



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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CHANGE REQUIRED TO MEET RISING HOUSING DEMAND
* * * * *

A LONG-TERM HOUSING STRATEGY REVIEW HAS IDENTIFIED A NEED FOR A MODEST CHANGE IN DIRECTION IN ORDER TO PROVIDE MORE THAN A MILLION NEW FLATS BY 2001 TO MEET RISING HOUSING DEMAND FROM THE PEOPLE, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID FORD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

TABLING A POLICY STATEMENT ON LONG-TERM HOUSING STRATEGY, HE SAID THE PRESENT OVERALL HOUSING PRODUCTION AT 70 000 FLATS A YEAR WAS UNLIKELY TO BE ACHIEVED IF PRESENT POLICIES REMAINED UNCHANGED.

MOREOVER, ALTHOUGH RENTAL NEEDS WOULD BE MET, MR FORD SAID THERE WOULD STILL BE AN OUTSTANDING DEMAND FROM AN ESTIMATED 100 000 FAMILIES WHO WISHED TO PURCHASE THEIR OWN HOMES.

+MUCH OF THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR HOME PURCHASE COMES FROM EXISTING AND PROSPECTIVE PUBLIC RENTAL HOUSING TENANTS AND FROM THOSE AFFECTED BY RE-DEVELOPMENT.

+MANY OF THESE COULD AFFORD TO PURCHASE THEIR OWN HOMES BUT SUCCESSIVE OVER-SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR HOS AND PSPS FLATS HAVE PREVENTED THEM FROM DOING SO.

+THE PREFERENCE OF PROSPECTIVE PUBLIC RENTAL HOUSING TENANTS AND FAMILIES IN ESTATES TO BE RE-DEVELOPED WILL BE GAUGED, AND FROM WITHIN THE PUBLIC HOUSING QUOTA A SUFFICIENT BALANCE OF HOME OWNERSHIP AND RENTAL FLATS WILL BE BUILT TO MEET THE DEMAND FOR EACH.

+IN THIS WAY THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE REHOUSED WILL NOT BE REDUCED AND THE CHANCE OF SUCCESS OF APPLICANTS UNDER PRESENT HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEMES WILL BE IMPROVED.

MR FORD ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD INTRODUCE A HOME PURCHASE LOAN SCHEME, OFFERING ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS THE OPTION OF AN INTEREST-FREE DOWN PAYMENT LOAN TO HELP THEM BUY A NEW FLAT IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

+IT WILL COMPLEMENT THE EXISTING ASSISTED HOME PURCHASE SCHEMES AND WILL INCREASE THE OPTIONS OPEN TO THOSE WISHING TO PURCHASE THEIR OWN HOMES.

+BY STIMULATING RE-DEVELOPMENT OF OLDER AND UNDER-DEVELOPED PRIVATE SITES, IT SHOULD INCREASE THE CHOICE OF LOCATION FOR PROSPECTIVE PURCHASERS.

MR FORD ADDED THESE INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOME PURCHASE SHOULD INCREASE THE UPWARD MOBILITY OF SITTING TENANTS AND IN SO DOING RELEASE RENTAL FLATS FOR THE MORE NEEDY AND INCREASE THE SPEED AT WHICH THEY COULD BE REHOUSED.

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HE SAID EACH LOAN REPRESENTED ONE RENTAL FLAT MADE AVAILABLE FOR ALLOCATION.

+AS SUCH IT IS A REPLACEMENT FOR GOVERNMENT'S BUILDING SUBSIDY RATHER THAN A DOUBLE SUBSIDY TO THE RECIPIENT AS HAS BEEN SUGGESTED BY SOME WHO HAVE COMMENTED ON THE SCHEME,+ HE ADDED.

MR FORD STRESSED THE NEW STRATEGY DID NOT ENVISAGE ANY REDUCTION IN GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SECTOR BUT PROVIDED FOR AN OVERALL INCREASE IN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSING UNITS SUBSIDISED BY GOVERNMENT.

+NOR DOES IT, IN ANY WAY, DETRACT FROM THE PRIORITY GIVEN TO HOUSING THOSE MOST IN NEED,+ HE STRESSED.

HE ALSO SAID THE NEW STRATEGY WOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THOSE ELIGIBLE FOR PUBLIC HOUSING UNDER EXISTING POLICIES, INSTEAD THEY STOOD TO BENEFIT BY BEING GIVEN A GREATER CHOICE BETWEEN RENTAL AND PURCHASE.

+THE INCREASED EMPHASIS ON HOME OWNERSHIP WILL IMPROVE THE OVERALL CASH FLOW OF THE HOUSING PROGRAMME AND SHOULD ENABLE THE ENHANCED PROGRAMMES TO BE MET WITH NO MAJOR INCREASE IN THE SHARE OF SOCIAL PROGRAMMES FUNDS WHICH HAVE TO BE ALLOCATED TO HOUSING,+ MR FORD ADDED.

HE SAID THE NEW STRATEGY WOULD REQUIRE CAREFUL CO-ORDINATION BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HOUSING ACTIVITIES AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE READY TO USE THE HOS AND PSPS TO MEET ANY FAILURE BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO PROVIDE THE NUMBER OF FLATS NEEDED AT AFFORDABLE PRICES.

+THE ACTIVITIES OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY, THE HOUSING SOCIETY, THE FUTURE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR WILL HAVE TO BE CLOSELY CO-ORDINATED,+ HE SAID.

MR FORD SAID THE HOUSING AUTHORITY SHOULD PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE IN CARRYING OUT ALL ASPECTS OF THE STRATEGY INTO EFFECT, INCLUDING THOSE PROPOSALS CONCERNING THE HOS, PSPS AND THE HOME PURCHASE LOAN SCHEME.

HE ADDED THAT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS RELATING TO THE DETAILED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY WOULD BE PUT TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION.

MR FORD ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS EXAMINING THE OVERALL FINANCING OF THE HOUSING PROGRAMME AND CONSIDERING APPROPRIATE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FUTURE FINANCING OF THE HOUSING PROGRAMME.

/+THIS WILL

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+THIS WILL INCLUDE AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE WHICH THE DEVELOPMENT LOAN FUND AND THE HOME OWNERSHIP FUND MIGHT PLAY IN FUTURE,+ HE ADDED.

MR FORD ALSO SAID A PROGRAMME FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE OLD NON-SELF-CONTAINED BLOCKS WAS ALREADY UNDER WAY AND WOULD PROVIDE NEW HOMES FOR 125 000 FAMILIES.

+THE NEW STRATEGY EXTENDS THIS RE-DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME TO THE OTHER GROUP B ESTATES,+ HE SAID, ADDING THAT IN ACCEPTING THIS, THE GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED A COMMITMENT TO REHOUSE 135 000 FAMILIES MORE THAN UNDER ITS PRESENT POLICY.

MR FORD SAID IN BRIEF, THE NEW HOUSING STRATEGY WOULD BE MORE DEMAND-LED. +IT WILL EXTEND RE-DEVELOPMENT TO MOST OF THE OLDER PUBLIC RENTAL HOUSING ESTATES AND WILL PROMOTE HOME PURCHASE BY BUILDING MORE FLATS FOR SALE AND BY INTRODUCING THE HOME PURCHASE LOAN SCHEME.

+IN THIS WAY IT WILL BE ABLE MORE CLOSELY TO MATCH THE PROVISION OF HOUSING TO THE ASPIRATIONS OF THOSE TO BE HOUSED. IT IS DESIGNED TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES FROM ALL HOUSING SECTORS AND INTRODUCES THE DEGREE OF FLEXIBILITY NEEDED TO ALLOW CHANGES WHEN THESE ARE NECESSARY TO MEET CHANGING NEEDS,+ HE ADDED.

MR FORD SAID THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO IMPLEMENT THE NEW STRATEGY FROM APRIL 1 NEXT YEAR TO ALLOW THE NECESSARY ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS TO BE MADE.

HE SAID WIDE PUBLICITY WAS BEING GIVEN TO THE STRATEGY AND COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC AND INTERESTED BODIES WOULD BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED AND TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN PRODUCING THE INITIAL PROGRAMMES FOR ITS STRATEGY.

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DEFINITION OF RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG EXPLAINED * * * * *

A BILL SEEKING TO DEFINE THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG AS THE RIGHT TO LAND AND REMAIN IN HONG KONG AND THE RIGHT NOT TO BE DEPORTED OR REMOVED FROM HONG KONG, WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1987, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, SAID THE DEFINITION INCLUDED ALL THE COMPONENTS OF RIGHT OF ABODE AS THE TERM WAS GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD, INCLUDING FREEDOM FROM DEPORTATION.

/THE BILL

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THE BILL IS COMPLEMENTARY TO THE REGISTRATION OF PERSONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, HE NOTED.

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE TWO BILLS INTRODUCED IMPORTANT MEASURES INTO HONG KONG LEGISLATION.

+FOR THE FIRST TIME THE TERM 'RIGHT OF ABODE' WILL BE APPLIED IN LAW TO HONG KONG PEOPLE,+ HE EXPLAINED.

+SOME FIVE MILLION HONG KONG PEOPLE WILL BE ACCORDED THIS RIGHT WHICH WILL GIVE THEM THE RIGHT TO LAND AND REMAIN IN HONG KONG WITHOUT ANY IMMIGRATION RESTRICTIONS. THEY WILL NOT BE DEPORTABLE OR REMOVABLE FROM HONG KONG.

+THEY WILL BE DESCRIBED BY A NEW TERM 'HONG KONG PERMANENT RESIDENT'. THIS TERM WILL BE EASILY UNDERSTOOD. 'HONG KONG PERMANENT RESIDENTS' WILL HAVE PERMANENT IDENTITY CARDS WHICH WILL BE EVIDENCE FOR ALL TO SEE THAT THEY HAVE THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG.

+THE ARRANGEMENTS TO BE INTRODUCED BY THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION WILL HELP TOWARDS GUARANTEEING HONG KONG PEOPLE'S TRAVELLING CONVENIENCE BEFORE AND AFTER 1997.+

MR JEAFFRESON SAID TO ENSURE THAT HOLDERS OF BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORTS AND OF CERTIFICATES OF IDENTITY WOULD CONTINUE TO TRAVEL WITH THE SAME EASE AND CONVENIENCE IN THE TRANSITION PERIOD AND AFTER 1997, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA HAD DISCUSSED ARRANGEMENTS FOR THESE DOCUMENTS AND RELATED MATTERS IN THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT LIAISON GROUP.

THE TWO GOVERNMENTS HAD AGREED THAT BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORTS MIGHT INCLUDE AN ENDORSEMENT INDICATING THE HOLDER'S RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG.

THE WORDING OF THE ENDORSEMENT AS AGREED BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WAS: +THE HOLDER OF THIS PASSPORT HAS HONG KONG PERMANENT IDENTITY CARD NUMBER (XYZ) WHICH STATES THAT THE HOLDER HAS THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG.+

THE PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS WERE CONSISTENT WITH THIS AGREEMENT, MR JEAFFRESON SAID.

THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS ALSO RESULTED FROM THE HONG KONG (BRITISH NATIONALITY) ORDER 1986 WHICH GAVE EFFECT TO THE UNITED KINGDOM MEMORANDUM ASSOCIATED WITH THE JOINT DECLARATION AND WHICH ENABLED PASSPORTS IN THE NEW STATUS OF BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) TO BE ISSUED FROM JULY 1, 1987.

/MR JEAFFRESON

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MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE DATE OF JULY 1, 1987 WAS EQUALLY SIGNIFICANT IN RESPECT OF CERTIFICATES OF IDENTITY NOW USED BY +CHINESE RESIDENTS+.

+IT HAS BEEN AGREED WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA THAT CERTIFICATES OF IDENTITY MAY CONTINUE TO BE ISSUED FROM THAT DATE UNTIL JUNE 30, 1997 WITH A FULL TEN-YEAR VALIDITY AND MAY CONTINUE TO BE USED UNTIL THEIR DUE EXPIRY DATE,+ HE SAID.

+THEY WILL ALSO INCLUDE A RIGHT OF ABODE ENDORSEMENT SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH WILL BE INCLUDED IN BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORTS.+

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE ARRANGEMENT TO INCLUDE A RIGHT OF ABODE ENDORSEMENT IN TRAVEL DOCUMENTS WAS BASED UPON THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS IN THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION.

+SUCH AN ENDORSEMENT WHICH SHOWS THAT THE HOLDER OF THE DOCUMENT WILL BE ABLE TO RETURN FREELY TO HONG KONG IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THE ACCEPTABILITY OF THE BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORTS AND TO THE CONTINUED ACCEPTABILITY OF CERTIFICATES OF IDENTITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL BEFORE AND AFTER 1997,+ HE STRESSED.

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE BILL ALSO SOUGHT TO CREATE THE NEW CATEGORY OF PERSONS +HONG KONG PERMANENT RESIDENTS+ COMPRISING ALL WHO WERE AT PRESENT DEFINED IN THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE AS +HONG KONG BELONGERS+ OR +CHINESE RESIDENTS+.

HE SAID: +BROADLY SPEAKING, THE FORMER COVER 3.25 MILLION HONG KONG BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORIES CITIZENS AND THE LATTER ANOTHER 1.74 MILLION PERSONS OF CHINESE RACE WHO HAVE RESIDED IN HONG KONG FOR SEVEN YEARS OR MORE.

+THE RIGHT OF ABODE AS DEFINED WILL BE ACCORDED TO THIS NEW CATEGORY OF PERSONS. CONSEQUENTLY, THE RIGHT NOT TO BE DEPORTED FROM HONG KONG CURRENTLY ENJOYED BY +HONG KONG BELONGERS+ WILL BE EXTENDED TO +CHINESE RESIDENTS+.

+THE BILL AMENDS THE DEPORTATION PROVISIONS IN THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE IMMUNITY FROM DEPORTATION OF PERSONS WHO ARE AT PRESENT DEFINED AS +CHINESE RESIDENTS.+

THE REPLACEMENT OF THE TERMS +HONG KONG BELONGER+ AND +CHINESE RESIDENT+ BY A NEW EXPRESSION +HONG KONG PERMANENT RESIDENT+ REMOVED A DISTINCTION, WHICH HAS BEEN DRAWN ON THE BASIS OF BRITISH NATIONALITY, BETWEEN TWO MAJOR CATEGORIES OF HONG KONG RESIDENTS.

/+SUBJECT TO

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+SUBJECT TO THE ENACTMENT OF THIS LEGISLATION, ALL HONG KONG PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG WILL BE +HONG KONG PERMANENT RESIDENTS+ AND WILL BE ENTITLED TO A PERMANENT IDENTITY CARD,+ MR JEAFFRESON SAID.

+THIS CHANGE IN NOMENCLATURE ENTAILS CERTAIN CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE AND OTHER LEGISLATION WHICH ARE CONTAINED IN THIS BILL. BUT THEY WILL NOT INVOLVE ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN SUBSTANCE.+

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE ARRANGEMENTS TO BE INTRODUCED BY THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION WERE OF A TRANSITIONAL NATURE AND WERE INTENDED TO MEET THE IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE OF INCLUDING A RIGHT OF ABODE ENDORSEMENT IN BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORTS AND CERTIFICATES OF IDENTITY TO BE ISSUED FROM JULY 1, 1987.

FURTHER LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS WOULD BE INTRODUCED BEFORE JULY 1, 1997 SO THAT THE CATEGORIES OF PERSONS ENJOYING THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG WERE ON THAT DATE COMPLETELY IN LINE WITH THOSE SET OUT IN THE JOINT DECLARATION, HE SAID.

MR JEAFFRESON NOTED THAT ON JULY 1, 1997 PEOPLE WOULD ACQUIRE THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS IN SECTION XIV OF ANNEX I TO THE JOINT DECLARATION.

UNDER THAT SECTION, THE FOLLOWING THREE CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE WOULD HAVE THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION:

- * ALL CHINESE NATIONALS WHO WERE BORN OR WHO HAVE ORDINARILY RESIDED IN HONG KONG BEFORE OR AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION FOR A CONTINUOUS PERIOD OF SEVEN YEARS OR MORE, AND PERSONS OF CHINESE NATIONALITY BORN OUTSIDE HONG KONG OF SUCH CHINESE NATIONALS;
- * ALL OTHER PERSONS WHO HAVE ORDINARILY RESIDED IN HONG KONG BEFORE OR AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION FOR A CONTINUOUS PERIOD OF SEVEN YEARS OR MORE AND WHO HAVE TAKEN HONG KONG AS THEIR PLACE OF PERMANENT RESIDENCE BEFORE OR AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION, AND PERSONS UNDER 21 YEARS OF AGE WHO WERE BORN OF SUCH PERSONS IN HONG KONG BEFORE OR AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION;
- * ANY OTHER PERSONS WHO HAD THE RIGHT OF ABODE ONLY IN HONG KONG BEFORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION.

