE COURSE OF THEIR PRACTICE, SHE SAID.

"THESE PRACTITIONERS WILL THEREBY NO LONGER HAVE ACCESS TO SUCH DRUGS AND WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY IN MAINTAINING THE STANDARD OF THEIR SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC," THE SECRETARY SAID.

"THIS BILL THEREFORE SEEKS TO ENABLE THEM TO CONTINUE TO HAVE THE USE OF CERTAIN BENZODIAZEPINE DRUGS AS SPECIFIED BY THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH FOR THE PURPOSE OF TREATING THEIR PATIENTS."

MRS WONG NOTED THAT THE QUALIFICATIONS OF ALL UNREGISTRABLE MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS WERE ASSESSED IN 1963 BY THE THEN MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND THOSE WHO PASSED THE ASSESSMENT WERE ALLOWED TO PRACTISE IN EXEMPTED CLINICS.

THE NUMBER OF SUCH PRACTITIONERS HAD BEEN DECREASED STEADILY FROM OVER 400 IN 1963 TO 165 NOW THROUGH RETIREMENT OR DEATH, SHE SAID.

FOR THE PAST THREE DECADES, MRS WONG SAID, THESE PRACTITIONERS HAD BEEN PROVIDING A VALUABLE SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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INSURANCE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1991 INTRODUCED  
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A BILL WHICH EMPOWERS THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY TO APPOINT A PERSON TO ADVISE AN INSURER ON THE MANAGEMENT OF ITS AFFAIRS, BUSINESS AND PROPERTY AND, IF SO REQUIRED, APPOINT A MANAGER TO ASSUME SUCH MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE INSURANCE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1991, THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS, MR DAVID NENDICK, EXPLAINED THAT THE PRESENT ORDINANCE GAVE THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY CERTAIN POWERS TO INTERVENE IN THE OPERATIONS OF AN INSURER.

"HOWEVER, PAST EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN THAT THESE POWERS ARE INADEQUATE IF THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY IS TO BE ABLE TO ENSURE THAT THE BUSINESS OF AN INSURER WHICH IS IN SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES WILL BE PRUDENTLY MANAGED," HE SAID.

MR NENDICK POINTED OUT THAT AN INSURER IN SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES MIGHT EXPOSE THE INSURING PUBLIC TO SERIOUS RISK OF LOSS AND THE ABSENCE OF PRUDENT MANAGEMENT COULD RESULT IN EVEN GREATER DAMAGE TO POLICY HOLDERS.

/"IT COULD .....

"IT COULD ALSO DAMAGE THE GENERAL REPUTATION OF THE INSURANCE MARKET IN HONG KONG," HE ADDED.

TO OVERCOME THE PRESENT INADEQUACY OF THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY'S POWERS OF INTERVENTION AND IN THE INTEREST OF THE INSURING PUBLIC, MR NENDICK SAID THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSED THAT THE AUTHORITY SHOULD BE GIVEN THE ADDITIONAL INTERVENTIONARY POWER OF BEING ABLE TO APPOINT AN ADVISOR OR A MANAGER IN RESPECT OF AN INSURER WHERE THE EXERCISE OF HIS OTHER INTERVENTIONARY POWERS WOULD NOT PROVIDE ADEQUATE SAFEGUARDS.

HOWEVER, MR NENDICK STRESSED THAT THE POWER WOULD ONLY BE EXERCISED AS A LAST RESORT, IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE ALL THE OTHER INTERVENTIONARY POWERS OF THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY WOULD NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF POLICY HOLDERS.

"A RIGHT OF APPEAL AGAINST THE EXERCISE OF THESE POWERS LIES TO THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY. MOREOVER, EXERCISE OF THE POWER MAY BE SUBJECTED TO REVIEW BY THE COURTS," HE SAID.

HE ASSURED THE COUNCIL THAT THE POWER WOULD BE EXERCISED WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF LEGAL REASONABLENESS WHICH, AMONGST OTHER THINGS, TOOK INTO ACCOUNT THE RELEVANCE OF THE ACTION.

WHERE AN INSURER WHICH WAS IN SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES WAS INCORPORATED OUTSIDE HONG KONG, THE BILL PROPOSES THAT THE REMIT OF THE ADVISOR OR MANAGER WILL ONLY EXTEND TO THAT PART OF THE INSURER'S BUSINESS WHICH IS CARRIED ON, OR MANAGED, IN OR FROM HONG KONG AS WELL AS THE PROPERTY OF SUCH AN INSURER WHICH IS LOCATED IN, OR MANAGED FROM, HONG KONG.

MR NENDICK SAID THE GOVERNMENT ALSO PROPOSED THAT A FURTHER GROUND SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE ORDINANCE FOR THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY TO EXERCISE ITS INTERVENTIONARY POWERS.

"SIMILAR TO THE PROVISION IN THE BANKING ORDINANCE, THE FURTHER GROUND WOULD ALLOW THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY TO INTERVENE WHERE IT APPEARED TO HIM THAT AN INSURER IS CARRYING ON ITS BUSINESS IN A MANNER DETRIMENTAL TO THE INTERESTS OF ITS POLICY HOLDERS," HE SAID.

IN ADDITION, THE BILL SEEKS TO AMEND THE ORDINANCE SO THAT THE EXISTING PROVISION WHICH PROHIBITS INSURERS CARRYING ON LONG TERM BUSINESS FROM BEING WOUND UP WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF THE COURTS IS EXTENDED TO INSURERS CARRYING ON GENERAL BUSINESS.

"THIS WILL ENSURE THAT THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY HAS PRIOR NOTICE OF A PROPOSAL FOR THE VOLUNTARY WINDING UP OF A GENERAL BUSINESS INSURER, AS IS PRESENTLY THE CASE FOR AN INSURER WRITING LONG TERM BUSINESS," HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

## EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION LEVELS TO BE INCREASED

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THE LEVELS OF COMPENSATION AND CERTAIN COMPENSATION-RELATED ITEMS UNDER THE EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION ORDINANCE WILL BE REVISED AS FROM JANUARY 1 NEXT YEAR.

MOVING A RESOLUTION TO EFFECT THE CHANGES AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, SAID IT HAD BEEN THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY SINCE 1978 TO REVIEW THE LEVELS OF COMPENSATION EVERY TWO YEARS TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF WAGE MOVEMENTS, INFLATION AND OTHER CHANGES.

"TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE PROJECTED RATE OF WAGE INCREASE FOR THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 1990 TO DECEMBER 1991 AND THE SLIGHT UNDER-ESTIMATION OF THE INCREASE IN NOMINAL WAGES IN THE LAST REVIEW, WE PROPOSE TO INCREASE THE EXISTING LEVELS OF COMPENSATION ARISING FROM DEATH, PERMANENT TOTAL INCAPACITY AND THE REQUIREMENT FOR CONSTANT ATTENTION BY 27.8 PER CENT," MR CHAN SAID.

DETAILS OF THE REVISION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

	OLD RATE		NEW RATE	
	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
- FOR DEATH	\$143,000	\$424,000	\$183,000	\$542,000
- FOR PERMANENT TOTAL INCAPACITY	\$162,000	\$485,000	\$207,000	\$620,000
- FOR CONSTANT ATTENTION	-	\$194,000	-	\$248,000
- FOR BURIAL AND MEDICAL EXPENSES WHERE THE DECEASED EMPLOYEE LEAVES NO DEPENDANTS	-	\$8,000	-	\$10,000
- FOR DAILY REIM- BURSEMENT OF MEDICAL EXPENSES	-	\$70	-	\$90
- PAYMENT BY AN EMPLOYER TOWARDS THE COSTS OF SUPPLYING AND FITTING A PROSTHESIS OR A SURGICAL APPLIANCE	-	\$16,000	-	\$20,000
- FOR REPAIR OR RENEWAL OF A PROSTHESIS OR A SURGICAL APPLIANCE	-	\$50,000	-	\$62,000

/"FOR THE .....

"FOR THE PURPOSE OF CALCULATING COMPENSATION, THE AMOUNT THAT IS DEEMED TO BE MINIMUM EARNINGS PER MONTH WILL ALSO BE RAISED FROM \$1,040 TO \$1,450," THE SECRETARY SAID.

IN ADDITION, THE CEILING FOR ADVANCE PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION WILL BE REVISED FROM \$20,000 TO \$28,000, THE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF SURCHARGE IMPOSED UPON EXPIRY OF THE PAYMENT PERIOD BE INCREASED FROM \$200 TO \$300, AND THE MINIMUM ADDITIONAL SURCHARGE IMPOSED THREE MONTHS LATER BE INCREASED FROM \$400 TO \$600.

MR CHAN ALSO MOVED A RESOLUTION UNDER THE PNEUMOCONIOSIS (COMPENSATION) ORDINANCE TO REVISE THE LEVELS OF COMPENSATION FOR CERTAIN AWARDS TO PERSONS WHO ARE INCAPACITATED BY, OR DIE AS A RESULT OF, PNEUMOCONIOSIS.

THESE AWARDS ARE IN RESPECT OF DEATH, PERMANENT TOTAL INCAPACITY, CONSTANT ATTENTION AND BURIAL AND MEDICAL EXPENSES.

"THE LEVELS OF THESE AWARDS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN IDENTICAL TO THOSE SPECIFIED IN THE EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION ORDINANCE," MR CHAN EXPLAINED.

"AS THE LATTER HAVE JUST BEEN RAISED BY A RESOLUTION OF THIS COUNCIL, I PROPOSE THAT THE FORMER BE SIMILARLY RAISED."

THE PROPOSED INCREASES HAVE BEEN ENDORSED BY THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD.

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#### CS OUTLINES LEGISLATION DRAFTING PROGRAMME

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THE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES COMMITTEE WILL MONITOR THE DRAFTING PROGRAMME AND WILL ADJUST IT WHERE NECESSARY TO ENSURE AN EVEN FLOW OF LEGISLATION INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MARTIN BARROW, THE CHIEF SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT 31 NEW LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS (THAT IS NEW ORDINANCES) WERE AT VARIOUS STAGES OF DRAFTING WITH THE MAJORITY OF THEM INTENDED TO BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGCO DURING THE 1991-92 SESSION.

SIR DAVID SAID IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO GIVE A PRECISE NUMBER OF THE EXISTING ORDINANCES UNDER REVIEW FOR POSSIBLE AMENDMENT BECAUSE THE PROPOSALS WERE AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF PROCESSING AND SOME OF THEM HAD YET TO BE GIVEN POLICY CLEARANCE.

"HOWEVER, A USEFUL INDICATIVE FIGURE WOULD BE THE NUMBER OF AMENDMENT BILLS BEING DRAFTED AND THE FIGURE IS 142," HE SAID.

/SIR DAVID .....