/MR JEAFFRESON

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MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE VAST MAJORITY OF +HONG KONG PERMANENT RESIDENTS+ TO WHOM THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG WOULD BE ACCORDED BY THIS BILL WOULD CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION UNDER THE FIRST OF THESE CATEGORIES, BY VIRTUE OF BEING CHINESE NATIONALS WHO WERE BORN IN HONG KONG, OR WHO HAD ORDINARILY RESIDED IN HONG KONG FOR A CONTINUOUS PERIOD OF SEVEN YEARS OR MORE.

OTHER +HONG KONG PERMANENT RESIDENTS+ AS NOW DEFINED IN THE BILL WHO WERE NOT CHINESE NATIONALS WOULD BE ABLE TO RETAIN THEIR RIGHT OF ABODE UNDER THE OTHER CATEGORIES, HE SAID.

BUT MR JEAFFRESON POINTED OUT THAT THERE MIGHT BE A VERY SMALL NUMBER OF PEOPLE AMONG THOSE TO BE ACCORDED THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG IN THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION WHO WOULD NOT CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION ON JULY 1, 1997 BECAUSE THEY DID NOT MEET THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS IN THE JOINT DECLARATION.

+THEY WOULD BE 'HONG KONG PERMANENT RESIDENTS' WHO ARE NOT CHINESE NATIONALS, HENCE DO NOT FALL INTO THE FIRST CATEGORY, AND WHO COMPLY NEITHER WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SECOND CATEGORY NOR WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE THIRD CATEGORY,+ HE SAID.

+IN PRACTICAL TERMS, THEY WOULD BE A VERY SMALL NUMBER OF NON-CHINESE NATIONALS WHO ON JULY 1, 1997 MAY NOT HAVE ORDINARILY RESIDED IN HONG KONG FOR A CONTINUOUS PERIOD OF SEVEN YEARS OR MORE, OR WHO MAY HAVE SO RESIDED BUT HAVE NOT TAKEN HONG KONG AS THEIR PLACE OF PERMANENT RESIDENCE= IN EITHER CASE THEY WOULD HAVE THE RIGHT OF ABODE ELSEWHERE.+

MR JEAFFRESON SAID +HONG KONG PERMANENT RESIDENTS+, WHO WERE NON-CHINESE NATIONALS AND HAD ORDINARILY RESIDED IN HONG KONG FOR NOT LESS THAN SEVEN YEARS, MIGHT CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION UNDER THE SECOND CATEGORY IN SECTION XIV OF ANNEX I TO THE JOINT DECLARATION ONCE THEY HAD ESTABLISHED THAT THEY HAVE TAKEN HONG KONG AS THEIR PLACE OF PERMANENT RESIDENCE.

HE SAID THE BRITISH AND CHINESE GOVERNMENTS HAD REACHED A COMMON UNDERSTANDING THAT THE WAY TO ESTABLISH THAT SUCH A PERSON HAD TAKEN HONG KONG AS HIS PLACE OF PERMANENT RESIDENCE WOULD BE THE SIGNING OF A SIMPLE DECLARATION BY THE PERSON IN QUESTION.

+THIS METHOD WILL ALSO APPLY TO OTHER NON-CHINESE NATIONALS WHO WILL NOT ENJOY THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG NOW BUT WHO WISH TO ACQUIRE THAT RIGHT IN THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION UNDER THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF THE JOINT DECLARATION.+ HE SAID.

/+THIS IS

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+THIS IS A PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENT WHICH SHOULD REASSURE NON-CHINESE NATIONALS OF THEIR CONTINUED ABILITY TO ENJOY THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG.+

PROVISIONS FOR THE ACQUISITION OF THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG BY LONG-TERM HONG KONG RESIDENTS, THAT IS, THOSE WHO HAD BEEN HERE CONTINUOUSLY FOR AT LEAST SEVEN YEARS, OTHER THAN THOSE WHO WOULD FALL WITHIN THE CATEGORY OF +HONG KONG PERMANENT RESIDENTS+ AS DEFINED WERE NOT CONTAINED IN THE PRESENT PROPOSALS.

THIS WAS BECAUSE THOSE PEOPLE WOULD NOT BE ELIGIBLE TO HOLD A BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORT OR A CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY.

BUT THEY WOULD CONTINUE TO ENJOY THEIR PRESENT RESIDENTIAL STATUS IN HONG KONG, HE SAID.

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT WHEN THE LEGISLATION WAS EVENTUALLY BROUGHT INTO COMPLETE CONFORMITY WITH THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS IN THE JOINT DECLARATION, THESE LONG-TERM RESIDENTS WOULD BE ABLE TO ACQUIRE THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG IF THEY SO WISHED BY THE SIGNING OF A SIMPLE DECLARATION.

+ALTHOUGH THIS ARRANGEMENT TO ACQUIRE THE RIGHT OF ABODE WILL ONLY BE EFFECTED BY FUTURE LEGISLATION, ITS BENEFITS ARE BOTH IMMEDIATE AND FAR-REACHING,+ HE SAID.

+IT SHOULD HELP TO REASSURE OTHER COMMUNITIES IN HONG KONG THAT THEY HAVE A LONG TERM FUTURE HERE AND WILL BE ABLE TO ACQUIRE THE RIGHT OF ABODE IF THEY SO WISH.+

DEBATE ON THE MOTION WAS ADJOURNED.

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NEW ID CARDS TO BEAR RIGHT OF ABODE ENDORSEMENT
* * * * *

THE MAIN OBJECT OF THE REGISTRATION OF PERSONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 WAS TO INTRODUCE A PERMANENT IDENTITY CARD STATING THE HOLDERS RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE PERMANENT IDENTITY CARD WAS NEEDED TO ENABLE A RIGHT OF ABODE ENDORSEMENT TO BE INCLUDED IN BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORTS AND CERTIFICATES OF IDENTITY, HE ADDED, MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL.

/AT PRESENT,

AT PRESENT, UNDER THE REGISTRATION OF PERSONS ORDINANCE, A HONG KONG IDENTITY CARD IS ONLY A PROOF OF IDENTITY.

+SUBJECT TO THE ENACTMENT OF THIS BILL, THE NEW IDENTITY CARD TO BE ISSUED FROM JULY 1 THIS YEAR WILL IN ADDITION REFLECT THE IMMIGRATION STATUS OF THE HOLDER, THAT IS WHETHER OR NOT HE HAS THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG.+

+A PERMANENT IDENTITY CARD STATING THE HOLDER'S RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG WILL BE ISSUED TO PERSONS WHO HAVE THAT RIGHT UNDER THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE,+ HE SAID.

+THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE THAT RIGHT WILL BE ISSUED WITH A DIFFERENT FORM OF IDENTITY CARD WHICH WILL NOT INCLUDE A STATEMENT THAT THE HOLDER HAS THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG.

+TO ENSURE A SMOOTH TRANSITION, HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA HAVE AGREED THAT THE NEW FORMS OF IDENTITY CARD ISSUED BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO BE USED AFTER JUNE 30, 1997 UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THEY ARE REPLACED BY IDENTITY CARDS ISSUED BY THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION GOVERNMENT,+ MR JEAFFRESON SAID.

THEREFORE, IN CONTRAST TO THE IDENTITY CARDS CURRENTLY IN USE WHICH HAD A FIXED PERIOD OF VALIDITY, THE NEW CARDS TO BE ISSUED FROM JULY 1 THIS YEAR WOULD NOT SPECIFY THE DATES ON WHICH THEY MUST BE RENEWED, HE ADDED.

ON THE PROCEDURE OF ISSUING THE NEW IDENTITY CARD, HE SAID IT WOULD TAKE THE FORM OF A REPLACEMENT EXERCISE TO BE COMPLETED IN FOUR-AND-A-HALF YEARS.

+IT WILL INVOLVE ARRANGEMENTS SIMILAR TO THOSE ADOPTED IN THE LAST RE-ISSUE EXERCISE. IDENTITY CARD HOLDERS WILL BE ASKED TO COME FORWARD IN SPECIFIC GROUPS BY AGE AND SEX TO HAVE THEIR CARDS REPLACED AND EXISTING CARDS WILL BE DECLARED INVALID PROGRESSIVELY.+

+THOSE WHO ARE APPLYING FOR A BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORT OR A CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY BUT WHO HAVE NOT YET OBTAINED A PERMANENT IDENTITY CARD WILL NEED ONE IN ORDER TO SUPPORT THE RIGHT OF ABODE ENDORSEMENT IN THEIR TRAVEL DOCUMENTS,+ HE POINTED OUT.

SO THE BILL SPECIFICALLY PROVIDES FOR THE ISSUE OF PERMANENT IDENTITY CARDS TO APPLICANTS FOR THESE TWO TRAVEL DOCUMENTS. AND THESE PEOPLE WOULD GET THEIR NEW IDENTITY CARDS AHEAD OF THEIR SCHEDULED TURN IN THE REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME, HE SAID.

/+TO MINIMISE

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+TO MINIMISE INCONVENIENCE TO THE PUBLIC, THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT WILL MAKE SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS TO ISSUE THE PERMANENT IDENTITY CARD AT THE SAME TIME AS IT ISSUES THE TRAVEL DOCUMENT.+

+THE BILL ALSO SEEKS TO EMPOWER THE COMMISSIONER OF REGISTRATION TO ISSUE PERMANENT IDENTITY CARDS TO CHILDREN UNDER 11 YEARS OF AGE AND TO HONG KONG RESIDENTS LIVING OVERSEAS WHO HAVE THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG,+ MR JEAFFRESON ADDED.

+THESE TWO CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO REGISTER FOR AN IDENTITY CARD. BUT THEY WILL NEED TO BE ABLE TO GET A PERMANENT ONE IF THEY WISH TO BE ISSUED WITH A BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORT OR A CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY WITH A RIGHT OF ABODE ENDORSEMENT FROM JULY THIS YEAR.+

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT AN IMPORTANT PROPOSAL IN THIS BILL WAS THE SETTING UP OF AN APPEALS PROCEDURE.

+THE BILL ESTABLISHES A REGISTRATION OF PERSONS TRIBUNAL TO DETERMINE APPEALS FROM PERSONS WHO APPLY FOR PERMANENT IDENTITY CARDS AND WHO ARE THEN REFUSED THEM.

+THEY MAY APPEAL ONLY ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEY HAVE THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG AND THE TIME LIMIT FOR APPEALING WILL BE 90 DAYS.+

+THE REGISTRATION OF PERSONS TRIBUNAL WILL CONSIST OF A PANEL OF ADJUDICATORS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR,+ HE ADDED.

THE PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE GOVERNING APPEALS TO THE TRIBUNAL AND THE DETAILED PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE IDENTITY CARD REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME WOULD BE SET OUT IN SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION, MR JEAFFRESON SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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MAN COMMITTED 'WITH TOTAL ENERGY TO GOOD OF HK'
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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID FORD, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DESCRIBED THE OUT-GOING PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, SIR DAVID AKERS-JONES, AS +A MAN WHO HAS COMMITTED HIMSELF WITH TOTAL ENERGY TO THE GOOD OF HONG KONG+.

IN A VALEDICTORY TO MARK SIR DAVID'S LAST APPEARANCE AS A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL, MR FORD PAID TRIBUTE TO THE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION SIR DAVID HAD MADE TO HONG KONG - +NOT ONLY AS A MEMBER OF THIS COUNCIL, BUT ALSO IN THE COURSE OF THE 30 YEARS YOU HAVE WORKED FOR YOUR COMMUNITY+.

/NOTING THAT

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NOTING THAT SIR DAVID BEGAN HIS CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE NEW TERRITORIES BACK IN 1959, HE SAID THE PHENOMENAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE REGION WERE IN NO SMALL MEASURE DUE TO SIR DAVID'S WORK AND HIS SKILFUL AND SYMPATHETIC HANDLING OF THE MANY SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS INVOLVED.

+OF NO LESS SIGNIFICANCE, SIR, IS YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT,+ HE ADDED.

ON SIR DAVID'S APPOINTMENT AS CHIEF SECRETARY, MR FORD SAID: +IN 18 MOMENTOUS MONTHS IN THIS ROLE YOU HAVE GIVEN EFFECTIVE AND REASSURING LEADERSHIP NOT ONLY TO THE CIVIL SERVICE BUT TO THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE.+

HE PRAISED SIR DAVID'S STEADFASTNESS OF PURPOSE AND HIS SENSITIVITY TO THE NEEDS OF HONG KONG IN THE MONTHS FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF SIR EDWARD YOUDE, WHICH HAD BROUGHT US ALL THROUGH A DIFFICULT PERIOD.

THE FACT THAT SIR DAVID HAD DECIDED TO MAKE HONG KONG HIS PERMANENT PLACE OF RESIDENCE WAS CLEAR EVIDENCE AS TO WHERE HIS ROOTS WERE, HE ADDED.

MR FORD ALSO POINTED OUT THE +TREMENDOUS CONTRIBUTION+ LADY AKERS-JONES HAD MADE DURING HER TIME HERE.

+TOGETHER YOU HAVE MADE AN UNBEATABLE TEAM AND OUR GREATEST CONSOLATION IS THAT IT IS A TEAM WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY TOGETHER ON ITS HOME GROUND,+ HE SAID.

MR FORD WISHED SIR DAVID, LADY AKERS-JONES AND THEIR FAMILY THE VERY BEST OF GOOD FORTUNE IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

IN REPLY, SIR DAVID THANKED COUNCIL MEMBERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT AND FRIENDSHIP THROUGHOUT HIS YEARS OF SERVICES AND LEFT THEM WITH THE FOLLOWING QUOTE FROM EDMUND BURKE:

+PARLIAMENT IS NOT A CONGRESS OF AMBASSADORS FROM DIFFERENT AND HOSTILE INTERESTS. IT IS A DELIBERATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONE NATION WITH ONE INTEREST, THAT OF THE WHOLE, WHERE NOT LOCAL PURPOSES, NOT LOCAL PREJUDICES OUGHT TO GUIDE, BUT THE GENERAL GOOD RESULTING FROM THE GENERAL REASON OF THE WHOLE.+

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SIR DAVID LAUDED FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION TO HONG KONG
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SENIOR LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBER, THE HON LYDIA DUNN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) EXPRESSED APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE ON BEHALF OF HER COLLEAGUES TO THE OUT-GOING PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL, SIR DAVID AKERS-JONES, FOR ALL THAT HE HAD DONE FOR HONG KONG DURING HIS 30 YEARS HERE.

IN A VALEDICTORY DELIVERED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MISS DUNN SAID IT WOULD TAKE A WHOLE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE TO DESCRIBE THE PROGRESS THAT HAD BEEN MADE IN THE ADMINISTRATION AND DAILY LIFE OF HONG KONG IN THE LAST 30 YEARS.

SHE SAID SIR DAVID'S CONTRIBUTION TO THAT PROCESS HAD BEEN IMMENSE.

+IT HAS EARNED YOU NOT ONLY THE ADMIRATION OF MANY OF YOUR COLLEAGUES IN GOVERNMENT, BUT ALSO THE RESPECT AND AFFECTION OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG,+ SHE SAID TO SIR DAVID.

SHE ADDED THAT SIR DAVID HAD GUIDED THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TERRITORIES WITH IMAGINATION WHICH HAD ENABLED NEW TOWNS, HOUSING HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE, AND TRADITIONAL VILLAGE LIFE TO EXIST SIDE BY SIDE.

SHE SAID THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION SCHEME AND THE PROMOTION OF THE ARTS AND COMMUNITY LIFE IN THE DISTRICTS HAD OWED MUCH TO SIR DAVID'S ENCOURAGEMENT AND HE HAD PLAYED NO SMALL PART IN BRINGING ABOUT THE INCREASING RICHNESS AND VITALITY THAT PEOPLE SAW AROUND THEM WHEREVER THEY WENT IN HONG KONG.

SHE NOTED THAT MORE RECENTLY, SIR DAVID HAD, AS CHIEF SECRETARY, MADE USE OF HIS DEEP KNOWLEDGE OF THE TERRITORY AND ITS PEOPLE, AND HIS SKILLS AS AN ADMINISTRATOR TO PROMOTE STABLE AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT.