SIR DAVID SAID A TOTAL OF 89 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS (THAT IS NEW BILLS AND AMENDMENT BILLS), HAD SO FAR BEEN GIVEN PRIORITY BY THE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES COMMITTEE FOR INTRODUCTION INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN THE 1991-92 SESSION.

"TWENTY-ONE BILLS HAVE ALREADY BEEN INTRODUCED INTO THE COUNCIL.

"THE ACTUAL TOTAL NUMBER OF BILLS THAT WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL BY JULY 1992 WILL DEPEND ON THE DRAFTING PROGRESS OF THE BILLS AND WHETHER THERE ARE ANY URGENT LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS OUTSIDE THE APPROVED PROGRAMME THAT MAY NEED TO BE INTRODUCED INTO THE COUNCIL WITHIN THIS SESSION," THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID SO FAR ABOUT 50 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS HAD NOT YET OBTAINED PRIORITY FOR INTRODUCTION INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN THE 1991-92 SESSION, HAVING REGARD TO THEIR URGENCY AND STAGE OF PROCESSING.

"THEY WILL BE RECONSIDERED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE NEXT (1992-93) SESSION, OR WHEN THERE IS A VACANT SLOT IN THE CURRENT SESSION'S PROGRAMME," SIR DAVID SAID.

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TELEPHONE TARIFFS ARE SUBJECT TO CONTROL  
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THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ANSON CHAN TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THE ABSENCE OF A SCHEME OF CONTROL AGREEMENT DID NOT MEAN THAT HONG KONG TELEPHONE COMPANY TARIFFS WERE NO LONGER SUBJECT TO CONTROL.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON STEPHEN POON, MRS CHAN POINTED OUT THAT UNDER SECTION 26 OF THE TELEPHONE ORDINANCE, THE MAXIMUM CHARGE FOR SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE COMPANY COULD ONLY BE INCREASED BY RESOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO AMEND THE SCHEDULE TO THE TELEPHONE ORDINANCE.

"THE ADMINISTRATION WILL NOT SUPPORT AMENDMENTS TO THE SCHEDULE UNLESS IT IS SATISFIED THAT THESE ARE FULLY JUSTIFIED," MRS CHAN SAID.

SHE SAID THE INTERESTS OF TELEPHONE USERS WERE ALSO PROTECTED IN OTHER WAYS.

FOR EXAMPLE, UNDER SECTION 22 OF THE TELEPHONE ORDINANCE, THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY (THE POSTMASTER GENERAL) WAS EMPOWERED TO ENSURE THAT THE COMPANY MAINTAINED A GOOD AND EFFICIENT SERVICE.

SECTION 4A OF THE ORDINANCE PROVIDES FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF TWO GOVERNMENT DIRECTORS TO THE BOARD OF THE COMPANY WHO HAVE A STATUTORY OBLIGATION TO REPRESENT GOVERNMENT, AND HENCE THE PUBLIC INTEREST, MRS CHAN EXPLAINED.

/SHE POINTED .....

SHE POINTED OUT THAT THE HONG KONG TELEPHONE COMPANY DECLINED TO RENEW THE PREVIOUS SCHEME OF CONTROL AGREEMENT WHEN IT EXPIRED IN MARCH THIS YEAR, AND MADE CLEAR THAT IT WOULD FAVOUR PRICE-CAPPING RATHER THAN PROFIT CONTROL AS A REPLACEMENT.

"THIS OPTION IS ONE OF A NUMBER OF REGULATORY ISSUES BEING CONSIDERED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT REVIEW OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY, I EXPECT TO REACH CONCLUSIONS EARLY IN THE NEW YEAR," MRS CHAN SAID.

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KAI TAK IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME UNDER REGULAR REVIEW  
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THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ANSON CHAN, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT SINCE THE INCEPTION OF THE PROGRAMME OF IMPROVEMENTS TO FACILITIES AT KAI TAK IN 1988, THE PROGRAMME HAS BEEN REVIEWED REGULARLY IN THE COURSE OF THE ANNUAL RESOURCE ALLOCATION EXERCISE.

"AS A RESULT, SOME LESS ESSENTIAL PROJECTS HAVE BEEN DELETED OR THEIR SCOPE REDUCED," MRS CHAN SAID IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON LAU WONG-FAT.

MRS CHAN POINTED OUT THAT THE PRESENT PACKAGE OF MEASURES INCLUDED ONLY THOSE PROJECTS CONSIDERED ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO ENSURE THE CONTINUING EFFICIENT OPERATION OF THE AIRPORT BEARING IN MIND ITS LIMITED LIFE.

"THESE INCLUDE : THE EXTENSION OF THE AIRPORT APRON AREA TO PROVIDE MORE AIRCRAFT PARKING BAYS, IMPROVEMENTS TO THE TERMINAL BUILDING, CONSTRUCTION OF A TAXIWAY BRIDGE TO FACILITATE AIRCRAFT MOVEMENT ON THE APRON AREA AND IMPROVEMENTS TO ROAD ACCESS LEADING TO THE AIRPORT," SHE EXPLAINED.

THE SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT THE DESIGN AND SPECIFICATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS HAD ALSO BEEN EXAMINED CRITICALLY TO ENSURE THAT THE MOST COST-EFFECTIVE DESIGNS AND MATERIALS WERE UTILISED WITHOUT COMPROMISING STANDARDS OF OPERATIONAL SAFETY.

"THIS APPROACH HAS ALREADY LED TO SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTIONS IN THE ESTIMATED COST OF SOME ITEMS," SHE SAID.

MRS CHAN EXPLAINED THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME WAS TO ENSURE THAT KAI TAK AIRPORT COULD COPE WITH THE EXPECTED CONTINUING GROWTH IN PASSENGER AND CARGO TRAFFIC UP TO THE OPENING OF THE NEW AIRPORT AT CHEK LAP KOK.

"ON PRESENT ESTIMATES, PASSENGER THROUGHPUT IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE BY 10 PER CENT PER ANNUM AND CARGO BY EIGHT PER CENT PER ANNUM," SHE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1991

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SAFETY STANDARDS FOR CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS TO BE INTRODUCED

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THE GOVERNMENT IS DRAFTING A BILL WHICH SETS SAFETY STANDARDS FOR TOYS AND CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS OFFERED FOR SALE IN HONG KONG, INCLUDING THE LEVEL OF LEAD PERMISSIBLE IN PAINTS USED BY CHILDREN.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR CHAU TAK-HAY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON LEONG CHE-HUNG, MR CHAU SAID THE TOYS AND CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS SAFETY BILL WAS AT AN ADVANCED STAGE OF DRAFTING.

SUBJECT TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL'S ADVICE, THE BILL IS EXPECTED TO BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LATER THIS SESSION, HE ADDED.

AT PRESENT, THERE IS NO STATUTORY SAFETY STANDARD REGARDING LEAD CONTENT IN DRAWING PAINT USED BY SCHOOL CHILDREN.

NOTING THAT THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND SCHOOLS WERE CONCERNED ABOUT SAFETY PRECAUTIONS IN SCHOOLS, HE SAID: "MEASURES TAKEN BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ON THE PROMOTION OF SAFETY IN ART ACTIVITIES INCLUDE THE ISSUE OF GUIDELINES TO ALL SCHOOLS IN WHICH SAFETY PRECAUTIONS IN HANDLING TOXIC MATERIALS, INCLUDING PAINTS, ARE EMPHASISED."

FOLLOWING A WARNING RECENTLY ISSUED BY THE CONSUMER COUNCIL ON THE HIGH LEAD CONTENT FOUND IN A CERTAIN BRAND OF POWDER PAINT, HE SAID THE DEPARTMENT WAS REVISING THE SAFETY GUIDELINES TO STRENGTHEN THE PART ON THE PROPER HANDLING OF TOXIC ART MATERIAL.

"IT IS ALSO PLANNING TO ORGANISE A SEMINAR FOR ART TEACHERS ON THE SUBJECT," HE SAID.

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SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO BE CONSULTED ON POLICY CHANGES

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THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT RECURRENT EXPENDITURE ON SOCIAL WELFARE IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE IN REAL TERMS BY ABOUT 16 PER CENT OVER THE NEXT FOUR FINANCIAL YEARS.

IN FACT, FOR THE GOVERNMENT AS A WHOLE THERE WILL BE REAL INCREASES IN EXPENDITURE OVER THE SAME PERIOD, SHE ADDED.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON LI WAH-MING, MRS WONG EXPLAINED THAT BRANCH SECRETARIES HAD BEEN ASKED TO IDENTIFY MODEST SAVINGS ON EXISTING SERVICES SO THAT MORE FUNDS COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR NEW SERVICES.

/THE SAVINGS .....

THE SAVINGS TARGETS ARE ONE PER CENT, 2.2 PER CENT AND 2.6 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL BASELINE EXPENDITURE OF THE INDIVIDUAL POLICY SECRETARIES' PROGRAMME AREAS FOR 1992/93, 1993/94, 1994/95 AND 1995/96 RESPECTIVELY.

"THE MAIN CRITERION USED IN IDENTIFYING SAVINGS IN MY PROGRAMME AREA IS TO EFFECT ECONOMIES IN THE WAY SERVICES ARE DELIVERED, BUT NOT TO WITHDRAW SERVICES WHICH ARE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH EXISTING POLICIES," SHE ADDED.

TO ACHIEVE SAVINGS IN THE WELFARE FIELD, THE GOVERNMENT WILL NO LONGER RECOGNISE, FOR SUBVENTION PURPOSES, ONE POST IN EACH CHILDREN AND YOUTH CENTRE OR COMMUNITY CENTRE WITH A STUDY/READING ROOM NEXT YEAR.

"ADDITIONALLY, CORRESPONDING MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN TO DELETE ONE POST FROM EACH OF SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT'S GROUP WORK UNITS.

"THERE ARE OTHER INCIDENTAL SAVINGS ARISING FROM MINOR MANAGERIAL ADJUSTMENTS."

MRS WONG SAID THERE APPEARED TO BE CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION ABOUT CONSULTATION.

SHE POINTED OUT THAT THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT FIRST INITIATED CONSULTATION WITH THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE AND THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS ABOUT THE REDUCTION IN SUBVENTION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH CENTRES AND COMMUNITY CENTRES WITH A STUDY/READING ROOM LAST MONTH.

"EARLIER CONSULTATION WAS NEITHER PRACTICABLE NOR OPPORTUNE. HAD THERE BEEN POLICY CHANGES INVOLVED IT WOULD HAVE BEEN NECESSARY TO CONSULT THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND INDEED THIS WILL BE DONE FOR SOME OF THE ITEMS BEING CONSIDERED FOR SUBSEQUENT YEARS," MRS WONG SAID.