+AND FOUR MONTHS AGO, WITH THE SUDDEN DEATH OF SIR EDWARD YOUDE, YOU TOOK ON THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNOR AT A TIME OF GREAT SADNESS,+ SHE SAID.

SHE NOTED THAT DURING THESE FOUR MONTHS, THERE HAD BEEN NO SLACKENING OF THE VIGOROUS AND PROGRESSIVE PACE AT WHICH THE GOVERNMENT WORKED.

+WHEN THE NEW GOVERNOR ARRIVES TOMORROW HE WILL SEE A THRIVING, ENERGETIC AND WELL-GOVERNED SOCIETY, WHICH IS WELL PREPARED FOR THE CHALLENGES THAT ARE TO COME,+ SHE SAID.

ALTHOUGH SIR DAVID RETIRED FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, HIS VALUABLE WORK IN THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT WAS NOT YET FINISHED.

/+YOUR POSITION

+YOUR POSITION AS ADVISER TO THE GOVERNOR WILL, I AM CERTAIN, KEEP YOU VERY BUSY IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, AND WE CAN BE CONFIDENT THAT THE GOVERNOR WILL BENEFIT FROM YOUR WISE COUNSEL,+ MISS DUNN ADDED.

SHE ADDED THAT NO ACCOUNT OF SIR DAVID'S WORK IN HONG KONG WOULD BE COMPLETE WITHOUT PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE CONTRIBUTION OF LADY AKERS-JONES WHO, IN ADDITION TO SUPPORTING SIR DAVID SO DEVOTEDLY THROUGHOUT HIS LONG CAREER, HAD HERSELF EARNED A PLACE IN THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE.

+HER WORK AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE, AND IN PARTICULAR HER ENERGETIC AND PRODUCTIVE ASSOCIATION WITH THE GIRL GUIDES, WILL LONG BE REMEMBERED IN HONG KONG,+ MISS DUNN SAID.

SHE WISHED SIR DAVID AND LADY AKERS-JONES A VERY HAPPY AND HEALTHY RETIREMENT.

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SWITCH TO MARKET BORROWINGS FOR MTRC FINANCING
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) EMPOWERED THE GOVERNMENT TO GRANT GUARANTEES, FREE OF CHARGE, FOR FINANCING INSTRUMENTS ISSUED BY THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION (MTRC) UP TO A TOTAL VALUE OF \$3 000 MILLION.

MOVING THE MOTION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, SAID THE INSTRUMENTS WOULD REPLACE, AND IN TURN CANCEL, THE LONGER TERM GOVERNMENT GUARANTEED EXPORT CREDIT DEBT OBLIGATIONS.

THE INSTRUMENTS WOULD INCLUDE FLOATING OR FIXED-RATE LOANS WITH TERMS OF BETWEEN TWO TO NINE YEARS, HE ADDED.

+THIS SWITCH TO MARKET BORROWINGS WILL BENEFIT THE CORPORATION BECAUSE THE REPLACEMENT INSTRUMENTS WILL CARRY LOWER INTEREST RATES AND SUBSTANTIAL INTEREST COST SAVINGS ARE EXPECTED,+ MR JACOBS SAID.

+THE GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO BENEFIT BECAUSE MTRC WILL REPLACE GOVERNMENT GUARANTEED EXPORT CREDIT DEBT OBLIGATIONS DUE TO MATURE WITHIN TWO YEARS WITH MARKET BORROWINGS WITHOUT SEEKING GOVERNMENT GUARANTEES FOR SUCH INSTRUMENTS.+

THE AMOUNT INVOLVED WOULD BE ABOUT \$1 500 MILLION AND THE VALUE OF GOVERNMENT GUARANTEES FOR MTRC LOANS WOULD BE REDUCED BY THE SAME AMOUNT.

+THIS WILL HAVE A BENEFICIAL EFFECT ON THE PUBLIC PURSE IN THAT WE WILL NOT HAVE TO PROVIDE FOR THESE THEORETICAL CONTINGENCIES,+ MR JACOBS SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT'S TOTAL GUARANTEE COMMITMENT AVAILABLE TO MTRC, ALL FREE OF CHARGE, STOOD AT \$6 100 MILLION AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1986.

NEW RULES FOR BANKRUPTCY AND LIQUIDATION APPROVED

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NEW RULES ON THE HEARING OF APPLICATIONS RELATING TO INDIVIDUAL BANKRUPTCIES AND TO COMPANY LIQUIDATIONS WERE APPROVED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING TWO RESOLUTIONS OF THE BANKRUPTCY (AMENDMENT) RULES 1987 AND THE COMPANIES (WINDING-UP)(AMENDMENT) RULES 1987, THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL, THE HON MICHAEL THOMAS SAID THESE RULES WERE MADE BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE TO ENABLE APPLICATIONS RELATING TO SUCH PROCEEDINGS TO BE ADJOURNED AT THE DISCRETION OF A JUDGE, FOR DETERMINATION IN CHAMBERS BY THE REGISTRAR OF THE SUPREME COURT.

+PROVISION IS MADE FOR THESE MATTERS TO BE ADJOURNED FROM CHAMBERS BACK TO COURT AT THE DISCRETION OF THE REGISTRAR OF A JUDGE, OR IF THE CONTENDING PARTIES SO REQUEST IT,+ HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT SUCH HEARINGS WERE, ACCORDING TO THE NATURE OF THE APPLICATION, DETERMINED BY A JUDGE IN OPEN COURT OR BY A JUDGE IN CHAMBERS.

+THERE IS SOME DISPARITY HOWEVER. WHILE IT IS POSSIBLE FOR HEARINGS RELATING TO COMPANY LIQUIDATIONS AT THE DISCRETION OF A JUDGE TO BE ADJOURNED FOR DETERMINATION IN CHAMBERS BY THE REGISTRAR OF THE SUPREME COURT, THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR HEARINGS RELATING TO INDIVIDUAL BANKRUPTCIES,+ HE SAID.

+THE ANOMALY HERE IS THAT THE JUDGE DEALING WITH BANKRUPTCY IS ALSO THE JUDGE DEALING WITH COMPANIES AND THE PROCEDURES UNDER THE TWO SETS OF RULES ARE VERY MUCH THE SAME,+ HE ADDED.

HE SAID THAT THE MAJORITY OF APPLICATIONS TO COURT WERE FORMAL IN NATURE, UNCONTESTED AND GENERALLY WERE WITHOUT THE APPEARANCE OF THE APPLICANT OR THE PARTY WITH WHOM THE APPLICATION WAS CONCERNED.

+IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES THERE IS NO NEED FOR A HEARING BY A JUDGE WHETHER IN COURT OR IN CHAMBERS. SUCH APPLICATION CAN BE DEALT WITH ADEQUATELY BY THE REGISTRAR OF THE SUPREME COURT IN CHAMBERS,+ HE SAID.

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ROAD USERS' CODE APPROVED

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A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE ROAD USERS' CODE AS A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE FOR MOTORISTS AND PEDESTRIANS WAS MOVED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE CODE, PREPARED UNDER SECTION 109(1) OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE, WAS DESIGNED NOT ONLY TO GIVE A COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY OF HONG KONG'S TRAFFIC LEGISLATION REQUIREMENTS IN LAY TERMS BUT ALSO TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL RULES OF CONDUCT TO COMPLEMENT THE LEGISLATION, MR LEUNG SAID.

/MOREOVER, THE

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MOREOVER, THE CODE PROVIDED ADVICE ON THE LAW AND RULES OF CONDUCT, INFORMATION ON ROAD SAFETY AND VARIOUS ROAD FEATURES AND TRAFFIC SIGNS.

MR LEUNG SAID THAT OVER ONE MILLION COPIES OF THE CODE IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE WOULD BE DISTRIBUTED IN THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF ITS PUBLICATION.

THE CODE WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION IN MID-1987 WHEN FURTHER DETAILS OF ITS CONTENTS WILL BE RELEASED.

COPIES WILL BE GIVEN AWAY FREE OF CHARGE TO LEARNER DRIVERS, DRIVING INSTRUCTORS AND ROAD SAFETY ORGANISATIONS. ALL APPLICANTS UPON FIRST APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF DRIVING LICENCES DURING THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF PUBLICATION WILL ALSO RECEIVE FREE COPIES AND A SEPARATE CHAPTER ON CYCLING EXTRACTED FROM THE CODE WILL BE DISTRIBUTED FREE TO SCHOOLS.

IN ADDITION, COPIES OF THE CODE WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR SALE AT GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS OUTLETS.

THE CODE, SET TO REPLACE THE OLD HIGHWAY CODE, WAS APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL LAST MONTH.

THE RESOLUTION WAS PASSED.

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LOCAL PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS RECOGNISED
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THE HON CHENG HON-KWAN TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WELCOMED THE BUILDING (ADMINISTRATION) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1987 AS ANOTHER MOVE BY THE GOVERNMENT TO RECOGNISE LOCAL PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS.

SPEAKING ON THE SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR CHENG SAID THAT THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS HAD BEEN ENDORSED BY THE LAND AND BUILDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE WHICH INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL BODIES AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE NOTED THAT THE INCORPORATION OF THE CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP OF THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS AND OF THE HONG KONG INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS INTO THESE REGULATIONS WAS INITIATED BY THE LOCAL PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTIONS, ALTHOUGH SUCH LOCAL QUALIFICATIONS HAD LONG BEEN RECOGNISED BY THE BUILDING AUTHORITY AS ALTERNATIVE PREREQUISITES FOR REGISTRATION OF AUTHORISED PERSONS AND STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS.

/HE EXPLAINED

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HE EXPLAINED THAT THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS WOULD ALSO ENABLE ANY ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS EQUIVALENT TO RECOGNISED UNIVERSITY DEGREES TO BE ACCEPTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF REGISTRATION.

THIS PROPOSAL ACKNOWLEDGED THE FACT THAT MANY REPUTABLE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION MIGHT AWARD QUALIFICATIONS IN ARCHITECTURE AND ENGINEERING INSTEAD OF DEGREES, WHICH WERE ACCEPTABLE TO THE BUILDING AUTHORITY, HE ADDED.

HE SAID HE AGREED THAT RECOGNITION OF OTHER ACADEMIC OR PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SHOULD BE A DECISION MADE BY THE BUILDING AUTHORITY ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE REGISTRATION COMMITTEE.

TO FACILITATE COMPETENT EXECUTION OF STATUTORY FUNCTIONS UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE, MR CHENG SAID HE FULLY SUPPORTED THE PROPOSED REQUIREMENT FOR ONE YEAR'S CONTINUOUS PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE TO BE GAINED IN HONG KONG BEFORE REGISTRATION.

MOREOVER, TO TIDY UP THE EXISTING REGULATIONS, HE SAID IT WAS DESIRABLE TO MAKE AMENDMENTS TO ABOLISH THE FULL EXAMINATION IN VIEW OF ABSENCE OF ANY APPLICANTS FOR MANY YEARS AND TO MAKE THE PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEWS DISCRETIONARY AS IN SOME INSTANCES SUCH INTERVIEWS MIGHT NOT BE NECESSARY, SUCH AS ON RE-REGISTRATION.

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COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION --- ISSUES NEED RESOLVING
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THERE ARE A NUMBER OF ISSUES CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WHICH NEED TO BE RESOLVED AND IT WILL BE FOR SOME TIME BEFORE MORE DEFINITE PROPOSALS CAN BE PUT FORWARD FOR DISCUSSION, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID FORD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

WINDING UP THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES, MR FORD SAID PUBLIC RESPONSE DURING THE CONSULTATION PERIOD OF A LITTLE MORE THAN FOUR MONTHS +WAS COMPARATIVELY SMALL+.

HE SAID ABOUT THREE-QUARTERS OF THE 50 WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED FAVOURED THE INTRODUCTION OF AN INDEPENDENT AUTHORITY TO CONSIDER COMPLAINTS ALLEGING MALADMINISTRATION -- THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION.

MR FORD NOTED THAT THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT WAS ALSO DISCUSSED IN 17 OF THE 19 DISTRICT BOARDS AND IN THE URBAN COUNCIL, AND A SIZEABLE PROPORTION OF THE MEMBERS SPOKE IN FAVOUR OF THE CREATION OF A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION.

/+THE RESPONSE,

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+THE RESPONSE, COMBINED WITH THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN TODAY'S ADJOURNMENT DEBATE, INDICATED THAT THERE IS SCOPE FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT,+ HE SAID.

+HOWEVER, AS MEMBERS HAVE POINTED OUT, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF ISSUES, WHICH NEED TO BE RESOLVED BEFORE A DECISION TO ESTABLISH A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION CAN BE TAKEN,+ HE ADDED.

MR FORD SAID ONE SUCH CONCERN WAS THE RELATION OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WITH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND WITH THE GOVERNOR.

+IT WAS SUGGESTED IN THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT THAT THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION SHOULD BE APPOINTED BY, AND REPORT TO, THE GOVERNOR. THIS POSITION HAS BEEN SUPPORTED BY SOME, WHEREAS OTHERS HAVE ARGUED THAT HE SHOULD BE APPOINTED BY, AND REPORT TO, THIS COUNCIL,+ HE SAID.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY WENT ON TO SAY THAT A COMMISSIONER APPOINTED BY THE COUNCIL COULD BE SEEN AS A LOGICAL EXTENSION OF THE EXISTING COMPLAINT SYSTEM OPERATED BY OMELCO, AND WAS CONSISTENT WITH LEGCO'S ROLE AS THE MONITOR OF THE WORK OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

+ON THE OTHER HAND, IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD ALTER MATERIALLY THE ROLE OF MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ADMINISTRATION. THIS MATTER CLEARLY NEEDS TO BE GIVEN VERY CAREFUL CONSIDERATION,+ HE CONTINUED.

THERE HAD ALSO BEEN COMMENTS THAT THE COMMISSIONER SHOULD HAVE WIDER POWERS THAN THOSE SUGGESTED IN THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT.

ON THIS POINT, MR FORD SAID IT WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE NECESSARY FOR THE COMMISSIONER, IF ONE WAS TO BE ESTABLISHED, TO HAVE SUFFICIENT POWERS TO DISCHARGE HIS FUNCTIONS EFFECTIVELY.

+BUT THERE ALSO HAVE TO BE LIMITS SO THAT FOR INSTANCE, THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES IS NOT INTERFERED WITH,+ HE NOTED.

MR FORD SAID THAT IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE OR REALISTIC TO EXPECT A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION TO HEAD AN ALL POWERFUL INSTITUTION ABLE TO RESOLVE EVERY KIND OF PROBLEM AND REVIEW ALL DECISIONS INCLUDING THOSE OF A POLICY OR JUDICIAL NATURE.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT DIFFERENT VIEWS HAD BEEN EXPRESSED CONCERNING WHETHER THE PUBLIC SHOULD HAVE DIRECT ACCESS TO THE COMMISSIONER OR WHETHER ACCESS SHOULD BE THROUGH MEMBERS OF OMELCO, AND THERE WERE CONCERNS EXPRESSED IN LEGCO TODAY TO ENSURE THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO OVERLAPPING OF FUNCTIONS BETWEEN THE COMMISSIONER AND OTHER CHANNELS FOR THE REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES.

MR FORD REITERATED THAT THERE WERE COMPLEX AREAS TO WHICH MUCH THOUGHT MUST BE GIVEN AND THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD CONTINUE TO STUDY THE MATTER AND BRING FORWARD DEFINITE PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS.

LEGCO PANEL READY TO SUPPORT OMBUDSMAN IDEA
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THE CONVENER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AD HOC GROUP TO EXAMINE THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON THE REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES, THE HON SELINA CHOW, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT MEMBERS OF THE GROUP WERE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE OF THE FORMATION OF THE INSTITUTION OF COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT, MRS CHOW SAID MEMBERS ALSO AGREED THAT THE OPTION FOR CREATING SUCH A POST DESERVED TO BE EXAMINED IN MUCH MORE DETAIL, PARTICULARLY REGARDING ITS TERMS OF REFERENCE, POSITION WITH THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND THE QUESTION OF FINALITY.

SHE CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO PROCEED WITH THE STUDY EXPEDITIOUSLY.

RECOUNTING THE WORK OF THE AD HOC GROUP, MRS CHOW SAID THAT DURING ITS FIVE MEETINGS THERE WAS ACTIVE DISCUSSION ON ALL ASPECTS OF THE DOCUMENT ON THE REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES.

+ALTHOUGH THE PUBLIC RESPONSE CANNOT BE DESCRIBED IN ANY WAY AS OVERWHELMING, IT IS A FACT THAT A CLEAR MAJORITY OF THE 50 OR SO SUBMISSIONS ARE FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE THIRD OPTION IN THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT - THAT IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION,+ SHE SAID.

SHE SAID THE GROUP FELT THAT THE OPTION OF MAKING NO CHANGE TO THE EXISTING SYSTEM WAS NEITHER REALISTIC NOR DESIRABLE. ALL AGREED THAT THE OPTION WHICH CALLED FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF ALL EXISTING CHANNELS SHOULD NOT ONLY BE ACCEPTED BUT POSITIVELY SUPPORTED.

MRS CHOW ADDED THAT SHE PERSONALLY WAS CONVINCED THAT ALL EXISTING CHANNELS FOR REDRESS WERE BY AND LARGE RECEPTACLES OF GRIEVANCES RATHER THAN INVESTIGATIVE INSTRUMENTS OF ALLEGED MALADMINISTRATION.

+WITH THE GRADUAL POLITICISING OF OUR SYSTEM, THERE IS MERIT IN HAVING AN INSTITUTION TO UNDERTAKE THAT INVESTIGATIVE FUNCTION INDEPENDENT OF OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM, WHILE EXISTING CHANNELS ARE IMPROVED UPON TO RECEIVE COMPLAINTS AS WELL AS TO RESOLVE THOSE GRIEVANCES WHICH HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH MALADMINISTRATION,+ SHE SAID.

IN ORDER THAT THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WAS SEEN TO BE FAIR AND INDEPENDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE, THOUGHT SHOULD GO INTO HIS QUALIFICATION AND SELECTION, AS WELL AS THE KEY QUESTION OF WHETHER HE WAS ANSWERABLE TO THE GOVERNOR OR THE LEGISLATURE, SHE ADDED.

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MRS CHOW SAID THERE WAS ONE POINT ON WHICH SHE WOULD NOT COMPROMISE. +I BELIEVE THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION'S FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS MUST BE FINAL.+

SHE SAID THERE WOULD ALWAYS BE A CERTAIN PERCENTAGE OF DISSATISFIED CLIENTS, AND IF THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION HAD TO REPEATEDLY LOOK AT CASES, IT WOULD UNDERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF THE COMMISSIONER, AND CREATE ENORMOUS AND UNNECESSARY WASTAGE OF PUBLIC RESOURCES.

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APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION ADVOCATED
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NOTHING SHORT OF AN INDEPENDENT BODY WITH INVESTIGATIVE POWERS AS STRONG AS THOSE OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION SHOULD BE SET UP IF PUBLIC GRIEVANCES WERE TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY AND DEALT WITH PROPERLY, THE HON HUI YIN-FAT SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES, MR HUI SAID HONG KONG NEEDED A PROPERLY CONSTITUTED COMMISSION FOR ADMINISTRATION THAT WOULD PROJECT AN INDEPENDENT AND IMPARTIAL PUBLIC IMAGE LIKE THAT OF THE POPULAR JUDGE BAO CHING-TIN OF THE SUNG DYNASTY.

+I WISH TO EMPHASISE THAT THE STATUS AND POWER OF THE COMMISSIONER MUST BE CONFERRED BY STATUTE TO ENSURE HIS INDEPENDENT AUTHORITY. THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION SHOULD REPORT DIRECTLY TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND THE GOVERNOR, INSTEAD OF TO THE CHIEF SECRETARY, IN ORDER TO REINFORCE HIS MONITORING FUNCTION,+ HE SAID.

MR HUI SAID THAT APART FROM BEING DIRECTLY ACCESSIBLE TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO WISHED TO FILE COMPLAINTS AGAINST ADMINISTRATIVE OR PERSONAL INJUSTICES, THE COMMISSIONER SHOULD ADOPT FORMAL AND SYSTEMATIC PROCEDURES THAT WERE OPENED TO THE PUBLIC AS SITUATIONS REQUIRED.

IT WAS IMPERATIVE THAT THE SUBORDINATES OF THE COMMISSIONER WERE TOTALLY INDEPENDENT FROM THE CIVIL SERVICE ESTABLISHMENT FOR THEM TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY. +THEY WORK UNDER THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WHICH SERVES AS THE FINAL AUTHORITY OF APPEAL.+

MR HUI SAID THAT FOR THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION TO BE IMPARTIAL, HE SHOULD NOT BE A FORMER CIVIL SERVANT, BUT SHOULD BE SOMEONE WITH HIGH COMMUNITY STANDING NOMINATED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR.

/+THIS IMPARTIALITY

+THIS IMPARTIALITY HOWEVER MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY PERVADING AUTHORITY -- POWERS TO COLLECT EVIDENCE, TO GAIN ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS AND FILES AND TO REQUIRE THE DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION BY SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS TO THE BEST OF THEIR KNOWLEDGE,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THE COMMISSIONER SHOULD BE ABLE TO COMMENT FREELY, NOT JUST ON THE DEFECTS OF SYSTEM, BUT ON POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND RELATED PERSONNEL. IN ADDITION, THE COMMISSIONER'S AUTHORITY SHOULD INCLUDE RECOMMENDING PROSECUTION BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES ON CIVIL SERVANTS.

MR HUI SAID THE LIMITATIONS OF THE OMELCO COMPLAINTS DIVISION WERE ONLY TOO REAL TO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS, WHO WERE SO OVERLOADED WITH COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS THAT THEY SIMPLY COULD NOT AWARD ENOUGH ATTENTION TO INDIVIDUAL CASES.

HE SAID THE CRUX OF THE MATTER WAS THAT ALL INVESTIGATIONS WERE DONE BY OMELCO STAFF WHO FOR THE LACK OF STATUTORY AUTHORITY COULD ONLY RELY ON OFFICIAL RECORDS, CORRESPONDENCE, TELEPHONE CALLS AND MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

+IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT INVESTIGATIONS CARRIED OUT BY SECONDED OFFICERS INTO CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS PREPARED BY SENIOR OFFICIALS WOULD BE TOTALLY IMPARTIAL,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THE RECORD OF 2 911 NON-CORRUPTION REPORTS RECEIVED BY THE ICAC IN 1986 SPOKE FOR THE SUCCESS OF AN INDEPENDENT AVENUE OF REDRESS THAT HAD COMMANDED THE CONFIDENCE AND RESPECT OF PEOPLE WITH GRIEVANCES TO PURSUE.

+A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION IS THE ONLY MEANS THROUGH WHICH JUSTICE FOR ALL IS SEEN TO BE DONE BY OUR GOVERNMENT, AND WHICH WILL DEFINITELY ENHANCE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE RUN-UP TO 1997,+ MR HUI CONCLUDED.

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OMBUDSMAN IS NOT THE PANACEA
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THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION COULD BE A MEANS TO IMPROVE UPON THE EXISTING MACHINERY TO DEAL WITH COMPLAINTS AGAINST MALADMINISTRATION BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, THE HON S.L. CHEN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT THAT IT SHOULD NOT BE SEEN AS AN END IN ITSELF.

+THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION IS DEFINITELY NOT GOING TO BE THE PANACEA FOR OUR COMPLAINANTS AND THOSE WHO SEEK REDRESS OF THEIR GRIEVANCES,+ HE SAID.

MR CHEN MADE THESE REMARKS WHEN HE SPOKE DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES.

/HE SAID

HE SAID IT WAS DIFFICULT TO COME TO A CONCLUSION WHETHER TO SUPPORT THE IDEA OF ESTABLISHING A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION, BECAUSE THE CONSULTATIVE PAPER DID NOT DESCRIBE PRECISELY THE SORT OF ORGANISATION THAT THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WAS LIKELY TO BE IN TERMS OF ITS POWERS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE.

HE SAID HE COULD ACCEPT THE IDEA OF CREATING A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION UNDER TWO CONDITIONS.

FIRST, IF THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WAS ESTABLISHED, HE MUST BE GIVEN SUFFICIENT POWER WHICH SHALL BE NO LESS THAN THOSE PRESENTLY ENTRUSTED TO OMELCO MEMBERS TO ENABLE HIM TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY.

IN ADDITION, IT MUST BE CLEARLY ESTABLISHED, PREFERABLY BY LEGISLATION, THAT HIS FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS WERE FINAL.

MR CHEN SAID ONCE A COMPLAINANT HAD CHOSEN TO TAKE HIS CASE TO THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION, HE MUST ACCEPT AND RESPECT THE COMMISSIONER'S DECISION AS FINAL. NO FURTHER APPEALS COULD BE MADE UNLESS THE COMPLAINT BECAME A MATTER FOR THE JUDICIARY.

HE SAID THE REASON WAS SIMPLE: +WE MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT THE PURPOSE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION IS TO IMPROVE UPON THE EXISTING SYSTEM.

+IF HIS DECISIONS CAN BE CHALLENGED THUS THE COMPLAINT CAN BE PURSUED ELSEWHERE, THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WOULD BECOME JUST AN ADDITION TO THE MANY ALREADY EXISTING CHANNELS OF REDRESS AND THE PURPOSE OF ITS ESTABLISHMENT WOULD BE TOTALLY DEFEATED.+

SECONDLY, HE PROPOSED THAT THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION SHOULD ONLY DEAL WITH COMPLAINTS REFERRED TO HIM BY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS.

+THIS IS A FILTERING OR SCREENING PROCESS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION IS NOT TO BE OVER-BURDENED WITH INDISCRIMINATE COMPLAINTS, WHICH IS ESSENTIAL FOR HIS EFFECTIVE OPERATION.

+IN FACT IT IS ALSO IN LINE WITH THE PRACTICE ADOPTED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION,+ MR CHEN EXPLAINED.

HE THEN PROPOSED THAT THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE HONG KONG COMMISSIONER BE MODELLED ON HIS UNITED KINGDOM COUNTERPART:

- (A) HIS AUTHORITY IS TO BE PRESCRIBED BY LAW;
- (B) THE COMPLAINT SHOULD BE MADE TO A LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBER WHO SHALL THEN REFER IT TO THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION, AND

- (C) THE COMMISSIONER CANNOT ACT ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE, NOR CAN HE RECEIVE SUBMISSIONS DIRECTLY FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

MR CHEN SAID THAT UNLESS THE CONDITIONS HE OUTLINED WERE SATISFACTORILY MET, HE WAS NOT IN FAVOUR OF CREATING A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION.

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OMBUDSMAN SHOULD BE ACCOUNTABLE TO LEGCO
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THE INDEPENDENT STATUS OF AN OMBUDSMAN SHOULD NOT MAKE HIS PARTICULAR OFFICE A SEPARATE +EMPIRE+ OF THE GOVERNMENT, THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT, ON REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES, MR CHEUNG SAID THE OMBUDSMAN'S APPOINTMENT, FUNCTIONS AND REMOVAL MUST BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR CHEUNG FELT THAT THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION SHOULD BE EMPOWERED TO INVESTIGATE COMPLAINTS IN RESPECT OF ALL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AUTHORITIES.

FOR THE SMOOTH WORKING OF THE CHECKS AND BALANCES OF THE MECHANISM IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD BE GIVEN FOR THE SETTING UP OF A SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO DEAL WITH COMPLAINTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS, WHO THOUGHT THAT THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION HAD FAILED TO PERFORM HIS DEFINED DUTIES, HE SAID.

THE COMMITTEE MUST NOT ACT AS A COURT OF APPEAL FROM THE COMMISSIONER'S FINDINGS, BUT RATHER, AS AN AUTHORITY TO REVIEW HIS WORK SO THAT REMEDIAL MEASURES, SUCH AS REDEFINING THE JURISDICTION OF THE COMMISSIONER, MIGHT BE TAKEN FROM TIME TO TIME TO IMPROVE THE REDRESS SYSTEM, HE SAID.

HE BELIEVED THE EXISTENCE OF AN OMBUDSMAN SYSTEM OUGHT TO BE SEEN AS A STRONG PROFESSIONAL ARM OF OMELCO OR ITS SUPPLEMENT, RATHER THAN ITS REPLACEMENT IN THE AREA OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST ADMINISTRATION.

SPEAKING ON THE FUNCTION OF THE OMBUDSMAN, MR CHEUNG SAID IT SHOULD BE STRICTLY LIMITED TO ONE OF INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS OF INJUSTICE TO CITIZENS RESULTING FROM FAULTY ADMINISTRATION ON THE PART OF A GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT, NOT AMOUNTING TO ILLEGALITY.

+THIS REFERS TO THE PROBLEM OF 'MALADMINISTRATION' AND THE OMBUDSMAN IS A CHANNEL WHEREBY PRIVATE CITIZENS MAY LODGE THEIR COMPLAINTS AGAINST A PUBLIC AUTHORITY, WHICH HAS, THOUGH ACTING WITHIN THE LAW, FAILED TO OBSERVE THE PROPER STANDARDS OF ADMINISTRATIVE CONDUCT,+ HE ADDED.

COMMISSIONER EXPECTED TO CHANGE WRONG DECISIONS

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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WILL ONLY BE MEANINGFUL AND VALUABLE IF HE CAN FULFIL THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S EXPECTATION THAT HE CAN CHANGE THE GOVERNMENT'S WRONG DECISIONS, THE HON CHAN YING-LUN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES, MR CHAN EXPRESSED DOUBT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMISSIONER AS IT WAS UNDERSTOOD FROM THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT THAT IT WOULD ONLY BE AN ADDITIONAL AVENUE OF COMPLAINT AND APPEAL.

HE SAID THERE WAS NO WAY TO KNOW THE EXACT POWER OF THE COMMISSIONER, ESPECIALLY WHEN BOTH THE COMPLAINANTS AND THE MEMBERS INVOLVED IN THE CASE WERE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE INVESTIGATIONS.

MR CHAN SAID ALTHOUGH HE GAVE HIS SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION, HE CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO DETAIL THE COMMISSIONER'S POWERS, THE AMBIT OF INVESTIGATION AND THE OPPORTUNITIES OF RE-EXAMINATION OF ANY CASES BEFORE ANY DECISION WAS MADE.

MR CHAN SAID THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION SHOULD ADHERE TO CERTAIN STATUTORY PROCEDURES WHEN MAKING INVESTIGATIONS TO ENSURE THAT THE COMPLAINANTS RECEIVED FAIR TREATMENT.

+IN THE EVENT OF UNREASONABLE COMPLAINTS, THE COMMISSIONER CAN, BY VIRTUE OF HIS INDEPENDENT STATUS, MAKE FAIR DECISION WITHOUT BEING AFFECTED BY POLITICAL ELEMENTS,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID HE ALSO FELT THAT THOSE PUBLIC OFFICERS WHO HAD ERRED, DELIBERATELY WRONGED THE INNOCENT OR DONE INJUSTICE SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR MISDEEDS.

+I HOPE THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WILL POINT OUT THOSE PUBLIC OFFICERS WHO SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MALADMINISTRATION SO AS TO IMPROVE THE WORKING ATTITUDE AND EFFICIENCY OF CIVIL SERVANTS,+ HE SAID.

REGARDING THE REDRESS SYSTEM, MR CHAN SAID THAT IT WAS A BASIC RIGHT OF THE PUBLIC TO LODGE COMPLAINTS TO COUNCILLORS AND DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS WHO SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER IT THEIR BASIC OBLIGATION TO LISTEN TO THE PUBLIC'S VIEWS.

HE FELT THEREFORE THAT THE EXISTING REDRESS SYSTEM SHOULD BE RETAINED EVEN AFTER THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WAS APPOINTED.

+THE COMMISSIONER AND THE MEMBERS SHOULD KEEP IN CLOSE CONTACT EVEN IF THE FORMER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INVESTIGATION,+ HE SAID.

WATCHDOG ROLE TO ENHANCE EFFICIENCY
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THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION COULD ACT AS A WATCHDOG OVER THE GOVERNMENT MACHINERY AND ENHANCE ITS EFFICIENCY, THE HON YEUNG PO-KWAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR YEUNG SAID THAT THE COMMISSIONER COULD RELIEVE SOME OF THE PUBLIC COMMITMENTS OF OMELCO MEMBERS, THUS ALLOWING THEM MORE TIME FOR OTHER IMPORTANT MATTERS OTHER THAN HANDLING COMPLAINTS.