"THE ADMINISTRATION IS FIRMLY OF THE VIEW THAT WHETHER A CENTRE-CUM-STUDY/READING ROOM IS RUN BY 11 OR NINE OR 13 STAFF IS BASICALLY A MANAGEMENT/UTILISATION OF RESOURCES ISSUE AND DOES NOT ALTER THE POLICY THAT SUCH A CENTRE SHOULD PROVIDE COUNSELLING AND OUTREACHING SERVICES.

"THE DECISION ON HOW TO ADJUST TO THE REDUCTION IN SUBVENTION FOR THESE CENTRES IS BASICALLY ONE FOR THE OPERATING AGENCIES.

"BY WAY OF FURTHER CLARIFICATION, I WISH TO STRESS THAT THERE IS NO QUESTION OF EXEMPTING ANY AREA OF GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE FROM SAVINGS MEASURES TO IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY, VALUE FOR MONEY OR FOR MANAGEMENT/RESOURCES CONTROL REASONS.

"AS REGARDS 1992/93, THE TARGET OF \$61 MILLION IS STILL VERY FAR FROM BEING MET AND ANY SUGGESTIONS AS TO FURTHER MEASURES THAT MIGHT BE ADOPTED WILL MOST CERTAINLY BE CONSIDERED."

SHE UNDERTOOK TO CONSULT THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ANY REVISIONS TO THE POLICIES IMPLICIT IN THE WHITE PAPER ON SOCIAL WELFARE INTO THE 1990S AND BEYOND.

EARLIER, MRS WONG HAD EXPLAINED THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE GOVERNING THE PLANNING AND CONTROL OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE.

SHE SAID THE GROWTH RATE OVER A PERIOD OF TIME SHOULD BE NO GREATER THAN THE TREND GROWTH RATE OF THE ECONOMY, AS MEASURED BY THE GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP).

THE FORECAST TREND GROWTH RATE OF GDP HAS BEEN REVISED FROM 5.5 PER CENT TO FIVE PER CENT.

ACCORDINGLY, THE GUIDELINE GROWTH RATES IN REAL TERMS FOR RECURRENT AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE HAVE BEEN ADJUSTED FROM 4.5 PER CENT AND 7.5 PER CENT PER ANNUM TO FOUR PER CENT AND SEVEN PER CENT PER ANNUM RESPECTIVELY FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS.

THIS, QUITE CLEARLY DOES NOT MEAN THAT OVERALL THERE ARE "CUTS", MRS WONG SAID.

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#### BUS PRIORITY MEASURES FOR TSING YI

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TWO BUS PRIORITY MEASURES HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED AT TSING YI SOUTH BRIDGE, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON LEE WING-TAT, MR LEUNG SAID THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WAS ALSO CONSIDERING OTHER TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES AIMED AT IMPROVING CONDITIONS FOR ALL VEHICLES, INCLUDING BUSES, IN THE VICINITY OF TSING YI SOUTH BRIDGE.

THE BUS PRIORITY MEASURES INTRODUCED ARE THE BUS-ONLY RIGHT-HAND TURN FROM THE BRIDGE INTO TSING YI HEUNG SZE WUI ROAD NORTHBOUND, AND THE BUS-ONLY RIGHT-HAND TURN FROM TSING YI ROAD NORTHBOUND ONTO THE BRIDGE.

THESE ARRANGEMENTS OPERATE FROM 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY, EXCEPT SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS.

MR LEUNG EXPLAINED THAT IN DECIDING WHETHER TO INTRODUCE BUS PRIORITY SCHEME, CONSIDERATION WAS GIVEN TO THE EXTENT TO WHICH BUS SERVICES WERE BEING DELAYED AS A RESULT OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND TO ANY ADVERSE EFFECTS THAT SUCH SCHEMES MIGHT HAVE ON OTHER ROAD USERS.

AT PRESENT, THERE ARE 98 BUS PRIORITY SCHEMES TERRITORY-WIDE, COMPRISING 77 BUS ONLY LANES, 11 BUS GATES, AND 10 BUS ONLY TURNING.

"THESE MEASURES HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN SAVING TRAVELLING TIME FOR BUS PASSENGERS AND REDUCING THE OPERATING COSTS OF BUS SERVICES."

ON THE POSSIBILITY OF IMPOSING RESTRICTIONS ON VEHICLES OTHER THAN PUBLIC BUSES FROM USING CONGESTED ROADS AT PEAK HOURS, MR LEUNG SAID THIS WOULD BE AN EXTREME MEASURE TO BE CONSIDERED ONLY WHERE NO BETTER ALTERNATIVES WERE AVAILABLE.

"SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT COULD OBVIOUSLY INTERFERE WITH THE ACTIVITIES OF OTHER ESSENTIAL ROAD USERS.

"SO FAR, A BUS ONLY SYSTEM HAS BEEN INTRODUCED IN PARTS OF MID-LEVELS AT CERTAIN TIMES OF THE DAY AND WITH SOME SUCCESS," HE ADDED.

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PERSONAL INFORMATION OF BNS APPLICANTS PROTECTED

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THE IDENTITY AND PERSONAL DATA OF APPLICANTS UNDER THE BRITISH NATIONALITY SCHEME (BNS) ARE PROTECTED WITH STRICT CONFIDENCE, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON EDWARD HO, MR STRACHAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT GIVEN, NOR ENVISAGED GIVING, AUTHORISATION FOR THE DISCLOSURE OF SUCH INFORMATION.

"RECORDS ON UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS WILL BE DESTROYED, AND THOSE ON SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS WILL BE KEPT BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT," HE ADDED.

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ALL GOVT SERVANTS REQUIRED TO PROTECT OFFICIAL INFORMATION

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ALL GOVERNMENT SERVANTS ARE REQUIRED BY HONG KONG GOVERNMENT SECURITY REGULATIONS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS TO PROTECT OFFICIAL INFORMATION, WHICH INCLUDES PERSONAL DATA HELD IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, STATED THIS IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON EDWARD HO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE POINTED OUT THAT CIVIL SERVANTS WERE SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITED FROM PASSING TO PERSONS ANY SUCH INFORMATION UNLESS THOSE PERSONS ARE AUTHORISED TO HAVE ACCESS TO IT.

"THESE REGULATIONS ARE COMPREHENSIVE AND PRECISE," HE SAID.

"THEY COVER THE HANDLING, PROTECTION AND STORAGE OF ALL CLASSIFIED DATA, NO MATTER IN WHAT FORM SUCH DATA IS STORED, THAT IS, WHETHER THE DATA BE STORED IN CONVENTIONAL FILES OR ON COMPUTER SYSTEMS MEDIA."

RECOGNISING THE SPECIAL NEEDS FOR PROTECTING PERSONAL DATA STORED IN COMPUTER SYSTEMS, THE ACTING SECRETARY SAID A WORKING GROUP ON DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION, REPORTING TO THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND DRAWING ON ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING EXPERTISE BOTH IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND WITHIN GOVERNMENT, ESTABLISHED DATA PROTECTION PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES WHICH WERE ISSUED TO GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS IN MARCH 1988.

"THESE PRINCIPLES WERE BASED ON THOSE WHICH HAD BEEN ADOPTED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM UNDER THE DATA PROTECTION ACT 1984," HE ADDED.

THE DATA PROTECTION GUIDELINES ISSUED TO GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS SET OUT DATA MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES, SPECIFY THE PARAMETERS FOR THE COLLECTION OF PERSONAL DATA AND LAY DOWN REQUIREMENTS FOR PROTECTION OF THESE DATA AGAINST UNAUTHORISED ACCESS.

A RECENT SURVEY OF DATA PROTECTION PRACTICES IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS CARRIED OUT BY THE WORKING GROUP SHOWED THAT, WITHIN THE PARAMETERS SET, THE GOVERNMENT'S RECORD ON PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION IS SATISFACTORY.

THE SURVEY ALSO SHOWED THAT MOST GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS HAVE SPECIFIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES DRAWN UP FOR THE PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA STORED IN THEIR COMPUTER SYSTEMS.

MANY HAVE A SENIOR MEMBER OF STAFF OR COMMITTEE TO OVERSEE THE SECURITY OF PERSONAL DATA STORED IN THEIR COMPUTER SYSTEMS.

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ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS FOR COLLEGES OF EDUCATION NOT LOWERED  
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THERE ARE NO PLANS AT PRESENT TO LOWER THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION, ALTHOUGH CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN TO APPLYING THE MINIMUM ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS MORE FLEXIBLY IN INDIVIDUAL CASES.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON NG MING-YUM AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE NOTED THAT THE EXISTING TWO-YEAR AND THREE-YEAR TEACHER TRAINING COURSES IN THE COLLEGES WERE INTRODUCED IN 1980 IN LINE WITH THE POLICY LAID DOWN IN THE 1978 WHITE PAPER ON SENIOR SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION.

/THE MINIMUM .....

THE MINIMUM ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS SET FOR THESE COURSES ARE TO ENSURE THAT STUDENTS ADMITTED HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO COMPLETE THEIR TRAINING AND BECOME QUALIFIED TEACHERS.

"NO UNDER-QUALIFIED CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN ADMITTED IN THE PAST 10 YEARS," HE SAID, "ALL CANDIDATES ADMITTED HAVE MET OR HAVE EXCEEDED THE MINIMUM ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS."

MR CHAN STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNISED THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING ADEQUATELY TRAINED TEACHERS.

BUT THE QUESTION OF ATTRACTING YOUNG PEOPLE INTO THE TEACHING PROFESSION IS A COMPLEX ONE.

"THIS IS BEING EXAMINED IN DETAIL BY THE EDUCATION COMMISSION IN THE CONTEXT OF ITS FIFTH REPORT," HE SAID.

"THE COMMISSION WILL INCLUDE CONSIDERATION OF THE STATUS OF THE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION AND IS EXPECTED TO PROPOSE MEASURES TO ENHANCE BOTH.

"THE AIM WILL BE TO MAKE TEACHING AS A CAREER A MORE ATTRACTIVE OPTION FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS."

MR CHAN CITED STATISTICS TO SHOW THE TARGET INTAKES OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS IN THE COLLEGES AND THE VERY LOW ENROLMENT WHICH RANGED FROM 0.7 PER CENT TO 6.3 PER CENT IN SIX OF THE LAST 10 YEARS.

AS REGARDS THE DROP-OUT RATE IN THE CURRENT ACADEMIC YEAR, THE NUMBER OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS WHO HAVE WITHDRAWN FROM BOTH THE TWO-YEAR AND THREE-YEAR COURSES AS AT THE END OF NOVEMBER WAS 134, OR 15.8 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL INTAKE IN SEPTEMBER.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE REASONS GIVEN FOR WITHDRAWING FROM THE COURSES SHOWS THAT 48 WERE TO PURSUE DEGREE COURSES, 19 TO PURSUE SUB-DEGREE COURSES, SIX TO TAKE UP EMPLOYMENT, ONE TO EMIGRATE AND THE REST EITHER FOR VARIOUS REASONS OR GAVE NO REASONS.