+AT PRESENT, THE COMPLAINTS DIVISION OF OMELCO DEALS WITH 1 000 CASES A YEAR, OF WHICH 35 TO 40 PER CENT CONCERNED GOVERNMENT MALADMINISTRATION OR INJUSTICE.

+WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION, THESE CASES CAN BE DEALT WITH BY THE COMMISSIONER,+ HE SAID.

MR YEUNG ALSO SAID THAT THE OFFICE WOULD BE WELCOMED BY THE PUBLIC AS IT MEANT AN ADDITIONAL INDEPENDENT STATUTORY REDRESS CHANNEL FOR HANDLING GRIEVANCES.

ON THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE, MR YEUNG SAID THEY SHOULD BE CLEARLY DEFINED AND STIPULATED IN LEGISLATION TO AVOID DUPLICATION OF WORK.

ON THE WORK OF THE COMMISSIONER, MR YEUNG SUGGESTED THAT HIS WORK SHOULD BE RELATED TO INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS OF GOVERNMENT MALPRACTICE AND INJUSTICE.

HE ALSO SUGGESTED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMITTEE INCLUDING OMELCO MEMBERS FOR MONITORING THE WORK OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION.

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NO NEED TO CHANGE EXISTING REDRESS SYSTEM
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THERE IS NO IMMEDIATE NEED TO CHANGE ANY OF THE EXISTING CHANNELS OF COMPLAINTS OR TO ELIMINATE ANY ONE OF THEM, THE HON KIM CHAM SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES, MR CHAM SAID THE DIVERSITY OF PRESENT CHANNELS PROVIDED A NATURAL SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES.

/HE SAID

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HE SAID HE FELT THE CREATION OF A NEW BODY, WHETHER IT WAS CALLED THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION, SHOULD BE DEVELOPED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PRESENT STRUCTURE.

+WE MUST AVOID THE PITFALL OF SETTING UP A NEW BODY FOR THE SAKE OF ESTABLISHING IT,+ HE SAID.

MR CHAM POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE ADMINISTRATION TO IDENTIFY THE OPERATING ELEMENTS OF THE PROPOSED COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION NOW.

LISTING SEVERAL OF THE VITAL ELEMENTS WHICH THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NEED TO ADDRESS, HE SAID OPTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES COULD BE IDENTIFIED, SO THAT THE IMPLICATIONS OF EACH OPTION COULD BE FULLY CONSIDERED.

HE ALSO NOTED THE ARGUMENT THAT THE NEED FOR A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION AROSE FROM POSSIBLE CONFLICT OF INTERESTS BY INVOLVING MEMBERS IN INVESTIGATORY DETAILS.

MR CHAM SUGGESTED THAT THESE FEARS COULD BE ALLEVIATED WITH ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES SUCH AS DIVERSIFIED MEMBERSHIP IN HANDLING CASES AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

HE REITERATED THAT IT WOULD BE MORE PRUDENT TO DEVELOP THE EXISTING CHANNELS TO MEET INADEQUACIES OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM.

+IN THE EVENT THAT A NEW BODY NEEDS TO BE CREATED, IT MUST WORK IN CO-ORDINATION WITH EXISTING BODIES, CERTAINLY NOT TO DISRUPT THEM,+ HE ADDED.

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NEED TO ENHANCE EXISTING CHANNELS OF COMPLAINT
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THERE IS A NEED TO RETAIN AND IMPROVE EXISTING CHANNELS OF COMPLAINT AND IF A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM CAN BE GRAFTED ON WITH CONSTRUCTIVE RESULTS IT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE HON HILTON CHEONG-LEEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR CHEONG-LEEN SAID HE BELIEVED THAT IN PRINCIPLE A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION COULD BE GOOD FOR HONG KONG, PROVIDING THAT IT WAS WELL THOUGHT OUT AND PROPERLY STRUCTURED.

/FIRSTLY, HE

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FIRSTLY, HE SAID, SUCH A COMMISSIONER WOULD BE IN POSITION TO TAKE OVER ON PRESENT INDICATIONS UP TO ABOUT HALF THE CASES WHICH WERE RECEIVED BY THE OMELCO COMPLAINTS DIVISION EVERY YEAR, AND HE WOULD BE SEEN BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC TO BE ACTING INDEPENDENTLY OF OMELCO AND OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

SECONDLY, THE FACT OF HAVING A SEPARATE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WOULD HAVE THE SALUTARY EFFECT OF PUTTING THE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS EVEN MORE ON THEIR TOES IN THE PROCESSING OF COMPLAINTS EFFICIENTLY AND EXPEDITIOUSLY.

THIRDLY, FROM TIME TO TIME HIS REPORTS TO THE GOVERNOR WOULD HAVE TO BE TABLED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY, AND AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR HIS ANNUAL REPORT COULD BE DEBATED BY THE COUNCIL.

FOURTHLY, THE SETTING UP OF A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WOULD NOT IN ANY WAY DETRACT FROM THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF OTHER CHANNELS OF COMPLAINT, SUCH AS THE WARD OFFICES OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS, URBAN COUNCILLORS, REGIONAL COUNCILLORS AND DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS.

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, MR CHEONG-LEEN SAID MUCH WOULD DEPEND ON HOW SUCCESSFULLY A HONG KONG-STYLE OMBUDSMAN OR COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM COULD BE DEvised TO MEET THE NEEDS OF HONG KONG PEOPLE AND THE HONG KONG POLITICAL SYSTEM.

HE EMPHASISED THAT THE SYSTEM COULD NOT AND SHOULD NOT BE AN IDENTICAL MODEL OF THE NEW ZEALAND, CANADIAN, SCANDINAVIAN OR THE BRITISH SYSTEMS.

MR CHEONG-LEEN ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO PREPARE A DETAILED REPORT ON THE SETTING UP OF A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION BEFORE TAKING A FINAL DECISION.

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STRENGTHENING OF OMELCO COMPLAINTS DIVISION ADVOCATED

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THE HON CHUNG PUI-LAM TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SAID HE BELIEVED THAT A STRENGTHENED OMELCO COMPLAINTS DIVISION SHOULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN THE PROPOSED COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION IN HANDLING COMPLAINTS.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON THE REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES, MR CHUNG SAID THAT AS THE PUBLIC HAD FOR LONG BEEN WELCOMED TO LODGE THEIR COMPLAINTS WITH OMELCO, IT WAS ONLY NATURAL TO EXPAND THE JURISDICTION OF OMELCO IN RESPECT OF THE HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS.

/HE NOTED

HE NOTED THAT AT PRESENT, OMELCO COULD MAKE DIRECT CONTACT WITH RESPONSIBLE OFFICERS AND GAIN ACCESS TO RELEVANT PAPERS IN THE COURSE OF HANDLING COMPLAINTS.

+ON THE BASIS OF THIS ARRANGEMENT, THE CHIEF ASSISTANT SECRETARY (COMPLAINTS) OF OMELCO MAY BE DELEGATED AN APPROPRIATE AUTHORITY TO FUNCTION AS A STATUTORY COMMISSIONER FOR COMPLAINTS,+ HE SAID.

THE INCUMBENT WOULD BE CHARGED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF HANDLING PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE CIVIL SERVICE AND WOULD BE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO OMELCO UNDER THE EXISTING STRUCTURE.

MR CHUNG SAID THAT UPON THE REQUEST OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR COMPLAINTS, OMELCO'S DUTY ROSTER MEMBERS WOULD EXAMINE A CASE TO SEE IF AN AD HOC GROUP SHOULD BE SET UP TO HANDLE THE CASE REPORTS SUBMITTED BY THE CHIEF ASSISTANT SECRETARY (COMPLAINTS) OR THE COMMISSIONER FOR COMPLAINTS.

THE COMMISSIONER FOR COMPLAINTS MIGHT, EITHER BY HIMSELF OR THROUGH THE AD HOC GROUP, SEEK TO SETTLE THE COMPLAINT BY REFERRING IT TO THE RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS UNDER AN ESTABLISHED PROCEDURE. AS A FURTHER STEP, LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS COULD BE INTRODUCED TO PROVIDE A SOLUTION FOR THE PROBLEM CONCERNED.

MR CHUNG NOTED THAT IN THE EYES OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC, THE PROPOSED COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION MUST PLAY A ROLE SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE LEGENDARY +JUSTICE BAO+ WHO OFFERED REDRESS TO PEOPLE'S GRIEVANCES.

BUT THIS IN FACT WOULD NOT BE THE CASE AS THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT STATED THAT THE PROPOSED COMMISSIONER COULD ONLY HANDLE COMPLAINTS AGAINST MALADMINISTRATION OR DERELICTION OF DUTY AND WOULD NOT BE EMPOWERED TO DEAL WITH CASES CONCERNING GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND DECISIONS, COURT JUDGEMENT, PERSONNEL MATTERS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE, TRANSACTIONS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR AS WELL AS MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST.

+HOW CAN SUCH A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION BE ABLE TO DEAL SQUARELY WITH ISSUES THAT PEOPLE ARE MOST CONCERNED WITH AND FOR WHICH PEOPLE HAVE A REAL NEED TO SEEK REDRESS?+ MR CHUNG QUESTIONED.

HE SAID THAT IN THE COURSE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, IF THE GOVERNMENT WAS TO ESTABLISH A REDRESS SYSTEM WHICH HAD AN EMPTY TITLE BUT NO REAL POWER, IT WOULD IN THE LONG RUN ONLY LET PEOPLE DOWN AND MAKE THEM EVEN MORE DISCONTENTED.

INDEPENDENT OMBUDSMAN OFFICE BACKED
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AN INDEPENDENT OFFICE OF A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION, ANSWERABLE TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, SHOULD BE SET UP TO HANDLE SUFFICIENTLY SERIOUS COMPLAINTS.

THE CALL WAS MADE BY THE HON THOMAS CLYDESDALE DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE CONSULTATIVE DECUMENT ON REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID, SHOULD BE GIVEN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF REFERRING ALL CASES TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE COMMISSIONER.

+IN CASES WHERE COMPLAINTS ARE BEING MADE AGAINST THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ITSELF OR ITS INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS, THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL SHOULD HAVE THE POWER TO CONSIDER SENDING THEM FORWARD TO THE COMMISSIONER,+ HE ADDED.

THE COUNCIL SHOULD ALSO BE EMPOWERED TO AUTHORISE THE COMMISSIONER TO MAKE PUBLIC SUCH DETAILS OF VALID COMPLAINTS AS MAY BE SEEN NECESSARY IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST, HE SUGGESTED.

MR CLYDESDALE NOTED THAT THE NEW OFFICE SHOULD BE GIVEN THE RESOURCES FROM THE OUTSET, NOT ONLY IN FINANCIAL TERMS BUT ALSO IN REGARD TO THE QUALITY OF THE COMMISSIONER AND HIS STAFF, AS WELL AS THE LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE POWERS GIVEN TO HIM.

HOWEVER, HE FOUND IT NECESSARY TO DEFINE CAREFULLY THE BOUNDARIES OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE COMMISSIONER AND HIS RIGHT TO REQUIRE INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

+THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF WILL HAVE TO BE DEFINED SINCE THERE ARE MANY ORGANISATIONS FULLY OR LARGELY SUPPORTED BY THE GOVERNMENT,+ HE SAID.

MR CLYDESDALE STRESSED THAT THE NEW OFFICE WAS TO PROVIDE AN AVENUE OF COMPLAINT FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO WERE AGGRIEVED AND WHO HAD FOUND NO MEANS OF OBTAINING REDRESS.

+OURS IS AN OPEN SOCIETY AND SUCH AN OFFICE WILL HELP KEEP IT SO,+ HE SAID.

HE CITED THE PUBLIC DISTRUST OF THE GOVERNMENT AND CALL FOR EFFECTIVE ACTION TO CONTAIN GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION, BEFORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ICAC IN 1974, AS THE +PRIME EXAMPLE OF FAILURE OF THE COMPLAINTS SYSTEM+.

+WE MUST NEVER FORGET THIS LESSON NOR THE VERY GREAT IMPROVEMENT THAT HAS OCCURRED THROUGH GENUINE AND HONEST EFFORT TO SET UP AN ORGANISATION WHICH THE GENERAL PUBLIC, AT ALL LEVELS, CAN TRUST AND TO WHICH COMPLAINTS CAN BE MADE WITH CONFIDENCE,+ HE SAID.

MR CLYDESDALE SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT EXISTING CHANNELS FOR THE REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES WERE ADEQUATE NOR THAT THEY ENJOYED WIDE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE.

THESE CHANNELS SHOULD BE MOST CAREFULLY CONSIDERED WITH A VIEW TO IMPROVEMENT WHERE POSSIBLE, HE PROPOSED.

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SUPPORT FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF OMBUDSMAN
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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WITH FULL INVESTIGATIVE POWERS TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF HIS JOB WAS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SUPPORTED BY THE HON RICHARD LAI.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON THE REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES, MR LAI SAID ALL EXISTING CHANNELS FOR REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES EXCEPT THOSE OF OFFICIAL BODIES WERE SET UP PRIMARILY FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

THESE CHANNELS, SUCH AS THE OMELCO, WERE FIRST AND FOREMOST INDISPENSIBLE PARTS OF THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE AND WERE NOT SPECIALLY SET UP TO HANDLE COMPLAINTS.

MR LAI SAID THE PRESENT CHANNELS FOR REDRESS GAVE AN IMPRESSION THAT THEY WERE SCATTERED AND CONFUSING.

+IF THERE WAS A UNIFIED CHANNEL FOR PEOPLE TO APPROACH, AND FROM IT THE MATTER COULD BE REDIRECTED TO THE APPROPRIATE DEPARTMENTS FOR ACTION AND RECTIFICATION, IT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY SIMPLIFY THE REDRESS PROCESS AND MAKE IT MORE ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC.+

HE ADDED THAT THE SUSPICION THAT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TENDED TO FAVOUR THEIR OWN STILL EXISTED AMONG A LOT OF PEOPLE.

IF AN INDEPENDENT OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION, WHICH WOULD NOT BE A PART OF THE GOVERNMENT MECHANISM, WAS SET UP PEOPLE WOULD HAVE MORE TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN THE FAIRNESS WITH WHICH IT WOULD HANDLE COMPLAINTS, HE SAID.

MR LAI SAID THAT IF THE SYSTEM OF REDRESSING GRIEVANCES IN HONG KONG AFTER 1997 WAS NOT ADEQUATE AND COMPREHENSIVE, PEOPLE WOULD BE BOUND TO MAKE FREQUENT REPRESENTATIONS TO BODIES OUTSIDE THE SAR GOVERNMENT. THE EFFECTIVENESS AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE SAR GOVERNMENT WOULD THEN BE PUT IN DOUBT.

HE SAID THE SETTING UP OF A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WOULD DEMONSTRATE THE DETERMINATION OF THE GOVERNMENT TO LIBERALISE THE POLITICAL PROCESS, AND WOULD GO A LONG WAY IN ENHANCING THE IMPARTIAL AND INDEPENDENT IMAGE OF THE GOVERNMENT.

TURNING TO THE POWERS OF AND THE CANDIDATE FOR THE POST, MR LAI SAID THE FIRST AND MOST FUNDAMENTAL UNDERSTANDING WAS THAT THE COMMISSIONER WOULD NOT BE INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS OF POLICY MAKING AND SHOULD NOT EVEN COMMENT ON THE APPROPRIATENESS OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES. THE ROLE OF MONITORING POLICY MAKING WAS THE DOMAIN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

/HE SAID

HE SAID THE COMMISSIONER SHOULD BE APPOINTED BY AND ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO STATE CLEARLY THE BOUNDARIES OF THE POWERS OF THE COMMISSIONER IF IT WAS DECIDED THAT SUCH AN OFFICE SHOULD BE SET UP.

TO ENSURE THAT THE COMMISSIONER WOULD ENJOY AN INDEPENDENT REPUTATION, HE SHOULD BE GIVEN A RELATIVELY LONG TERM OF OFFICE, SUCH AS FIVE YEARS, MR LAI SUGGESTED.

HE ADDED THAT A HIGH COURT JUDGE MIGHT BE AN APPROPRIATE CANDIDATE IN THIS REGARD.

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COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION SOUGHT BY PUBLIC
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THE PUBLIC HAVE CLEARLY INDICATED THEIR WISH TO SEE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE POST OF COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION, THE HON, LEE YU-TAI SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES, MR LEE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD +HONOUR ITS WORDS+ BY ACCEDING TO THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE.