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GOVT'S 'LENDER OF LAST RESORT' POLICY UNDER REVIEW

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THERE WILL BE FULL CONSULTATION WITH THOSE CONCERNED SHOULD CHANGES IN THE GOVERNMENT'S LENDER OF LAST RESORT POLICY BE CONSIDERED NECESSARY AND DESIRABLE, THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS, MR DAVID NENDICK, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON DAVID K.P. LI, MR NENDICK EXPLAINED THAT THE OFFICE OF THE EXCHANGE FUND KEPT THE LIQUIDITY OF THE INTER-BANK MARKET AS A WHOLE AND THE LIQUIDITY NEEDS OF SOLVENT INDIVIDUAL BANKS UNDER REGULAR REVIEW.

/"THERE IS .....

"THERE IS CURRENTLY AN ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY THE OFFICE OF THE EXCHANGE FUND IN EFFECT ACTS AS THE LENDER OF LAST RESORT, PROVIDING LATE OVERNIGHT LIQUIDITY ASSISTANCE AFTER THE CLOSE OF THE LOCAL INTERBANK MARKET.

"OVER THE PAST 11 MONTHS, THE OFFICE HAS PROVIDED SUCH ASSISTANCE ON 11 OCCASIONS. THE TOTAL SUMS PROVIDED AMOUNT TO \$2.4 BILLION," HE SAID.

THE SECRETARY SAID THIS ARRANGEMENT SERVED THE FUNCTION WHICH IN OTHER MONETARY SYSTEMS WAS PROVIDED BY WHAT WAS CALLED A DISCOUNT WINDOW.

HE NOTED THAT SOME HAD RECENTLY EXPRESSED A WISH FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S LENDER OF LAST RESORT POLICY TO BE CLARIFIED, WHILE OTHERS HAD CALLED FOR THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT TO PROVIDE LATE OVERNIGHT LIQUIDITY ASSISTANCE TO BE FORMALISED, SO THAT LICENSED BANKS WOULD HAVE A BETTER OPPORTUNITY TO MANAGE THEIR LIQUIDITY POSITIONS EFFECTIVELY.

"THIS MATTER IS NOW UNDER REVIEW BY THE OFFICE OF THE EXCHANGE FUND," HE SAID.

"THERE WILL BE FULL CONSULTATION WITH THOSE CONCERNED, IN PARTICULAR WITH THE EXCHANGE FUND ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION OF BANKS, SHOULD CHANGES BE CONSIDERED NECESSARY AND DESIRABLE," HE ADDED.

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#### CRITERIA FOR DEPLOYMENT OF SOCIAL WORK TEAMS EXPLAINED

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THERE IS NO PLAN TO PROVIDE AN OUTREACHING SOCIAL WORK TEAM TO THE TAI PO AND NORTH DISTRICTS, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM REV THE HON FUNG CHI-WOOD, THE SECRETARY SAID THE PROVISION OF OUTREACHING SOCIAL WORK TEAMS WAS DETERMINED BY THE STEERING GROUP ON OUTREACHING SOCIAL WORK, WHICH CONSISTED OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE.

SHE NOTED THAT THE PRIORITIES WERE SET BY THE STEERING GROUP AND BASED ON THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- \* HIGH JUVENILE CRIME RATE, AS INDICATED BY THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF CASES PROSECUTED AND THE NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE SUPERVISED UNDER THE SUPERINTENDENT DISCRETIONARY SCHEME OF THE POLICE;
- \* RELATIVE PERCENTAGE OF YOUTH POPULATION; AND

/\* HIGH POPULATION .....

- \* HIGH POPULATION DENSITY, HAVING REGARD TO THE AVAILABILITY OF OTHER FORMS OF RELEVANT SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THAT DISTRICT.

AT PRESENT, THERE ARE 24 OUTREACHING SOCIAL WORK TEAMS IN THE TERRITORY.

OF THESE, FOUR ARE DEPLOYED IN KWUN TONG; THREE IN TSUEN WAN/KWAI TSING; TWO EACH IN WONG TAI SIN, KOWLOON CITY, SHAM SHUI PO, TUEN MUN AND SHA TIN; AND ONE EACH IN YAU MA TEI/TSIM SHA TSUI, MONG KOK, YUEN LONG, CENTRAL AND WESTERN, WAN CHAI, EASTERN AND SOUTHERN DISTRICTS.

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CONCLUSIONS EXPECTED EARLY NEXT YEAR  
ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY REVIEW

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THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ANSON CHAN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THE CURRENT REVIEW OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY IS EXPECTED TO REACH CONCLUSIONS IN THE EARLY PART OF NEXT YEAR.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON SAMUEL WONG, MRS CHAN SAID GOVERNMENT'S AIM WAS TO ESTABLISH A SOUND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK IN WHICH A DIVERSE RANGE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES COULD DEVELOP AT COMPETITIVE PRICES - BOTH IN THE INTERESTS OF DOMESTIC AND BUSINESS CONSUMERS AND IN ORDER TO SUPPORT HONG KONG'S ROLE AS A MAJOR REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF TRADE AND FINANCE.

"IT IS THE INTENTION TO SEEK THE VIEWS OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS BEFORE FINAL DECISIONS ARE TAKEN ON THE OUTCOME OF THE REVIEW," MRS CHAN SAID.

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PLANS AFOOT TO IMPROVE HOSPITAL BEDS PROVISION IN NT EAST

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A CONTINGENCY PLAN DOES EXIST IN THE PRINCE OF WALES HOSPITAL (PWH) FOR THE TRANSFER OF EMERGENCY CASES TO QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL AND FOR RESCHEDULING EXAMINATION OF NON-EMERGENCY CASES, IN CASE OF FAILURE OF THE CT SCANNER THERE, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"WITH EFFICIENT PATIENT MANAGEMENT, THE IMPACT ON SERVICE IS MINIMISED," SHE SAID, ADDING THAT CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN TO THE PROVISION OF NECESSARY EQUIPMENT TO MEET PATIENT NEEDS.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON EMILY LAU WAI-HING, MRS WONG SAID THE CT SCANNER IN PWH WAS OUT OF SERVICE FOR 214.1 HOURS OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS, REPRESENTING A DOWNTIME RATE OF 2.4 PER CENT.

THE MAIN REASON FOR THAT WAS THE NEED FOR MAJOR REPAIRS IN JULY AND SEPTEMBER WHICH ACCOUNTED FOR 150.5 HOURS, OR 70 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL DOWNTIME.

SINCE THEN, THE MACHINE-TIME HAD BEEN RESTORED TO OVER 90 PER CENT OF THE OPERATING CAPACITY, SHE SAID.

MRS WONG ALSO NOTED THAT PWH IS THE REGIONAL HOSPITAL FOR NEW TERRITORIES EAST WHICH HAS A POPULATION OF 1.03 MILLION.

APART FROM PWH WHICH HAS 1,380 BEDS, THE NEW TERRITORIES EAST REGION IS ALSO SERVED BY FANLING HOSPITAL (98 BEDS), SHATIN CHESHIRE HOME (246 BEDS), HAVEN OF HOPE HOSPITAL (271 BEDS), ST JOHN'S HOSPITAL (97 BEDS), 16 OUT-PATIENT CLINICS AND A RANGE OF OTHER MEDICAL AND HEALTH FACILITIES, SHE SAID.

THE REGION NOW HAS 2.07 BEDS PER 1,000 POPULATION, WHICH COMPARES WITH 4.28 BEDS PER 1,000 POPULATION FOR THE TERRITORY AS A WHOLE.

THE ACTUAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE FOR HOSPITAL SERVICES IN 1990/91 (INCLUDING SUBVENTIONS) WAS \$6.56 BILLION, OF WHICH \$687.8 MILLION, OR 10.5 PER CENT, WAS SPENT ON PWH.

"TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE CURRENT INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE VARIOUS FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE UTILISATION OF HOSPITAL SERVICES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES EAST REGION, SUCH AS THE RELATIVELY YOUNG POPULATION, THE HOSPITAL UTILISATION RATE AND THE AVAILABILITY OF PHYSICAL FACILITIES, THE ALLOCATION TO PWH IS CONSIDERED FAIR," THE SECRETARY SAID.

"THE SHATIN CHESHIRE HOME AND SHATIN INFIRMARY AND CONVALESCENT HOSPITAL ARE TWO NEW HOSPITALS OPENED THIS YEAR TO SERVE THE NEW TERRITORIES EAST REGION POPULATION.

"PLANS ARE ALSO IN THE PIPELINE TO IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF HOSPITAL BEDS IN THE REGION.

"THESE INCLUDE THE EXPANSION WORKS AT THE FANLING HOSPITAL, EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT WORKS AT THE PWH, RELOCATION OF THE NETHERSOLE HOSPITAL AT TAI PO, REDEVELOPMENT OF THE HAVEN OF HOPE HOSPITAL AND BUILDING OF THE NEW TAI PO INFIRMARY AND CONVALESCENT HOSPITAL."

PAYMENT OF WAGES BY AUTOPAY PROPOSED

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ACTION IS IN HAND TO INCREASE THE PENALTIES FOR UNLAWFUL DEDUCTION OR UNDERPAYMENT OF WAGES UNDER THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

CONSIDERATION WOULD ALSO BE GIVEN TO DEBARRING THOSE EMPLOYERS WHO HAD BEEN FOUND TO HAVE DEDUCTED WAGES UNLAWFULLY FROM PARTICIPATING IN FUTURE LABOUR IMPORTATION SCHEMES.

"AT THE TIME OF APPLICATION FOR VISA EXTENSION FOR IMPORTED WORKERS (UPON COMPLETION OF ONE YEAR'S SERVICE), THE DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION WILL REQUIRE EMPLOYERS TO CERTIFY THAT WAGES AS STIPULATED IN THE EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS ARE BEING PAID," MR CHAN SAID.

"PROVISION OF FALSE INFORMATION IS LIABLE TO A MAXIMUM FINE OF \$50,000 OR 14 YEARS' IMPRISONMENT UNDER THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE."

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON LAU CHIN-SHEK, MR CHAN SAID THE ADMINISTRATION'S RECENT PROPOSAL WAS TO MAKE THE PAYMENT OF WAGES BY AUTOPAY A CONDITION FOR IMPORTING WORKERS UNDER ANY NEW SCHEME WHICH MIGHT BE INTRODUCED.

SUCH A CONDITION DID NOT APPLY UNDER THE 1989 AND 1990 IMPORTATION SCHEMES, BUT HE POINTED OUT THAT THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT HAD BEEN TAKING STEPS TO PERSUADE AND ENCOURAGE EMPLOYERS WHO HAD IMPORTED WORKERS UNDER THE TWO SCHEMES TO EFFECT PAYMENTS OF WAGES BY AUTOPAY ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS.

AS AT DECEMBER 9 THIS YEAR, A TOTAL OF 2,084 EMPLOYERS WERE EMPLOYING IMPORTED WORKERS UNDER THE 1989 AND 1990 SCHEMES.

"DURING THE THREE MONTHS SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1991, 1,664 OF THESE ESTABLISHMENTS WERE INSPECTED BY THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT AND 338 (THAT IS 20.3 PER CENT) WERE MAKING PAYMENT OF WAGES THROUGH BANKS.

"THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT HAS ADVISED THE OTHER EMPLOYERS ORALLY AND IN WRITING TO PAY WAGES BY AUTOPAY.

"WHERE THERE ARE REASONS TO SUSPECT THAT AN EMPLOYER MAY HAVE DEDUCTED WORKERS' WAGES UNLAWFULLY, ENFORCEMENT ACTION WILL BE TAKEN UNDER EXISTING LAW."

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO STEP UP INSPECTIONS MADE TO PLACES OF EMPLOYMENT AND LIVING QUARTERS OF THE IMPORTED WORKERS.

TAI PO AND NORTH DISTRICTS TO BE SELF-SUFFICIENT

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TAI PO AND NORTH DISTRICTS WILL BE SELF-SUFFICIENT IN ALL NECESSARY FACILITIES AND SERVICES UPON THE COMPLETION OF THE PLANNED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR GRAHAM BARNES, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM REV THE HON FUNG CHI-WOOD, MR BARNES SAID THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S PUBLIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME WOULD PROVIDE A TOTAL OF 24,301 FLATS IN TAI PO AND NORTH DISTRICTS BETWEEN 1991/92 AND 1996/97.

"OF THESE, 8,514 ARE FOR RENTAL AND 15,787 FOR HOME OWNERSHIP, PROVIDING HOUSING FOR ABOUT 74,600 PEOPLE," HE SAID.

ON THE PROVISION OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES, MR BARNES SAID THIS WAS BEING IMPLEMENTED ACCORDING TO A DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME THAT WAS COMPATIBLE WITH THE OVERALL GROWTH OF THE ECONOMY.

HE SAID THE MAJOR HIGHWAYS PROJECTS IN TAI PO AND NORTH DISTRICTS WERE BASICALLY COMPLETE.

"WITH THE OPENING OF THE TATE'S CAIRN TUNNEL AND THE ENTIRE ROUTE 6 (BETWEEN THE TOLO HIGHWAY AND THE EASTERN HARBOUR CROSSING) EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE ROAD LINKS NOW IN PLACE SHOULD BE ADEQUATE TO MEET DEMAND FOR TRAFFIC BETWEEN NORTH-EAST NEW TERRITORIES AND THE METROPOLITAN AREAS UP TO THE LAST QUARTER OF THE 1990'S."

MR BARNES SAID THE SECTION OF THE NT CIRCULAR ROAD LINKING SHEUNG SHUI WITH YUEN LONG WAS NEARING COMPLETION. ITS PLANNED OPENING IN MID 1992 WOULD IMPROVE TRAFFIC FLOW BETWEEN NORTH-EAST NEW TERRITORIES AND NORTH-WEST NEW TERRITORIES.

"INTERNAL ROADS WITHIN THESE TWO DISTRICTS WILL CONTINUE TO BE BUILT TO COPE WITH DEVELOPMENT NEEDS," HE SAID.

ON KCRC SERVICES, MR BARNES SAID SINCE JUNE THIS YEAR, ALL KCR TRAINS CARRIED 12 CARRIAGES. BY SEPTEMBER 1993, THE KCR FLEET WOULD HAVE EXPANDED ITS CARRYING CAPACITY BY 53 PER CENT RELATIVE TO 1989.

"FOR THE LONGER TERM, A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE SIGNALLING SYSTEM IS BEING CONDUCTED TO EXPLORE WAYS FOR IMPROVING OPERATING EFFICIENCY AND TO FURTHER EXHANCE CAPACITY," HE SAID.

MR BARNES SAID UNDER THE KOWLOON MOTOR BUS COMPANY'S LATEST FIVE-YEAR PLAN, THE NUMBER OF BUSES SERVING TAI PO AND NORTH DISTRICTS WOULD INCREASE FROM SOME 280 VEHICLES TO ABOUT 300 VEHICLES BETWEEN 1991 AND 1996, AND THERE WOULD BE THE WIDER USE OF HIGH-CAPACITY THREE-AXLE DOUBLE-DECKERS.

ON THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION FACILITIES, MR BARNES SAID TWO PRIMARY AND FOUR SECONDARY SCHOOLS HAD BEEN COMPLETED IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS WHILE THREE PRIMARY AND SIX SECONDARY SCHOOLS WOULD BE BUILT IN THE COMING SIX YEARS.

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WELFARE AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLANNED FOR THE PERIOD INCLUDED ONE EACH FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE, RURAL CENTRE, SMALL GROUP HOME, CHILDREN AND YOUTH CENTRE, EARLY EDUCATION AND TRAINING CENTRE, SPECIAL CENTRE FOR THE ELDERLY, MULTI-SERVICE CENTRE FOR THE ELDERLY, HOME CUM CARE AND ATTENTION UNIT FOR THE ELDERLY, AND DAY ACTIVITY CENTRE FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED.

THERE WOULD ALSO BE THREE DAY NURSERIES, TWO FAMILY SERVICES CENTRES, TWO DAY CARE CENTRES FOR THE ELDERLY, AND TWO HOSTELS FOR THE DISABLED.

PROJECTS FOR OTHER NECESSARY SERVICES SUCH AS POLICE STATION, FIRE STATION AND AMBULANCE SERVICES HAD BASICALLY BEEN COMPLETED.

REGARDING RECREATION AND CULTURAL FACILITIES FOR THE COMING SIX YEARS, MR BARNES SAID A CULTURAL COMPLEX HAD BEEN PLANNED FOR IN TAI PO. THERE WOULD ALSO BE SEVEN DISTRICT OPEN SPACE PROJECTS IN THE NORTH DISTRICT, AND FIVE IN TAI PO.

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#### GOVT'S SALE OF CHTC SHARES EXPLAINED

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THE SALE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S 24.3 PER CENT OF THE SHARES OF THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL CO., LTD ("CHTC") TO WHARF (HOLDINGS) LIMITED WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S LONG DECLARED INTENTION THAT THE EXCHANGE FUND SHOULD DISPOSE OF THE WHOLE OF ITS EQUITY STAKE IN THE CHTC, ON THE GROUNDS THAT THIS WAS NOT AN APPROPRIATE ASSET FOR THE FUND.

THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS, MR DAVID NENDICK, STATED THIS IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON LI WAH-MING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR NENDICK EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS NOT A LIQUID INVESTMENT AND ALSO THERE WAS A POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICTS OF INTEREST TO ARISE WHERE THE GOVERNMENT WAS BOTH REGULATOR AND A SIGNIFICANT SHAREHOLDER.

THUS IN 1986, THE THEN FINANCIAL SECRETARY, SIR JOHN BREMIDGE, ANNOUNCED IN HIS BUDGET SPEECH THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED TO DISPOSE OF THE EXCHANGE FUND'S EQUITY HOLDINGS IN HONG KONG AS AND WHEN APPROPRIATE AND THAT THE DEALS SHOULD BE "AT ARM'S LENGTH ON THE STRENGTH OF IMPARTIAL OUTSIDE ADVICE", HE SAID.

AS REGARDS THE PRICE AT WHICH THE CHTC SHARES WERE SOLD, MR NENDICK SAID THE PRICE (\$12.035 PER SHARE) WAS DETERMINED ON THE BASIS OF SEVERAL FACTORS.

/THESE INCLUDED .....

THESE INCLUDED A "NET ASSET" VALUATION OF CHTC AND A "NET PRESENT VALUE" VALUATION OF EXPECTED FUTURE DIVIDENDS (HAVING REGARD TO THE FRANCHISE PERIOD OF CHTC'S TUNNEL), THE ABSENCE OF A MORE COMPETITIVE OFFER FROM AN INTERESTED PARTY IN HONG KONG, AND THE CONDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF OTHER BIDDERS OF THE SHARES FOR TRANSPORT BRANCH ASSURANCES ON VARIOUS RELEVANT ASPECTS OF TRANSPORT POLICY WHICH THE EXCHANGE FUND WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO PROVIDE.

THE DISCOUNT OF 15.2 PER CENT TO THE MARKET PRICE OF \$14.20 AT THE TIME OF THE SALE WAS CONSIDERED BY THE FUND'S FINANCIAL ADVISERS HAMBRO PACIFIC LIMITED TO BE ACCEPTABLE FOR A LARGE PRIVATE PLACEMENT AND FOR A SALE OF THIS TYPE, HE SAID.

THE OFFER WAS RECOMMENDED BY THEM TO THE EXCHANGE FUND AND THE DECISION TO SELL WAS TAKEN ON THE BASIS OF THAT RECOMMENDATION, THE SECRETARY SAID.

MR NENDICK SAID THE EXCHANGE FUND ACQUIRED THE CHTC SHARES FROM THE DEVELOPMENT LOAN FUND IN SEPTEMBER 1983 AND THE PURCHASE PRICE OF APPROXIMATELY \$318 MILLION (OR \$10.34 PER SHARE) WAS BASED ON THE VALUATION PREPARED BY INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS.

SINCE THAT TIME, THE FOLLOWING DIVIDENDS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED:

	PER SHARE -----
1983 (SIX MONTHS)	\$0.580
1984	\$1.140
1985	\$1.140
1986	\$1.250
1987	\$1.310
1988	\$1.435
1989	\$1.465
1990	\$1.465
1991 (SIX MONTHS)	\$0.670

THE SECRETARY SAID THE SALE TO THE WHARF GROUP REALISED TOTAL PROCEEDS OF \$370 MILLION, RESULTING IN A CAPITAL GAIN OF \$52 MILLION.

THE OVERALL RETURN OF BOTH DIVIDENDS AND CAPITAL VALUE TO THE EXCHANGE FUND SINCE THE ACQUISITION OF THE SHARES IN 1983 REPRESENTED AN INTERNAL RATE OF RETURN OF 14.39 PER CENT PER ANNUM, HE ADDED.

GOVT ENDEAVOURS TO ENSURE CONFORMITY OF BILLS TO ICCPR

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THE GOVERNMENT ALREADY ENDEAVOURS TO ENSURE THAT ALL BILLS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND ALL DRAFT BILLS PUBLISHED FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION, HAVE BEEN PREPARED TO CONFORM FULLY WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS (ICCPR) AS APPLIED TO HONG KONG.

THIS WAS A PROVISION OF GENERAL APPLICATION IN HONG KONG AS SPECIFICALLY REQUIRED BY THE AMENDED LETTERS PATENT IN ARTICLE VII(3), THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, STATED IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON JIMMY MCGREGOR IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR MATHEWS SAID WHEN A BILL WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IT NECESSARILY FOLLOWED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS SATISFIED THAT IT COMPLIED WITH THE COVENANT.