A PROPERLY RUN GOVERNMENT WAS NOT A GOVERNMENT FREE FROM MISTAKES BUT ONE WHICH RECEIVED COMPLAINTS AND WHICH WAS WILLING TO RECTIFY MISTAKES AND MAKE IMPROVEMENTS, MR LEE SAID.

COMMENTING ON THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION, MR LEE SAID THAT IN TERMS OF OBJECTIVITY, IT SEEMED THAT HE WOULD BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO HANDLE COMPLAINTS THAN COUNCILLORS.

IT WOULD ALSO BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION TO HANDLE ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING MALADMINISTRATION, WHILE THE OMELCO WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR RECEIVING AND REFERRING COMPLAINTS, SO AS TO FACILITATE COORDINATION.

MR LEE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD PROMISED IN 1985 TO ENHANCE THE AVENUES OF COMPLAINTS AND THAT A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT WOULD BE ISSUED TO ENABLE THE PUBLIC TO DEBATE ON THE PROPOSALS CONTAINED IN THE DOCUMENT.

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+THE ISSUE HAD BEEN REPEATEDLY DELAYED AND THE GREEN PAPER ON REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES WAS NOT PUBLISHED UNTIL AUGUST 1986. THE DOCUMENT IS BRIEF AND NON-COMMITTAL. THE INFORMATION CONTAINED THEREIN WAS INSUFFICIENT FOR DISCUSSION AT DISTRICT BOARD MEETINGS.

+MANY PEOPLE HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT THE SINCERITY OF GOVERNMENT'S PROMISE AS MADE IN THE 1985 POLICY ADDRESS ON THE ISSUE. THEY ALSO QUESTION WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD MAINTAIN OR LOOSEN ITS DETERMINATION TO GOVERN HONG KONG.

+THESE QUESTIONS MUST BE DEALT WITH IN A PRACTICAL MANNER AND CONCRETE MEASURES MUST BE TAKEN TO RELIEVE THE PUBLIC OF THEIR ANXIETIES,+ HE SAID.

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OMBUDSMAN WILL HELP REDUCE OMELCO WORKLOAD
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THE CREATION OF A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION POST WILL GREATLY RELIEVE THE HEAVY WORKLOAD OF OMELCO MEMBERS IN THE HANDLING OF COMPLAINT CASES, THE HON LIU LIT-FOR SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES, MR LIU SAID 40 PER CENT OF THE 1 000 COMPLAINT CASES HANDLED BY THE OMELCO EACH YEAR WAS ABOUT GOVERNMENT MALADMINISTRATION AND INJUSTICE.

+IF THE NUMBER OF CASES WHICH REQUIRES OMELCO MEMBERS TO INTERVIEW CLIENTS IS REDUCED, MEMBERS CAN DEVOTE MORE ATTENTION TO SOCIAL AND POLICY ISSUES,+ HE SAID.

MR LIU SAID AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WITH ADEQUATE POWER COULD BE CLEARLY IDENTIFIED BY THE PUBLIC AS AN ORGANISATION FOR REDRESS.

+THEY CAN LODGE THEIR COMPLAINTS DIRECTLY TO THE COMMISSIONER, WHETHER THEY BE COMPLAINTS AGAINST GOVERNMENT MALADMINISTRATION OR PERSONAL GRIEVANCES, AND THERE IS NO NEED FOR REFERRALS WHICH WASTE MUCH TIME,+ HE SAID.

+THE EXISTING REDRESS SYSTEM MAY NOT BE EFFECTIVE,+ HE ADDED.

MR LIU SAID FIRSTLY, THERE WERE INSTITUTIONS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS TO RECEIVE COMPLAINTS BUT THEY WERE NOT INDEPENDENT AND HAD LIMITED JURISDICTION AND POWER.

SECONDLY, SOME INSTITUTIONS ARRANGED DUTY ROSTER MEMBERS TO RECEIVE COMPLAINTS FROM THE PUBLIC AND THERE WERE NO OFFICERS SPECIALLY ASSIGNED TO HANDLE THE CASES.

MR LIU SAID THAT IF THESE SHORTCOMINGS COULD BE OVERCOME, THE EFFICIENCY OF THE EXISTING REDRESS SYSTEM WOULD BE IMPROVED.

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CALL FOR CREATION OF COMMISSIONER FOR INVESTIGATIONS

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A POST OF COMMISSIONER FOR INVESTIGATIONS WAS CALLED FOR BY THE HON HELMUT SOHMEN TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON THE REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES, MR SOHMEN SAID THE COMMISSIONER MUST BE A PERSON WITH AN OUTSTANDING PERSONAL RECORD OF INTEGRITY, USE OF AUTHORITY AND LEADERSHIP WITHOUT HAVING BEEN, OR LATTERLY BEEN, A GOVERNMENT SERVANT.

HE SAID THE COMMISSIONER MUST BE INDEPENDENT AND ACCOUNTABLE ONLY TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, TO WHICH AN ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER'S ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE SUBMITTED BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY AND WITH THE CHIEF SECRETARY'S OWN OBSERVATIONS.

THE COMMISSIONER SHOULD ACT UNDER THE POWERS CONFERRED UPON HIM BY STATUTE AS THE INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND ALL EXECUTIVE BRANCHES OF THE GOVERNMENT. HE SHOULD BE CONCERNED PRINCIPALLY WITH MALADMINISTRATION AND ALLEGED MISUSE OR ABUSE OF GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY, BUT NOT WITH POLICY MATTERS OR THOSE CLEARLY FALLING WITHIN THE AMBIT OF THE COURTS.

FINDINGS OF THE COMMISSIONER WOULD BE CONSIDERED FINAL, INCLUDING THE FINDINGS AS TO HIS OWN JURISDICTION, AND NOT IN THEMSELVES BE SUBJECT TO ADMINISTRATIVE OR JUDICIAL REVIEW OR APPEAL OR PETITION PROCEDURES EXCEPT WHERE THE EXERCISE OF THE POWERS OF THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER ITSELF WAS BEING CHALLENGED IN THE COURTS.

MR SOHMEN SAID THAT ACCESS TO THE OMBUDSMAN FROM THE PUBLIC MUST BE DIRECT AND BE OPEN TO EVERY RESIDENT OF HONG KONG WITHOUT THE NEED FOR APPROVAL BY ANY AUTHORITY, BY MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, OR BY SIMILAR PERSONS OR BODIES.

HE SAID THE EXISTING COMPLAINTS CHANNELS -- THE OMELCO COMPLAINTS DIVISION, URBAN COUNCIL WARDS, THE POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE, DISTRICT BOARD FUNCTIONS, DISTRICT OFFICES -- COULD BE ABOLISHED ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OMBUDSMAN'S OFFICE.

+THE RIGHT OF FORMAL APPEAL TO THE GOVERNOR AVAILABLE UNDER CERTAIN ORDINANCES SHOULD BE REVIEWED, BUT THEY TOGETHER WITH PETITIONERS TO THE GOVERNOR AND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN OUGHT GENERALLY TO BE RETAINED,+ HE ADDED.

IT MUST HOWEVER REMAIN POSSIBLE FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO BRING COMPLAINTS OF A POLICY NATURE TO THE ATTENTION OF MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VIA THE AVENUE OF OMELCO PANELS OR LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AD HOC GROUPS, WHILE THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION SHOULD ALSO BE RETAINED TO DEAL WITH OFFENCES FOR WHICH IT HAD JURISDICTION, MR SOHMEN SAID.

/HE SAID

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HE SAID THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OMBUDSMAN'S OFFICE WOULD BE SEEN AS A SIGNIFICANT MOVE TOWARDS OPEN GOVERNMENT IN HONG KONG.

+CONFIDENCE BY THE CITIZENS IN RESPONSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE AUTHORITY MUST BE A DESIRABLE OBJECTIVE FOR ANY GOVERNMENT, AND IF AN OMBUDSMAN IS A POSSIBLE METHOD TO ACHIEVE IT, WE MUST BE WILLING TO MAKE THE EFFORT,+ HE CONCLUDED.

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COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION ESSENTIAL AND NECESSARY
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THE SETTING UP OF A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WAS AN ESSENTIAL AND NECESSARY MEASURE WHICH SHOULD BE LOOKED INTO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, THE HON ROSANNA TAM SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES, MRS TAM GAVE HER SUPPORT TO THE NEED FOR FURTHER DEVELOPING THE REDRESS SYSTEM IN HONG KONG.

SHE SAID THAT HONG KONG WAS NOW ON THE THRESHOLD OF POLITICAL CHANGES. +TO ENSURE THAT WE PASS THROUGH THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD SMOOTHLY, IT IS IMPERATIVE TO MAINTAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF OUR RESIDENTS IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT.+

SHE SAID SHE BELIEVED A SOUND REDRESS SYSTEM WOULD NOT ONLY SAFEGUARD THE RIGHTS OF THE CITIZENS, BUT ALSO ENHANCE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN THE GOVERNMENT.

ALTHOUGH THERE WERE QUITE A NUMBER OF AVENUES OF COMPLAINTS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC IN HONG KONG, MRS TAM SAID THEY WERE SUBJECTED TO CERTAIN LIMITATIONS.

+AS FAR AS THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL GOVERNMENT POLICIES ARE CONCERNED, IT IS TRUE THAT THE DISTRICT BOARDS, THE URBAN COUNCIL, THE REGIONAL COUNCIL AND THE OMELCO CAN REFLECT VIEWS AND GRIEVANCES OF THE PUBLIC TO THE AUTHORITIES CONCERNED.

+HOWEVER, WITH REGARDS TO THOSE CONCERNING MALADMINISTRATION IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, THE ABOVE ORGANISATIONS MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH THEM BECAUSE THEY DO NOT POSSESS ADEQUATE INVESTIGATORY POWER,+ SHE SAID.

/FURTHERMORE, MEMBERS

FURTHERMORE, MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL INCREASINGLY IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES WITH THEIR FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES AND PROFESSIONAL GROUPS, AND WERE RESPONSIBLE TO THESE BODIES. CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS MIGHT ARISE IF THEY WERE INVOLVED IN THE INVESTIGATION OF MALADMINISTRATION OF CERTAIN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

+HENCE, TO FURTHER DEVELOP OUR COMPLAINT SYSTEM, IT IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO MERELY IMPROVE THE EXISTING CHANNELS.

+WE MUST CREATE AN INDEPENDENT AND IMPARTIAL REDRESS AUTHORITY INVESTED WITH ADEQUATE POWER TO HANDLE PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT MALADMINISTRATION OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

+THE PROPOSED COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION IS AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION,+ SHE SAID.

COMMENTING ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION, MRS TAM SAID THAT THE COMMISSIONER, WHO COULD BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR, SHOULD MAINTAIN A HIGH DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE AND NEUTRALITY.

+ALSO, HIS TENURE OF OFFICE SHOULD BE FIXED FOR A RELATIVELY LONG PERIOD OF TIME. ONCE APPOINTED, HE SHOULD NOT BE DISMISSED AT WILL.

+THE OFFICER SHOULD HAVE FULL POWER TO EMPLOY STAFF HE NEEDS AND ALL EXPENDITURE SHOULD BE DEFRAID BY A SEPARATE FUND.

+THE STATUS AND POWER OF THE COMMISSIONER MUST BE CONFERRED AND SAFEGUARDED BY STATUTE,+ MRS TAM SAID.

ON THE MAIN FUNCTION OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION, MRS TAM SAID HE WAS TO HANDLE PUBLIC COMPLAINTS CONCERNING MALADMINISTRATION OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

AS SUCH, HE SHOULD NOT REPLACE THE EXISTING REDRESS AVENUES. ON THE CONTRARY, THE WORK OF THE NEW AND OLD COMPLAINTS CHANNELS SHOULD BE COMPLEMENTARY.

AFTER THE AUTHORITY OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION HAD BEEN SET UP, THE OMELCO SHOULD CONTINUE TO HANDLE PUBLIC COMPLAINTS CONCERNING THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL GOVERNMENT POLICIES, MRS TAM SAID.

REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION AND THE PUBLIC, SHE SAID THE TWO SHOULD HAVE A GOOD COMMUNICATION.

+SINCE THE REDRESS CASES HANDLED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION ARE OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THE PERSONS CONCERNED, THE PUBLIC SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO LODGE COMPLAINTS DIRECTLY TO THE COMMISSIONER OTHER THAN THROUGH THE OMELCO, IN ORDER TO SAFEGUARD PUBLIC INTERESTS AND TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO SEEK REDRESS,+ SHE SAID.

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LASTLY, MRS TAM SAID THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION SHOULD BE CONFERRED WITH THE RIGHT TO DECIDE ON THE WAYS TO HANDLE A CASE; HE SHOULD BE GIVEN INVESTIGATORY POWER TO ENABLE HIM TO CALL FOR AND HAVE ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT INFORMATION AND DOCUMENT, SUMMON GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO MAKE STATEMENTS, AND TO ENTER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS FOR INSPECTION.

+AT THE SAME TIME, THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION SHOULD SUBMIT REPORTS TO THE GOVERNOR TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO IMPROVE THE WORK OF THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED, AS WELL AS TO RECOMMEND DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS AGAINST THE OFFICERS CONCERNED.

+HE SHOULD ALSO SUBMIT WORKING REPORTS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FOR SCRUTINY AT REGULAR INTERVALS,+ SHE SAID.

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OMELCO AND OMBUDSMAN TO COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER

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THE HON LAU WONG-FAT TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION AND THE OMELCO COULD BE COMPLEMENTARY TO EACH OTHER IN THE HANDLING OF PUBLIC COMPLAINTS.

SPEAKING DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON THE REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES, MR LAU SAID COMPLAINTS CONCERNING GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION SHOULD BE HANDLED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WHILE THOSE RELATING TO POLICIES SHOULD BE TAKEN UP BY THE OMELCO.

+AS SUCH, THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION MAY RELIEVE THE HEAVY WORKLOAD OF OMELCO MEMBERS, THUS ENABLING THEM TO CONCENTRATE ON POLICY-RELATED ISSUES,+ HE SAID.

MR LAU FELT THAT THE JURISDICTION OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION SHOULD BE CLEARLY DEFINED AND THAT HE SHOULD BE GIVEN ADEQUATE POWER TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY.

+HIS DUTY CAN BE CONFINED TO THE INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST MALADMINISTRATION WHICH CAUSES INCONVENIENCE AND INJUSTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

+THESE COMPLAINTS MAY INCLUDE DERELICTION OF DUTY, ABUSE OF POWER, ULTRA VIRUS AND TARDINESS OF THE CIVIL SERVICE,+ HE SAID.

+CASES INVOLVING BREACHES OF CRIMINAL LAWS SHOULD BE HANDLED BY THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT AND THE JUDICIARY,+ HE ADDED.

/MR LAU

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MR LAU STRESSED THAT THE ULTIMATE AIM OF ESTABLISHING A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WAS TO ENHANCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ADMINISTRATION ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT.

ANY ARGUMENT THAT THE EXISTENCE OF THE ICAC REMOVED THE NEED OF A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION COULD NOT HOLD WATER, HE SAID.

MR LAU EMPHASISED THAT ADEQUATE POWER OF INVESTIGATION MUST BE DELEGATED TO THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION, WHO MUST BE GIVEN FULL AUTHORITY TO DECIDE ON THE COURSE OF ACTION TO BE TAKEN WHEN A COMPLAINT WAS RECEIVED.

VESTED WITH SUCH POWER AS CALLING IN THE OFFICERS CONCERNED, OR EVEN HAVING ACCESS TO CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS FOR INSPECTION, THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE ABLE TO INVESTIGATE GRIEVANCES THOROUGHLY, HE NOTED.

MOREOVER, HE SAID THE COMMISSIONER COULD MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE WAYS TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED OR RECTIFY THEIR MISTAKES.

TO ENSURE THAT THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WOULD DISCHARGE HIS DUTIES EFFECTIVELY AND UPHOLD JUSTICE, MR LAU SUGGESTED THAT HE SHOULD SUBMIT WORKING REPORTS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL REGULARLY.

+IT WILL ENABLE THE COUNCIL TO HAVE A FULL PICTURE OF HIS WORK. IF EVER HE PRACTISES FAVOURITISM, THE COUNCIL MAY GIVE FULL PLAY TO ITS MONITORING FUNCTION AND KEEP MALADMINISTRATION UNDER CONTROL BY REFERRING TO HIS REPORTS,+ HE SAID.

MR LAU SAID: +IF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IS TO BE UPHELD AND HONG KONG TO REMAIN STABLE AND CONTINUE TO PROSPER, WE MUST HAVE AN IMPARTIAL AND EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT.+

HE WAS THEREFORE CONFIDENT THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WOULD HELP IN ACHIEVING THIS GOAL.

+IF APPROPRIATE STATUS AND POWER ARE DELEGATED TO THE SUITABLE PERSON, I AM SURE THAT THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION WILL PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE REDRESS SYSTEM OF HONG KONG,+ HE SAID.

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VR REPATRIATION REMAINS LONG-TERM AIM
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THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT'S LONG-TERM AIM IS TO REPATRIATE TO VIETNAM ALL NEW ARRIVALS WHO AFTER SCREENING CANNOT ESTABLISH THAT THEY ARE REFUGES IN TERMS OF THE INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED DEFINITION, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON SELINA CHOW, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT HOWEVER THE GOVERNMENT MUST FIRST BE SATISFIED THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE TREATED INHUMANELY ON THEIR RETURN TO VIETNAM.

REGARDING THE POSITION OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ON THE ISSUE, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT IT WAS AS STATED BY MR RENTON IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON JANUARY 21 WHEN HE SAID:

+WE ARE CONSULTING OTHER MAJOR RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES AND THE UNHCR TO SEE WHAT CAN FURTHER BE DONE AT PRESENT REPATRIATION FROM HONG KONG COULD TAKE PLACE ONLY WHEN WE AND OTHER MAJOR RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES ARE MUCH MORE CONVINCED THAN WE ARE NOW ABOUT, FOR EXAMPLE, HUMAN RIGHTS IN VIETNAM, AND HOW SUCH MIGRANTS WOULD BE TREATED AND LOOKED AFTER IF THEY WENT BACK TO VIETNAM.+

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POLICE COVERAGE ADEQUATE AT CRIME-PRONE AREAS
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THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE WAS SATISFIED THAT THE POLICE COVERAGE WAS AT AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL WHERE RECENT ROBBERY INCIDENTS OCCURRED IN THE LANDMARK IN CENTRAL AND REGENT ARCADE IN KOWLOON, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON WONG PO-YAN, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT IN ALL AREAS WITH A CONCENTRATION OF HIGH SERIOUS CRIME RISK PREMISES, POLICEMEN PATROLLING IN UNIFORM WERE SUPPORTED BY OFFICERS IN PLAIN CLOTHES AND BY SPECIAL HIGH-RISK AREA PATROLS.

HE ADDED THAT FREQUENT VISITS WERE ALSO MADE BY MOBILE UNITS IN HIGH-RISK AREAS.

+TO STRENGTHEN SECURITY IN HIGH-RISK PREMISES, THE POLICE CRIME PREVENTION BUREAU IS ALWAYS READY TO GIVE OWNERS AND OCCUPIERS ADVICE ON HOW IT MIGHT BE IMPROVED. CRIME PREVENTION OFFICERS VISIT THE PREMISES AND ADVISE ON IMPROVEMENTS, AND THEY VISIT THE PREMISES AGAIN LATER TO SEE WHETHER OR NOT THEIR ADVICE IS BEING FOLLOWED,+ HE SAID.

/MR JEAFFRESON

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MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT A WORKING GROUP ON SECURITY OF GOLDSMITH AND JEWELLERY SHOPS HAD BEEN SET UP UNDER THE FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE HOW SECURITY IN HIGH-RISK PREMISES COULD BE IMPROVED.

THE WORKING GROUP, ASSISTED BY THE POLICE CRIME PREVENTION BUREAU, MET REPRESENTATIVES OF TRADE ASSOCIATIONS TO ADVISE ON UP-TO-DATE AND EFFECTIVE SECURITY MEASURES, HE ADDED.

MOREOVER, IT HAD HELD SEMINARS, PUBLISHED ADVISORY BOOKLETS AND VISITED JEWELLERS AND GOLDSMITHS TO GIVE ON-THE-SPOT ADVICE, MR JEAFFRESON SAID.

+THESE EFFORTS SEEM TO BE HAVING SOME EFFECT. SECURITY MEASURES INSTALLED ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE CRIME PREVENTION BUREAU FOILED FIVE ROBBERIES IN 1985 AND FOUR IN THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF 1986. ROBBERIES IN JEWELLERY SHOPS AND SIMILAR PREMISES DECLINED FROM 92 IN 1983 TO 54 IN 1986. UP TO THE END OF MARCH THIS YEAR THERE HAVE BEEN 11,+ HE NOTED.

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OLD AGE ALLOWANCE POLICY EXPLAINED

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THE ELDERLY PERSON OR HIS RELATIVES SHOULD APPROACH THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT FOR OLD AGE ALLOWANCE SHOULD A RECIPIENT'S ABSENCE FROM HONG KONG WAS PROLONGED BEYOND 90 DAYS FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON HILTON CHEONG-LEEN.

MR CHAMBERS SAID THE DEPARTMENT WOULD CONSIDER EACH CASE SYMPATHETICALLY, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

+IN APPROPRIATE CASES THE DEPARTMENT HAS DISCRETION TO CONTINUE PAYMENT OF OLD AGE ALLOWANCE AFTER AN ABSENCE OF MORE THAN 90 DAYS,+ MR CHAMBERS SAID.

HE EXPLAINED OLD AGE ALLOWANCE WAS A NON-MEANS-TESTED PAYMENT INTENDED TO ENCOURAGE LOCAL RESIDENTS TO CARE FOR ELDERLY MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILIES, AND TO MEET THE EXTRA EXPENSES ARISING FROM OLD AGE.

+IT IS PAID FROM GENERAL REVENUE AND IS NOT A CONTRIBUTORY PENSION,+ HE ADDED.

HE SAID RESIDENCE IN HONG KONG WAS A NECESSARY QUALIFICATION FOR RECEIVING THE ALLOWANCE, BUT AN ABSENCE OF 90 DAYS WAS ALLOWED TO PERMIT RECIPIENTS TO VISIT RELATIVES AND TO GO ON HOLIDAY TRIPS OUTSIDE HONG KONG.

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HOUSING STRATEGY TO BE WIDELY PUBLICISED
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THE LONG-TERM HOUSING STRATEGY WHICH WAS OUTLINED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID FORD, WOULD BE WIDELY PUBLICISED, THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO, SAID TODAY.

+VIEWS OF THE PUBLIC AND INTERESTED BODIES WILL BE WELCOMED AND TAKEN INTO CAREFUL CONSIDERATION IN WORKING OUT THE INITIAL PROGRAMMES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY,+ MR LIAO SAID.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON HUI YIN-FAT ON THE CRITERIA IN DETERMINING THE NEED FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON A POLICY PAPER, MR LIAO SAID THERE WERE SEVERAL FACTORS INVOLVED IN SUCH A DECISION.

+IN DETERMINING WHETHER PUBLIC CONSULTATION SHOULD BE CONDUCTED PRIOR TO THE PUBLICATION OF A POLICY PAPER, THE RELEVANT POLICY SECRETARY WILL USUALLY TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE NATURE OF THE SUBJECT, THE DEGREE OF PUBLIC INTEREST IN IT, THE AVAILABILITY OF OPTIONS FOR THE CONSULTATION AND WHETHER THE PROPOSALS WOULD INVOLVE ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO EXISTING POLICIES,+ MR LIAO SAID.

+THE LONG-TERM HOUSING STRATEGY WHICH THE CHIEF SECRETARY HAS JUST OUTLINED DOES NOT REPRESENT A CHANGE IN HOUSING POLICY, BUT PROPOSES CERTAIN IMPROVEMENTS TO ACHIEVE THE POLICY OBJECTIVES.

+ITS IMPLEMENTATION WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THOSE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR PUBLIC HOUSING UNDER PRESENT POLICIES,+ HE SAID.

+IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED NOT TO PUBLISH A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT,+ MR LIAO ADDED.

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ADEQUATE HOSPITAL BEDS ON HK ISLAND ASSURED
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THE PROVISION OF HOSPITAL BEDS WAS PLANNED ON A REGIONAL RATHER THAN A DISTRICT BASIS, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LIU LIT-FOR, HE SAID THE PROPOSAL RECENTLY ENDORSED BY THE MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO REMOVE THE NETHERSOLE HOSPITAL FROM HONG KONG ISLAND TO TAI PO WAS MADE AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR HOSPITAL BEDS ON HONG KONG ISLAND AND IN THE EASTERN NEW TERRITORIES.

/MR CHAMBERS

MR CHAMBERS SAID THAT WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE EXPANSION PROJECTS AT THE QUEEN MARY HOSPITAL AND THE RUTTONJEE SANATORIUM, AND THE NEW EASTERN DISTRICT HOSPITAL, HONG KONG ISLAND WOULD HAVE 5 400 BEDS BY 1991, WHILE THE PROJECTED REQUIREMENT WAS ESTIMATED TO BE 4 460 BEDS.

HOWEVER, IN THE EASTERN NEW TERRITORIES, THE REQUIREMENT IN 1991 WAS ESTIMATED AT 3 300 BEDS AND THE PROVISION BY THAT YEAR WOULD ONLY AMOUNT TO 1 840 BEDS, HE ADDED.

+THE PRESENT NETHERSOLE HOSPITAL IS IN A SOMEWHAT DILAPIDATED CONDITION AND THE NATURE OF THE SITE MAKES REDEVELOPMENT THERE IMPRACTICABLE,+ HE SAID.

MR CHAMBERS ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE WESTERN DISTRICT WOULD BE MUCH BETTER OFF IN TERMS OF HOSPITAL BEDS BECAUSE OF THE QUEEN MARY HOSPITAL EXTENSION WHICH WOULD PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL 700 BEDS BY 1988.

DESPITE THE LOSS OF 385 BEDS AT THE NETHERSOLE HOSPITAL IN THE YEAR 1992/1993, THIS STILL MEANT A NET GAIN OF ABOUT 315 BEDS IN THE WESTERN DISTRICT, HE SAID, ADDING THAT THE PROVISION OF 614 NEW BEDS AT THE RUTTONJEE SANATHORIUM BY 1990 AND 1 580 IN THE EASTERN DISTRICT HOSPITAL BY 1991 WOULD FURTHER EASE THE PRESSURE ON THE QUEEN MARY HOSPITAL.

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UTILISATION RATE OF EEC QUOTAS EXPLAINED
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THE UTILISATION RATE OF QUOTAS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER THE TEXTILES AGREEMENT WITH THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (EEC) IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE SOMEWHAT IN 1987-88, THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, THE HON HAMISH MACLEOD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON NGAI SHIU-KIT ON THE REASONS WHY THE UTILISATION RATE OF EEC QUOTAS IN 1986-87 WAS MARKEDLY LOWER THAN THOSE OF OTHER TRADING PARTNERS, SUCH AS THE UNITED STATES, CANADA, SWEDEN AND NORWAY, MR MACLEOD SAID THE MAIN DETERMINANT OF UTILISATION OF TEXTILE QUOTAS WAS CLEARLY DEMAND FOR THE PRODUCTS UNDER RESTRAINT AND HENCE UTILISATION VARIED FROM YEAR TO YEAR.

MR MACLEOD SAID IT WAS TRUE THAT UTILISATION OF QUOTA FOR THE EEC TENDED TO BE LOWER THAN FOR OTHER MARKETS, AND AN IMPORTANT REASON FOR THIS WAS THAT IT WAS A RELATIVELY INFLEXIBLE AGREEMENT, WITH QUOTAS DIVIDED UP AMONG THE 12 MEMBER STATES AS WELL AS AMONG SOME 35 DIFFERENT PRODUCTS.

/+THUS WHILST

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+THUS WHILST QUOTAS FOR SOME PRODUCTS IN SOME MEMBER STATES ARE FULLY UTILISED, IN OTHERS THE DEMAND SIMPLY ISN'T THERE, BRINGING THE AVERAGE UTILISATION DOWN.+

ASKED WHAT PLANS THE GOVERNMENT HAD TO PROMOTE A HIGHER UTILISATION RATE OF EEC QUOTAS IN 1987-88, MR MACLEOD SAID UTILISATION OF EEC QUOTAS WAS EXPECTED TO INCREASE SOMEWHAT IN 1987-88, PARTLY BECAUSE RECENT TRENDS IN EXCHANGE RATES WERE TENDING TO MAKE OUR EXPORTS MORE COMPETITIVE IN THE EEC, AND PARTLY BECAUSE THE NEW HONG KONG - EEC TEXTILES AGREEMENT, WHICH TOOK EFFECT THIS YEAR, FOR THE FIRST TIME ALLOWED SOME MODEST TRANSFER OF QUOTA BETWEEN MEMBER STATES.

+WE PLAN TO CONTINUE TO ENSURE THAT SUCH FLEXIBILITY AS IS AVAILABLE UNDER THE AGREEMENT IS USED TO THE FULL EXTENT THAT DEMAND PERMITS, INCLUDING THIS NEW PROVISION FOR TRANSFER BETWEEN STATES,+ HE SAID.

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PERMITS ISSUED TO 1 202 WIVES AND CHILDREN
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BETWEEN AUGUST 1, 1986 AND MARCH 31, 1987 THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT ISSUED ENTRY PERMITS TO 1 202 WIVES AND CHILDREN FROM MACAU TO ALLOW THEM TO SETTLE IN HONG KONG WITH THEIR RESIDENT HUSBANDS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HELMUT SOHMEN, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT PERMITS WERE ALSO ISSUED TO 4 580 VISITORS TO VISIT HONG KONG.

HE SAID THAT WIVES FROM CHINA WHO HAD LIVED IN MACAU FOR SEVEN YEARS AFTER JANUARY 14, 1979 AND THEIR CHILDREN WERE ALLOWED TO SETTLE IN HONG KONG WITH THEIR HONG KONG RESIDENT HUSBANDS.

+FORMER RESIDENTS OF CHINA WHO HAVE ALSO LIVED IN MACAU FOR SEVEN YEARS SINCE JANUARY 14, 1979 ARE NOW ALLOWED TO VISIT HONG KONG,+ HE ADDED.

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THREE HEAT STROKE FATALITY CASES REPORTED

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THREE PERSONS DIED OF HEAT STROKE OUT OF THE 20 WHO SUFFERED FROM DISEASES ARISING FROM THE EFFECTS OF HEAT BETWEEN 1982 AND 1986, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP, MR CHAMBERS QUOTED STATISTICS FROM THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT, ADDING THAT THE EARLY SYMPTOMS OF HEAT STROKE INCLUDED HEADACHE, VERTIGO, FAINTNESS, ABDOMINAL DISTRESS, CONFUSION AND RAPID BREATHING.

HOWEVER, HE SAID THERE MIGHT BE NO PREMONITORY SYMPTOMS AND THE FIRST INDICATION IN SOME CASES MIGHT BE LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

+TREATMENT OF HEAT STROKE IS BY PROMPT AND RAPID COOLING, EITHER BY IMMERSION IN COLD WATER, OR BY EVAPORATION COOLING, THAT IS THE REPEATED WETTING OF SKIN WHILE IT IS FANNED STRONGLY,+ HE ADDED.

MR CHAMBERS SAID HEAT STROKE COULD BE PREVENTED BY AVOIDING PROLONGED STRENUOUS PHYSICAL EXERTION IN CONDITIONS OF HIGH TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY.

IF SUCH EXERTION COULD NOT BE AVOIDED, GRADUAL PHYSICAL ADJUSTMENT TO HIGH TEMPORARY CONDITIONS WAS ADVISED.

+IN ADDITION, ADEQUATE FLUIDS SHOULD BE TAKEN BEFORE AND DURING EXERTION, AND THE BODY SHOULD BE ADEQUATELY EXPOSED TO PERMIT SWEATING,+ MR CHAMBERS SAID.

+ALCOHOL AND DRUGS WHICH DECREASE SWEATING OR AFFECT THERMO-REGULATION SHOULD BE AVOIDED,+ HE ADDED.

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PUBLIC DUMPING SITES DEPEND ON AVAILABILITY

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THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT BIND ITSELF TO PROVIDING DUMPING SITES WHICH ARE CONVENIENT FOR ALL BECAUSE THE DEMAND IS NOT CONSTANT AND RECLAMATION CANNOT BE SET UP EVERYWHERE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON MARIA TAM AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

/MR BARNES

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MR BARNES SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT HAD NEVER FORMALISED ITS POLICY ON PUBLIC DUMPING, IT TRIED TO HAVE DUMPING CAPACITY AVAILABLE IN DIFFERENT PLACES.