HE SAID IT WAS NOT CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE TO ATTACH A STATEMENT TO EACH BILL STATING THAT IT HAD BEEN PREPARED TO CONFORM FULLY WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT.

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MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES REMAINS CNTA'S RESPONSIBILITY

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THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION (CNTA) WILL CONTINUE TO BE FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF ALL ITS 69 COMMUNITY HALLS AND CENTRES, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON NG MING-YUM, MR SUEN SAID THAT IN THIS REGARD, APPROVAL HAD RECENTLY BEEN GIVEN FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF PART-TIME STAFF TO ASSIST IN THE OPERATION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES.

HE STRESSED THAT IT WAS NOT THE INTENTION FOR CNTA TO GIVE UP MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY AT THIS STAGE.

"HOWEVER, CNTA IS CARRYING OUT A LIMITED THREE-YEAR TRIAL IN FOUR COMMUNITY HALLS TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT COMMUNITY FACILITIES CAN BE OPERATED IN A MANNER WHICH IS MORE RESPONSIVE TO COMMUNITY NEEDS.

"THE OBJECTIVE IS TO PROMOTE UTILISATION OF COMMUNITY HALLS AND AT THE SAME TIME ACHIEVE THE MOST EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES," MR SUEN SAID.

/HE POINTED .....

HE POINTED OUT THAT UNDER THE TRIAL, THE ADMINISTRATION HAD CAREFULLY SELECTED FOUR VOLUNTARY AGENCIES TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATION OF THE HALL AND TO PROMOTE THE USE OF THE HALL AMONG THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

"THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES ARE REQUIRED TO OPEN AND CLOSE THE HALL, SET UP, DISMANTLE AND STORE ANY EQUIPMENT PROVIDED, AS WELL AS TO MONITOR THE GENERAL CLEANLINESS AND SECURITY OF THE PREMISES DURING OPENING HOURS.

"THE RELEVANT CNTA DISTRICT OFFICE WILL STILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OVERALL MANAGEMENT OF THE CENTRE, INCLUDING THE BOOKING ARRANGEMENTS AND THE SUPERVISION OF MAINTENANCE AND CLEANSING CONTRACTORS," MR SUEN SAID.

THE FOUR COMMUNITY HALLS AND THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE SCHEME ARE: THE TSING YI COMMUNITY HALL MANAGED BY THE CHILDREN'S CLUB SINCE MAY THIS YEAR; THE CHEUNG HANG COMMUNITY HALL MANAGED BY THE POK OI HOSPITAL SINCE OCTOBER THIS YEAR; THE KIN SANG COMMUNITY HALL TO BE MANAGED BY THE YAN OI TONG; AND THE KWAI FONG COMMUNITY HALL TO BE MANAGED BY THE KWAI CHUNG AND TSING YI DISTRICT CULTURE AND ARTS CO-ORDINATING ASSOCIATION LIMITED.

THE TENANCY AGREEMENT FOR THE LAST TWO COMMUNITY HALLS ARE BEING PROCESSED.

NOTING THAT THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN THE PILOT SCHEME WOULD BE CLOSELY MONITORED OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS, MR SUEN SAID THAT SO FAR INITIAL REPORTS WERE POSITIVE.

HE ASSURED THE COUNCIL THAT NOT ONLY WOULD CNTA WORK TO ENSURE THAT THE LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVIDED AT COMMUNITY FACILITIES WAS MAINTAINED UNDER THE TRIAL, BUT ALSO STRIVE TO ENSURE THAT SERVICES GENERALLY WERE IMPROVED.

"THIS, AFTERALL, IS THE REASON WE HAVE EMBARKED UPON THIS TRIAL," MR SUEN SAID.

THE SECRETARY STRESSED THAT CNTA STAFF WERE WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS TO IDENTIFY PROBLEMS, TO WORK OUT REALISTIC SOLUTIONS AND TO CONSIDER WAYS TO FURTHER IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES.

"MEASURES BEING CONSIDERED IN ADDITION TO THOSE WHICH FORM PART OF THE TRIAL SCHEME INCLUDE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PHYSICAL SECURITY OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES; INTRODUCTION OF MORE FREQUENT CLEANSING TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT IN THESE FACILITIES; AND THE ADOPTION OF MORE FLEXIBLE BLOCK BOOKING ARRANGEMENTS WHICH SHOULD BENEFIT THE REGULAR USERS," HE ADDED.

TYPE OF CONTRACTS DETERMINED TO ACHIEVE BEST VALUE FOR MONEY

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DEPENDING ON THE NATURE, SIZE AND TIMING OF THE CAPITAL WORKS PROJECT, THE GOVERNMENT DETERMINES THE TYPE OF CONTRACT THAT WILL ACHIEVE THE BEST VALUE FOR THE PUBLIC MONEY SPENT, THE SECRETARY FOR WORKS, MR JAMES BLAKE, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON DAVID LI, MR BLAKE SAID THE ADOPTION OF CONTRACTS INCORPORATING PROVISION FOR FIXED-PRICE, LUMP-SUM OR DESIGN AND BUILD, WAS GIVEN CONSIDERATION OF AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS WITH NO HARD AND FAST RULES.

MR BLAKE SAID A FIXED PRICE CONTRACT, WITH NO PROVISION FOR PRICE FLUCTUATIONS, ALLOWED THE GOVERNMENT TO FIX THE COST ON THE PROJECT AT THE TIME WHEN WORK BEGAN.

A LUMP-SUM CONTRACT, SIMILAIILY ALLOWS THE FIXING OF COST AT THE TIME OF AWARD AGAINST A CLEARLY DEFINED SCOPE OF WORKS.

"FIXED PRICE LUMP-SUM CONTRACTS THEREFORE ALLOW A GREATER DEGREE OF CERTAINTY IN BUDGETING, AND FOR THIS REASON WE ARE USING THIS TYPE OF CONTRACT FOR THE MAJOR COMPONENT PROJECTS OF THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME," HE SAID.

MR BLAKE ADDED THAT AS THESE PROJECTS INVOLVED LARGE CONTRACT VALUES AND DEMANDING WORK SCHEDULES, BY AWARDED SUCH CONTRACTS WILL IMPROVE FINANCIAL CERTAINTY AND ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO HAVE AVAILABLE THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE MEANS TO ENSURE THAT CONTRACTORS ACHIEVE COMPLETION BY THE CONTRACTUAL DATES.

MR BLAKE SAID GOVERNMENT'S CAPITAL WORKS PROJECTS INVOLVING CONTRACTS OF 12 MONTHS OR LESS WERE ALSO FIXED PRICE.

"THOSE WHICH ARE OF A CIVIL ENGINEERING NATURE ARE USUALLY RE-MEASURED, AND NOT LUMP-SUM, BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF THE WORKS.

"ARCHITECTURAL CONTRACTS HAVE LESS UNKNOWNNS, ARE OFTEN MORE STANDARDISED, AND ARE USUALLY LET ON A LUMP-SUM BASIS. PROVISION CAN BE MADE FOR VARYING THE SCOPE OF LUMP-SUM OR RE-MEASUREMENT CONTRACTS," HE SAID.

FOR CAPITAL WORKS PROJECTS INVOLVING CONTRACTS LONGER THAN 12 MONTHS, MR BLAKE SAID THESE WERE USUALLY INFLATION LINKED WITH THE PAYMENT OF INDEX-RELATED PRICE FLUCTUATIONS.

"THEY MAY BE RE-MEASURED OR LUMP-SUM, AS THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN EACH CASE BEST DEMAND. INFLATION CONSIDERATION IS BALANCED AGAINST THE LESSER CONTRACT VALUES INVOLVED," HE SAID.

MR BLAKE SAID TURN-KEY CONTRACTS OR DESIGN AND BUILD CONTRACTS WERE USED WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES CLEARLY SHOWED THAT CONTRACTORS' METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT DURING DESIGN OF THE PERMANENT WORKS, WOULD BE COST ADVANTAGEOUS TO GOVERNMENT.

THEY ARE AWARDED ON A LUMP-SUM BASIS, AND MAY ALSO BE FIXED PRICE, HE SAID.

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REFURBISHMENT OF A TUNG TAU ESTATE BLOCK BEING CONSIDERED

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REFURBISHMENT OF BLOCK 22 AT TUNG TAU ESTATE IS ONE OF SEVERAL OPTIONS CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY TO MEET THE DEMAND FOR ACCOMMODATION FOR SMALL HOUSEHOLDS, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR GRAHAM BARNES, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LAU CHIN-SHEK, MR BARNES SAID THIS FOLLOWED AN IN-DEPTH ASSESSMENT OF THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND FOR SUCH ACCOMMODATION IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS YEAR.

HE SAID THIS PROPOSAL WOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S BUILDING COMMITTEE THIS MONTH.

"THE VARIOUS WAYS OF INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF SMALL HOUSEHOLD ACCOMMODATION, INCLUDING THE POSSIBLE RETENTION OF THIS BLOCK, ARE STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION," HE SAID.

MR BARNES EXPLAINED THAT ALL THE FLATS IN THE BLOCK HAD SELF-CONTAINED FACILITIES AND WOULD BE SUITABLY UPGRADED TO PROVIDE SATISFACTORY ACCOMMODATION SUBJECT TO A DECISION TO PROCEED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE HOUSING AUTHORITY WOULD NOT MOVE ELDERLY, ONE OR TWO-PERSON FAMILIES INTO BUILDINGS WITH INADEQUATE FACILITIES.

"THE AUTHORITY IS ALSO STUDYING WAYS TO INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF SELF-CONTAINED, ONE-PERSON FLATS IN ITS NEW PRODUCTION," HE SAID.

"THIS WILL BE ONE OF THE MEASURES TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS.

"THE AUTHORITY HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO USE ALL ITS STOCK IN AN EFFECTIVE MANNER, BOTH NEW AND OLD," THE SECRETARY ADDED.

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FOUR-HOUR DEBATE ON RETIREMENT PROTECTION SCHEME

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A MOTION ON THE RETIREMENT PROTECTION SCHEME MOVED BY THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG WAS PASSED AFTER A FOUR-HOUR DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TONIGHT (WEDNESDAY).

MR TAM'S MOTION READ: "THAT THIS COUNCIL WELCOMES THE DECISION BY GOVERNMENT TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMPULSORY RETIREMENT PROTECTION SCHEME AND URGES GOVERNMENT TO DRAW UP EXPEDITIOUSLY, AFTER WIDELY SEEKING AND FULLY TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS OF THE PUBLIC, A PLAN FOR SOLVING EFFECTIVELY THE LIVELIHOOD PROBLEM OF RETIRED AND ELDERLY PEOPLE."

A TOTAL OF 27 MEMBERS, INCLUDING THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SPOKE IN THE MOTION DEBATE. THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT.

AN AMENDED MOTION MOVED BY THE HON HENRY TANG WAS DEFEATED.

MEANWHILE, NINE MEMBERS SPOKE IN THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE STRATEGIC SEWAGE DISPOSAL SCHEME RAISED BY REV THE HON FUNG CHI-WOOD. THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR GRAHAM BARNES, REPLIED ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT.

IN ADDITION, THE PNEUMOCONIOSIS (COMPENSATION) (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1991 WAS PASSED.

THREE BILLS - THE INSURANCE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1991, NOISE CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 AND DANGEROUS DRUGS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1991 - WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS. DEBATES ON THEM WERE ADJOURNED.

TWO MOTIONS MOVED BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER UNDER THE EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION ORDINANCE AND THE PNEUMOCONIOSIS (COMPENSATION) ORDINANCE, WERE PASSED.

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GOVT TO TAKE TIME TO CONSIDER COMPULSORY RETIREMENT SCHEMES

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THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO TAKE TIME ABOUT LOOKING AT WAYS OF INTRODUCING COMPULSORY RETIREMENT SCHEMES BECAUSE IT IS A VERY COMPLEX MATTER.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER VISITING THE REGIONAL COUNCIL'S FACILITIES IN TUEN MUN AND YUEN LONG, SIR DAVID SAID: "WE DON'T WANT TO SUDDENLY RUSH INTO SOMETHING WHICH IS DAMAGING TO THE ECONOMY AND NOT VERY EFFECTIVE FOR THE WORKING FORCE.

"UP TO NOW WE HAVE TAKEN THE VIEW THAT CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUNDS HAVE NOT BEEN PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE IN THOSE TERRITORIES WHICH HAVE TRIED TO USE THEM, AND WE ARE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING WHICH WOULD BE MORE FLEXIBLE," HE SAID.

"BUT ABOVE ALL I THINK WE NEED TO TAKE TIME TO LOOK AT THE VARIOUS OPTIONS AND NOT RUSH INTO ONE SCHEME OR ANOTHER," HE ADDED.

SIR DAVID SAID IF THE GOVERNMENT FUNDED THE SCHEME IT WOULD MEAN TAXPAYERS PAYING FOR IT: "WHAT ONE WANTS TO DO IS HAVE SCHEMES FOR RETIREMENT WHICH ARE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE PEOPLE WHO BENEFIT, THAT'S THE WORKERS; AND ALSO FROM THEIR EMPLOYERS, NOT NECESSARILY FROM THE OVERALL TAX BASKET; FROM THE TAXPAYERS."

ON A QUESTION ABOUT THE EVOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNOR SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THERE SHOULD NOT BE CHANGES TO THE STRUCTURE OF THE WAY IN WHICH WE RUN THINGS IN HONG KONG.

"BY THAT I MEAN THAT POLICY DECISIONS ARE TAKEN AND LAID DOWN BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, AND THE ROLE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IS TO PASS LEGISLATION AND TO VOTE MONEY FOR THE PROJECTS WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION PUTS FORWARD.

"SO, POLICY TAKING, POLICY DECISIONS, RESTS WITH THE EXECUTIVE AND THAT'S THE WAY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN DONE AND THAT'S THE WAY I THINK IT SHOULD GO ON," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WOULD PROBABLY WANT TO GRADUALLY EVOLVE NEW WAYS OF DOING THINGS IN THE EXPECTATION OF DOING IT MORE EFFICIENTLY.

"NOW, THAT'S A DECISION THAT THEY'VE GOT TO TAKE THEMSELVES AND I HOPE WHAT THEY HAVE IN MIND IS WHAT IS THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY OF CARRYING OUT THE TERRITORY'S BUSINESS," HE SAID.

ASKED ABOUT INFLATION, SIR DAVID SAID: "I THINK AT THE MOMENT INFLATION IS UNCOMFORTABLY HIGH AND WE'RE TRYING TO ADOPT WHAT MEASURES WE CAN TO KEEP IT UNDER CONTROL.

/"I WOULD .....

"I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE RATE OF INFLATION COME DOWN, BUT I THINK PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS ABOUT WHAT IS PRACTICALLY POSSIBLE," HE SAID.

"WE WILL CONTINUE TO TRY TO TAKE MEASURES TO KEEP INFLATION UNDER CONTROL, BUT AT THE SAME TIME ALL OF US REALISE THAT YOU CAN'T SUDDENLY BRING DOWN INFLATION FROM THE RATES WE'VE GOT AT THE MOMENT TO VERY, VERY LOW RATES WITHOUT HAVING A DAMAGING EFFECT ON THE WHOLE ECONOMY," SIR DAVID ADDED.

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ONGOING DISCUSSION WITH UC ON HK STADIUM REDEVELOPMENT

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THE SECRETARY FOR RECREATION AND CULTURE, MR JAMES SO, HAD A FRANK AND USEFUL DISCUSSION THIS (WEDNESDAY) MORNING WITH THE URBAN COUNCIL'S WORKING GROUP ON THE JOCKEY CLUB'S PROPOSAL TO FUND THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE HONG KONG STADIUM.

MR SO APPRECIATED THE URBAN COUNCIL'S CONCERNS ABOUT THE LACK OF AN ATHLETIC TRACK IN THE PROPOSED NEW STADIUM, THE QUESTION OF WHETHER ADEQUATE INFORMATION HAD BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO THE COUNCIL AS WELL AS THE FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE NEW STADIUM.

DURING THE MEETING, MR SO CLARIFIED THAT IT REMAINED THE JOCKEY CLUB'S FIRM PROPOSAL TO UPGRADE THE ABERDEEN SPORTS GROUND IN ORDER TO PROVIDE, INTER ALIA, A SEATING CAPACITY OF BETWEEN 10,000 AND 12,500.

THIS WOULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARDS MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF SCHOOLS, BUT HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE WOULD STILL BE A VERY SMALL NUMBER OF JOINT SCHOOL ATHLETIC MEETS EVERY YEAR FOR WHICH THE UPGRADED ABERDEEN SPORTS GROUND WOULD NOT BE ADEQUATE.

AS REGARDS THE COUNCIL'S CONCERN ABOUT THE LACK OF FACILITIES FOR USE BY SCHOOLS DURING THE CONSTRUCTION PERIOD OF THE HONG KONG STADIUM, MR SO SAID CONSTRUCTION COULD BE PHASED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO MINIMISE DISRUPTION TO USERS.

TO ACHIEVE THIS, IT WAS ACCEPTED THAT CAREFUL SCHEDULING HAD TO BE WORKED OUT BETWEEN THE COUNCIL, THE JOCKEY CLUB AND THE USERS CONCERNED, INCLUDING SCHOOLS.

MR SO SAID ALL RELEVANT INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOW BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO THE COUNCIL. HIS BRANCH WOULD BE HAPPY TO DISCUSS ANY ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT WITH THE COUNCIL TO ASSIST IT IN REACHING AN EARLY DECISION.

MR SO CONFIRMED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NO INTENTION TO TAKE THE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE NEW STADIUM AWAY FROM THE COUNCIL'S HANDS.

/HOWEVER, HE .....

HOWEVER, HE STRESSED THAT IT WAS GOVERNMENT'S AIM THAT THE NEW STADIUM SHOULD BE MANAGED ON A COMMERCIAL BASIS TO ENSURE THAT IT COULD AT LEAST BE SELF-FINANCING, AND WHERE POSSIBLE, GENERATE REVENUE FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF SPORTS IN HONG KONG.

HE ADDED THAT HE LOOKED FORWARD TO EXPLORING VARIOUS MANAGEMENT OPTIONS WITH THE COUNCIL AS TO HOW BEST TO ACHIEVE THIS AIM.

FINALLY, MR SO SAID THE COUNCIL HAD AGREED TO COME TO A DECISION ON THE PROPOSED PROJECT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, PROBABLY WITHIN THREE MONTHS.

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#### REGIONAL COUNCIL OFFERS WIDE CHOICE OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

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THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THE PROVISION OF PARKS AND OTHER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES BY THE REGIONAL COUNCIL HAD MADE AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE NEW TOWNS.

"THE NEW TOWNS NOW HAVE SOME REALLY EXCELLENT RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, THANKS TO THE REGIONAL COUNCIL," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID VISITED TWO OF THE LATEST FACILITIES BUILT BY THE COUNCIL - BUTTERFLY BEACH PARK IN TUEN MUN AND YUEN LONG TOWN PARK.

BUTTERFLY BEACH PARK WAS COMPLETED IN MAY THIS YEAR AT A COST OF \$40 MILLION. IT HAS A VARIETY OF FACILITIES INCLUDING PAVILIONS LINKED BY BOARD WALKS, A BUTTERFLY-SHAPED GARDEN, GAMES PITCHES AND A BARBECUE AND PICNIC AREA.

FOLLOWING HIS TOUR OF THE PARK, SIR DAVID TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET SOME OF THE LIFEGUARDS WORKING AT BUTTERFLY BEACH.

YUEN LONG TOWN PARK WAS OPENED TO THE PUBLIC IN MARCH THIS YEAR. SIR DAVID VISITED ONE OF ITS MAIN ATTRACTIONS, A SEVEN-STORY PAGODA WITH PANORAMIC VIEWS OF THE TOWN.

THE PARK ALSO INCLUDES SOCCER PITCHES, A RAVINE GARDEN, A LAKE AND A CASCADING WATERFALL.

SIR DAVID WAS BRIEFED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL, MR CHEUNG YAN-LUNG ON THE REGIONAL COUNCIL'S PLANS FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, INCLUDING MAJOR EXPENDITURE ON RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.

SIR DAVID WAS ACCOMPANIED DURING THE VISIT BY THE REGIONAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN, MR CHEUNG YAN-LUNG; VICE-CHAIRMAN, DR PANG HOK-TUEN; AND THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF REGIONAL SERVICES, MISS DENISE YUE.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1991

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1992 SPECIAL STAMP ISSUE PROGRAMME ANNOUNCED

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THE POSTMASTER GENERAL, MR DOMINIC S.W. WONG, ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THE SPECIAL STAMP ISSUE PROGRAMME FOR NEXT YEAR.

DETAILS OF THE PROGRAMME ARE AS FOLLOWS:

JANUARY 22 - YEAR OF THE MONKEY  
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THIS SET OF STAMPS WILL COMPRISE FOUR DENOMINATIONS - \$0.8, \$1.80, \$2.30 AND \$5. A SOUVENIR SHEET AND A STAMP BOOKLET WILL ALSO BE ISSUED.

A RELATED PRODUCT, THE YEAR OF THE MONKEY ELECTRONIC POSTAGE LABELS, WILL BE ISSUED ON MARCH 12. THE LABEL PAPER BEARS A PEACH PATTERN DESIGN IN THE BACKGROUND.

FEBRUARY 11 - 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF ACCESSION TO THE  
THRONE OF HM QUEEN ELIZABETH II  
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THIS SET OF STAMPS WILL COMPRISE FIVE DENOMINATIONS - \$0.8, \$1.70, \$1.80, \$2.30 AND \$5. IT IS ISSUED JOINTLY WITH 18 OTHER POSTAL ADMINISTRATIONS.

APRIL 2 - 1992 OLYMPIC GAMES  
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THIS SET OF STAMPS WILL COMPRISE FOUR DENOMINATIONS - \$0.8, \$1.80, \$2.30 AND \$5. THE DESIGNS ARE IN SE-TENANT FORMAT. A SOUVENIR SHEET INCORPORATING THE FOUR STAMPS WILL ALSO BE ISSUED.

JULY 23 - STAMP COLLECTING  
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THIS SET OF FOUR STAMPS, IN FOUR DENOMINATIONS OF \$0.8, \$1.80, \$2.30 AND \$5, WILL SHOW VARIOUS ACCESSORIES USED IN STAMP COLLECTING, TOGETHER WITH REPLICAS OF SOME OLD HONG KONG STAMPS.

SEPTEMBER 24 - CHINESE OPERA  
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THIS SET OF STAMPS, IN FOUR DENOMINATIONS OF \$0.8, \$1.80, \$2.30 AND \$5, WILL SHOW DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF CHINESE OPERA.

NOVEMBER 19 - GREETINGS STAMPS  
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THIS SET OF STAMPS WILL BE SUITABLE FOR CONVEYING GREETINGS AND MESSAGES ON A VARIETY OF OCCASIONS. ATTRACTIVELY DESIGNED LABELS INCORPORATING VARIOUS MESSAGES WILL ALSO BE INTRODUCED. THERE WILL BE FOUR DENOMINATIONS - \$0.8, \$1.80, \$2.30 AND \$5.

/MR WONG .....

MR WONG ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT APART FROM THE SIX SPECIAL STAMP ISSUES, A NEW SET OF DEFINITIVE STAMPS COMPRISING 16 DENOMINATIONS WILL BE ISSUED ON JUNE 16 TO REPLACE THE CURRENT DEFINITIVE STAMPS ISSUED SINCE 1987.

FURTHER DETAILS OF EACH STAMP ISSUE WILL BE ANNOUNCED CLOSER TO THE DATE OF RELEASE.

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CONTRACT FOR QUEEN MARY HOSPITAL EXTENSION WORKS AWARDED  
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A \$296 MILLION CONTRACT FOR THE STAGE III EXTENSION AND IMPROVEMENT WORKS FOR QUEEN MARY HOSPITAL WILL BE SIGNED TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE CONTRACT WILL BE SIGNED BY THE DIRECTOR OF ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES, MR PAUL CORSER AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DICKSON CONSTRUCTION COMPANY LIMITED, WHICH HAS BEEN AWARDED THE CONTRACT.

THE WORKS UNDER THE CONTRACT WILL INCLUDE ALTERATIONS AND RENOVATIONS TO THE EXISTING BLOCK B OF THE HOSPITAL WHICH IS MADE UP OF THREE LINKED BUILDINGS - A MAIN H-SHAPED BUILDING COMPRISING FIVE WINGS, A SEVEN-STORY OPERATING THEATRE BUILDING AT THE REAR AND A THREE-STORY RADIOLOGY BUILDING AT THE FRONT.

THE CONVERSION INVOLVES THE DEMOLITION AND REPLACEMENT OF THE MAJORITY OF INTERNAL PARTITIONS, SANITARY FITTINGS AND BUILDING SERVICES TO BRING THE BUILDING UP TO MODERN STANDARDS.

THERE WILL ALSO BE ADDITIONS OF NEW OPERATING THEATRE FLOORS AND A NEW FLOOR AT THE RADIOLOGY BLOCK.

THE PROJECT ALSO PROVIDES FOR ENHANCEMENT OF MEDICAL FACILITIES, INCLUDING THE INSTALLATION OF AN ADDITIONAL COMPUTER ASSISTED TOMOGRAPHY SCANNER, A MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING MACHINE AND THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEDICAL FACILITIES SUCH AS A NEUROSURGERY UNIT AND IMPROVED OPERATING THEATRES.

WORKS UNDER THE CONTRACT WILL BE CARRIED OUT IN FOUR STAGES, AND WILL TAKE 29 MONTHS TO COMPLETE.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO COVER THE CONTRACT-SIGNING CEREMONY WHICH WILL BE HELD IN ROOM 3524, QUEENSWAY GOVERNMENT OFFICES, HIGH BLOCK AT 11.30 AM TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1991

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250 VOLUNTARY RETURNEES BACK TO VIETNAM

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A GROUP OF 250 VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) RETURNED TO VIETNAM UNDER THE UNHCR'S VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION PROGRAMME.

COMPRISING 85 MEN, 64 WOMEN, 44 BOYS AND 57 GIRLS, THEY WERE THE 81ST BATCH TO GO BACK UNDER THE PROGRAMME.

THIS GROUP BROUGHT TO 7,131 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS WHO HAVE RETURNED VOLUNTARILY THIS YEAR, AND TO 13,450 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF RETURNEES SINCE THE PROGRAMME STARTED IN MARCH 1989.

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\$30,000 FINE FOR UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS

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THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE OF THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) REMINDED BUILDING OWNERS THAT THEY WOULD FACE HEFTY FINES FOR CARRYING OUT UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS ON THEIR PREMISES.

THE REMINDER CAME IN THE WAKE OF A RECENT COURT CASE IN WHICH A TRADING COMPANY AND ITS DIRECTOR WERE FINED A TOTAL OF \$30,000 FOR BUILDING A TWO-STOREY STRUCTURE ON THE ROOF OF A BUILDING IN HAPPY VALLEY AND REMOVING THE BUILDING ROOF TO FORM AN OPENING WITHOUT AUTHORITY.

THE COURT WAS TOLD THAT THE UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS WERE FOUND ON THE ROOF OF YUK SING BUILDING AT NOS. 1-9 YUK SAU STREET AND NOS. 12, 12A-12C SING WOO ROAD WHICH WAS CERTIFIED FOR OCCUPATION IN SEPTEMBER 1976.

SINCE APRIL THIS YEAR, MILLION GLAD LIMITED HAD BEEN THE OWNER OF FLAT D, 26TH FLOOR AND PORTION D OF THE MAIN ROOF OF THE SAID BUILDING. GINA LEE SO-MAN WAS THE DIRECTOR OF THE COMPANY AT THE MATERIAL TIME.

STAFF OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE INSPECTED THE PREMISES ON MAY 22 THIS YEAR AND FOUND THAT CERTAIN UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS WERE BEING CARRIED OUT AT PORTION D OF THE MAIN ROOF.

THE COURT HEARD THAT THE UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS COMPRISED A TWO-STOREY STRUCTURE OF ABOUT 50 SQUARE METRES IN AREA AND FIVE METRES IN HEIGHT, CONSTRUCTED OF CORRUGATED METAL SHEET ROOFING ON METAL FRAMES WITH BRICKWORKS/ALUMINIUM WINDOW ENCLOSURE, AND THE REMOVAL OF THE REINFORCED CONCRETE ROOF SLAB TO FORM AN OPENING WITH AN AREA ABOUT 1.6 SQUARE METRES.

/THE DEFENDANTS .....

THE DEFENDANTS PLEADED GUILTY TO THE OFFENCES AND WERE EACH FINED \$15,000.

IN PASSING SENTENCE, A MAGISTRATE OF THE EASTERN MAGISTRACY, MR A. AU, COMMENTED THAT UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS OF SUCH SIZE MIGHT CREATE STRUCTURAL HAZARD TO THE WHOLE BUILDING AND WAS UNFAIR TO THE OTHER OCCUPIERS.

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GOVERNMENT LAND TO LET BY TENDER  
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THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR THE SHORT-TERM TENANCIES ON TWO PIECES OF GOVERNMENT LAND.

THE FIRST SITE IS LOCATED AT THE SIU SAI WAN RECLAMATION, CHAI WAN.

WITH AN AREA OF ABOUT 2.5 HECTARES, IT IS FOR STORAGE OF TENANT'S GOODS (INCLUDING CONTAINER, CONTAINER VEHICLES AND TRAILERS BUT EXCLUDING DANGEROUS GOODS) OR CARGO HANDLING, PUBLIC FEE PAYING VEHICLE PARK OR STUFFING AND DESTUFFING OF CONTAINERS.

THE OTHER SITE IS LOCATED AT ON KUI STREET, ON LOK TSUEN, FANLING, NEW TERRITORIES.

WITH AN AREA OF ABOUT 1,535 SQUARE METRES, IT IS EARMARKED FOR OPEN STORAGE AND LOADING AND UNLOADING OF TENANT'S GOODS INCLUDING VEHICLES NOT LICENSED UNDER THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE, CONTAINERS ON TRAILERS, CONSTRUCTION MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT.

BOTH TENANCIES ARE FOR TWO YEARS AND QUARTERLY AFTERWARDS.

TENDERS WILL CLOSE AT 12 NOON ON DECEMBER 27.

FORM OF TENDER, TENDER NOTICE AND CONDITIONS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM AND TENDER PLAN INSPECTED AT, THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, HONG KONG EAST, AND THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE NORTH IN THE NEW TERRITORIES; THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT, 14TH FLOOR, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG AND THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICES KOWLOON, 10TH FLOOR, YAU MA TEI CAR PARK BUILDING, 250 SHANGHAI STREET, KOWLOON.

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FC MEETING ON FRIDAY  
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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WILL HOLD A MEETING ON FRIDAY (DECEMBER 13) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER. IT WILL BEGIN AT 2.30 PM.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO OBSERVE THE COMMITTEE'S PROCEEDINGS FROM THE CHAMBER'S PUBLIC GALLERIES AND THEY MAY MAKE RESERVATIONS BY TELEPHONING 869 9492.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND  
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS  
\* \* \* \* \*

	DATE	\$ MILLION
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CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT ON	10.12.91	500
EFFECT OF FORWARDS TO BE SETTLED ON	11.12.91	-17
EFFECT OF OPERATIONS THIS MORNING		+17
EFFECT OF OPERATIONS THIS AFTERNOON		NEUTRAL

TRADE WEIGHTED INDEX 110.6 \*+0.4\* 11.12.91

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS		HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS				
TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	3.25 PCT	24 MONTHS	2311	6.25	101.76	5.35
1 MONTH	3.85 PCT					
3 MONTHS	3.93 PCT					
6 MONTHS	4.05 PCT					
12 MONTHS	4.62 PCT					

TURNOVER - BILLS 3,937 MN, BONDS 155 MN

CLOSED 11 DECEMBER 1991

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