+FIRSTLY BECAUSE IT IS AN ECONOMIC WAY TO DO THE RECLAMATIONS WE WANT TO DO AND HAVE COMPLETED LEGAL FORMALITIES FOR= SECONDLY BECAUSE IT REDUCES INDISCRIMINATE ILLEGAL DUMPING= AND THIRDLY BECAUSE IT HELPS THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FOR BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR PROJECTS,+ HE SAID.

HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO PROVIDE PUBLIC DUMPING IN DIFFERENT AREAS DEPENDED ON THERE BEING A GOING RECLAMATION OR PROJECT WHICH NEEDED FILL IN THE AREA.

HE SAID AT PRESENT THERE WAS INTERMITTENT RECLAMATION AT TELEGRAPH BAY AND THERE WERE PUBLIC DUMPS OPEN AT MA ON SHAN AND TUEN MUN. AND LATER IN THE YEAR, THE HUNG HOM BAY WOULD BE REOPENED FOR DUMPING FOR A SHORT PERIOD.

MR BARNES CONCEDED THAT THIS WAS NOT AN IDEAL SITUATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY BUT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TRY TO IMPROVE IT BY THE NEXT DRY SEASON.

+BUT CONTRACTORS WILL ALWAYS HAVE TO ACCEPT THAT SOMETIMES THEY HAVE TO DUMP ON SITES ACROSS THE HARBOUR OR FURTHER AFIELD.+

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SOME ERP EQUIPMENT PUT TO 'GOOD USE'
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MOST OF THE MANPOWER FOR THE ERP PILOT SCHEME WAS PROVIDED BY THE CONSULTANTS AND ONE TRAFFIC ENGINEER SECONDED TO THE STUDY TEAM HAD RETURNED TO THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON LEE YU-TAI IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE EXPLAINED THAT THE EQUIPMENT ACQUIRED FOR THE SCHEME FELL INTO TWO BROAD CATEGORIES.

HE SAID THE FIRST CATEGORY COVERED HARDWARE FOR DATA CAPTURE THAT WAS DESIGNED FOR THE STUDY AND COULD ONLY BE OF USE FOR AN ERP RELATED APPLICATION.

+PRESENT INTENTIONS ARE THAT THIS EQUIPMENT SHOULD BE KEPT FOR A FURTHER FEW YEARS UNTIL IT IS CLEAR THAT THE TECHNOLOGY HAS BEEN SUPERSEDED,+ HE SAID.

/THE OTHER

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THE OTHER CATEGORY, HE SAID, INCLUDED SMALLER ITEMS WHICH WERE MAINLY CONSUMABLES OF MORE GENERAL USE.

HE ADDED THAT ROADSIDE CABINETS WOULD BE REMOVED AND USED BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT TO HOUSE AUTOMATIC TRAFFIC COUNTERS.

+OTHER ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT INCLUDING VIDEO RECORDERS, SLIDE PROJECTORS AND MICRO COMPUTERS WILL ALSO BE PUT INTO GOOD USE BY THE DEPARTMENT,+

+ITEMS FOR WHICH THE DEPARTMENT HAS NO RELEVANT USE WILL BE RETURNED TO THE GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT EITHER FOR REALLOCATION OR FOR DISPOSAL,+ HE ADDED.

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ONE BILL PASSED
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THE IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 WAS PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

TWO OTHER BILLS - IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1987 AND REGISTRATION OF PERSONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 - WERE READ A SECOND TIME AND DEBATE ON THEM WAS ADJOURNED.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED TO MAY 6.

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LIVE TV, RADIO COVERAGE OF GOVERNOR'S ARRIVAL
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THE ARRIVAL OF THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, TOMORROW (THURSDAY) WILL BE BROADCAST LIVE ON ALL FOUR TV CHANNELS AND ON RADIO HONG KONG AND COMMERCIAL RADIO.

SIR DAVID, ACCOMPANIED BY LADY WILSON AND THEIR SON ANDREW, WILL ARRIVE AT KAI TAK AIRPORT BY FLIGHT CX 710, SCHEDULED TO LAND AT 2.40 PM. THEY WILL BE RECEIVED BY THE ACTING GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID AKERS-JONES, AND LADY AKERS-JONES. SIR DAVID WILL TAKE A SHORT REST AND CHANGE INTO UNIFORM BEFORE LEAVING BY CAR FOR THE TSIM SHA TSUI EAST PROMENADE TO BOARD THE LADY MAURINE.

LIVE TV COVERAGE, PROVIDED BY RTHK, WILL BE TRANSMITTED FROM ABOUT 3.20 PM, FROM THE ARRIVAL OF THE OFFICIAL PARTY AT THE PROMENADE, TO THE END OF THE SWEARING-IN CEREMONY IN THE CITY HALL CONCERT HALL AT ABOUT 4.45 PM.

DURING THE HARBOUR CROSSING TO QUEEN'S PIER, THERE WILL BE A FLYPAST AND AN ESCORT OF VESSELS OF THE VARIOUS SERVICES. A 17-GUN SALUTE WILL BE FIRED FROM HMS TAMAR.

ON DISEMBARKING AT QUEEN'S PIER, THE ACTING GOVERNOR WILL PRESENT THE CHIEF JUSTICE, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE COMMANDER BRITISH FORCES, THE BISHOPS OF HONG KONG, THE SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS, THE DIRECTOR OF XINHUA NEWS AGENCY AND THE DOYEN OF THE CONSULAR CORPS.

SIR DAVID WILL THEN INSPECT A GUARD OF HONOUR FORMED BY THE 1ST BATTALION 2ND KING EDWARD VII'S OWN GURKHA RIFLES. MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS AND THEIR SPOUSES WILL BE INTRODUCED TO SIR DAVID BEFORE HIS ENTRY TO THE CITY HALL.

DURING THE 40-MINUTE CEREMONY IN THE CONCERT HALL AND IN THE PRESENCE OF OVER 1 000 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMMUNITY, SIR DAVID WILL BE SWORN IN AS HONG KONG'S 27TH GOVERNOR.

THERE WILL BE A COMMUNITY RECEPTION FOR SIR DAVID AT THE CITY HALL RESTAURANT AFTERWARDS. SIR DAVID WILL DOT THE EYES OF A LION AND WATCH A LION DANCE PERFORMANCE OUTSIDE THE CITY HALL BEFORE LEAVING FOR GOVERNMENT HOUSE WHERE HE WILL BE WELCOMED ON ARRIVAL BY A GUARD OF HONOUR FORMED BY THE ROYAL HK REGIMENT (THE VOLUNTEERS).

NOTE TO EDITORS:

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE REMINDED THAT ONLY HOLDERS OF LAPEL BADGES ISSUED BY GIS MARKED SPECIFICALLY FOR THE VARIOUS PRESS POSITIONS WILL BE ALLOWED INSIDE THESE POSITIONS.

THEY SHOULD ARRIVE AT THE ASSEMBLY PLACES NOT LATER THAN THE TIMES ANNOUNCED. FOR EASE OF REFERENCE, THE ASSEMBLY PLACES AND LATEST ARRIVAL TIMES FOR THE PRESS POSITIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- (1) KAI TAK AIRPORT (PRESS ROOM ON GROUND FLOOR OF TERMINAL BUILDING, 1.30 PM)

/(2) TSIM SHA

- (2) TSIM SHA TSUI EAST PROMENADE (PRESS POSITION BY SIDE OF PONTOON, 2.45 PM). THOSE PROCEEDING TO THIS PRESS POSITION SHOULD USE THE FOOTBRIDGE BETWEEN TSIM SHA TSUI CENTRE AND SHANGRI-LA HOTEL.
- (3) PRESS BOAT (HMS TAMAR MAIN GATE, 2.15 PM)
- (4) QUEEN'S PIER/EDINBURGH PLACE +A+ AND +B+ (GROUND FLOOR LOBBY OF CITY HALL HIGH BLOCK, 2.30 PM). THOSE WHO WISH TO COVER THE LION DANCE MAY STAY ON OR REASSEMBLE IN THE LIFT LOBBY AT 4.45 PM.
- (5) CITY HALL FOYER (GROUND FLOOR LOBBY OF CITY HALL HIGH BLOCK, 2.45 PM)
- (6) CITY HALL CONCERT HALL (GROUND FLOOR LOBBY OF CITY HALL HIGH BLOCK, 3 PM)
- (7) CITY HALL RESTAURANT (GROUND FLOOR LOBBY OF CITY HALL HIGH BLOCK, 4 PM)

A PRESS KIT CONTAINING BACKGROUND NOTES ON THE EVENTS AT THE ARRIVAL OF SIR DAVID WILSON WILL BE BOXED AT GIS FOR COLLECTION THIS EVENING. IN THE EVENT OF EXTREMELY BAD WEATHER WHICH REQUIRES A CHANGE IN THE PROGRAMME TOMORROW, DETAILS AND MEDIA ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE ANNOUNCED NOT LATER THAN 1 PM.

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PUBLIC ORDER (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE GUIDELINES TO BE ISSUED

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WOULD ISSUE SOME GUIDELINES TO SHOW THE PUBLIC HOW THE PUBLIC ORDER (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED, THE ACTING GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID AKERS-JONES, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

+I HOPE THAT WILL SET PEOPLE'S MINDS AT REST,+ HE ADDED.

THE PUBLIC ORDER BILL HAD BEEN DEBATED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL QUITE THOROUGHLY, SIR DAVID SAID, WHICH WAS THE LONGEST SESSION EVER TO TAKE PLACE IN THE COUNCIL.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER PLANTING A TREE AT THE SHA TIN TOWN HALL, SIR DAVID ALSO SAID HE HOPED TO BE ABLE TO BRING THE NEW GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, UP TO DATE WITH CURRENT EVENTS IN THE FIRST FEW DAYS AFTER HIS ARRIVAL.

+IT WILL BE UP TO HIM REALLY HOW MUCH AND IN WHAT WAY HE WISHES ME TO GIVE HELP AND ADVICE OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS,+ HE ADDED.

/+I SHOULD

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+I SHOULD MAKE MYSELF AS USEFUL AS POSSIBLE TO THE NEW GOVERNOR AND THE ADMINISTRATION.+

SIR DAVID SAID HE THOUGHT THE NEW GOVERNOR WOULD HAVE A BUSY SCHEDULE, ADDING THAT HONG KONG WAS NOW AN EXTREMELY BUSY PLACE WITH SOME VERY IMPORTANT QUESTIONS FACING IT.

ASKED ABOUT HIS FEELINGS ON THE LAST DAY AS ACTING GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID SAID IT WAS VERY PLEASANT TO BE ABLE TO PLANT A TREE ON THIS DAY.

+IT NOT ONLY MARKS AN END BUT IT MARKS A BEGINNING, AND TO PLANT A TREE AND TO KNOW THAT THAT TREE WILL GO ON GROWING FOR THE NEXT 30 OR 40 OR 50 YEARS IS REALLY A VERY GREAT PLEASURE TO ME BECAUSE I PARTICULARLY LIKE PLANTING TREES,+ HE SAID.

+AND ALSO IT HAS EXTRA SIGNIFICANCE IN THAT I'M 60 THIS YEAR. I'M RETIRING THIS YEAR, AND IT'S IN SHA TIN WHICH I'VE TAKEN SO MUCH PLEASURE IN WATCHING IT GROW OVER THESE LAST FEW YEARS.

+SO I FEEL THAT THE TREE IN SHA TIN IS ALL PART OF ME AND PART OF LIFE.+

ASKED WHY HE CHOSE TO LIVE IN HONG KONG AFTER RETIREMENT, SIR DAVID SAID HE HAD LIVED HERE FOR 30 YEARS AND HIS ROOTS WERE IN HONG KONG.

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SHARES ISSUING ABILITY TO BE CONSIDERED
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FOLLOWING THE JOINT STATEMENT ISSUED EARLIER TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STOCK EXCHANGE, DR RONALD LI, AND THE COMMISSIONER FOR SECURITIES, MR RAY ASTIN, THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS, MR DAVID NENDICK, ANNOUNCED THAT, AT THE REQUEST OF THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, MR PIERS JACOBS, HE HAS ASKED THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMPANY LAW REFORM TO CONSIDER AS A MATTER OF URGENCY WHETHER OR NOT THE PRESENT ABILITY OF COMPANIES TO ISSUE SHARES WITH VOTING RIGHTS DISPROPORTIONATE TO THEIR NOMINAL VALUE IS IN THE INTERESTS OF THE GENERALITY OF SHAREHOLDERS, AND IF NOT, TO IDENTIFY WHETHER ANY CHANGES TO THE PRESENT LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK ARE DESIRABLE.

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CIVIL SERVICE PAY ADJUSTMENT 1987
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THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR HARNAM GREWAL, AND HIS STAFF MET THE STAFF SIDES OF THE SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE COUNCIL AND THE MODEL SCALE 1 STAFF CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR PAY CLAIMS FOR 1987. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CIVIL SERVICE BRANCH ALSO MET THE POLICE FORCE COUNCIL.

+THE RESULTS OF THE STANDING COMMISSION'S 1986-87 PRIVATE SECTOR PAY TREND SURVEY, THE PAY CLAIMS SUBMITTED BY THE STAFF SIDES OF THE THREE CENTRAL CONSULTATIVE COUNCILS AND THE RESULTS OF THE PAY LEVEL SURVEY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE CONDUCTED IN 1986-87 WERE CONSIDERED BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL THIS MORNING,+ SAID MR GREWAL.

+WE WERE AUTHORISED TO MAKE AN OFFER OF A PAY AWARD TO THE STAFF SIDES WITH EFFECT FROM APRIL 1, 1987 BASED APPROXIMATELY ON THE 1986-87 PRIVATE SECTOR PAY TREND INDICATORS, THAT IS, AN INCREASE OF 6.3 PER CENT FOR THE UPPER BAND, 6.4 PER CENT FOR THE MIDDLE BAND AND 7.13 PER CENT FOR THE LOWER BAND.+

THE OFFER WAS MADE SUBJECT TO THE PROVISION OF FUNDS BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

IN MAKING THE PAY OFFER MR GREWAL ALSO INDICATED THAT +WHILE THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL NOTED THE RESERVATIONS EXPRESSED BY THE STAFF SIDES REGARDING THE CONDUCT OF THE PAY LEVEL SURVEY AND ITS RESULTS, THE GOVERNMENT ACCEPTS IN PRINCIPLE THE GENERAL RESULTS OF THE PAY LEVEL SURVEY WHICH HAS BEEN CONDUCTED INDEPENDENTLY AND IN AN UNBIASED MANNER, AND WILL NOW CONSIDER HOW THEY SHOULD BE REFLECTED IN CIVIL SERVANTS' TOTAL PAY PACKAGE IN FUTURE. THE THREE COUNCILS WILL BE CONSULTED IN DUE COURSE ON THE DETAILS OF ADJUSTMENTS TO BE MADE+.

THE OFFER HAS BEEN FORMALLY ACCEPTED IN PRINCIPLE BY THE STAFF SIDES OF THE THREE COUNCILS. THEY HAVE, HOWEVER, RESERVED THEIR POSITION REGARDING THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION ON THE PAY LEVEL SURVEY. THE POLICE FORCE COUNCIL HAS ADDITIONALLY EXPRESSED RESERVATION ON THE VALIDITY OF THE PAY LEVEL SURVEY TO THE POLICE FORCE.

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JANUARY PRICE, VOLUME MOVEMENTS OF EXTERNAL TRADE
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STATISTICS RELEASED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT INDICATED THAT THE VOLUME OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS AND RE-EXPORTS GREW BY 30 PER CENT AND 37 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY IN JANUARY 1987 AS COMPARED WITH THE SAME MONTH IN 1986. HENCE, THERE WAS AN OVERALL INCREASE OF 33 PER CENT IN THE VOLUME OF TOTAL EXPORTS. IMPORTS INCREASED BY 21 PER CENT IN VOLUME TERMS.

WHILE THIS STRONG GROWTH IN THE TRADE AGGREGATES WAS A CONTINUATION OF THE TREND OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS, IT WAS PROBABLY AFFECTED BY THE TIMING OF THE CHINESE NEW YEAR, AND BY THE FACT THAT THE BASE OF COMPARISON IN JANUARY 1986 WAS RELATIVELY LOW.

ON THE SAME BASIS OF COMPARISON, THE PRICES OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS AND RE-EXPORTS ROSE BY 3 PER CENT AND 2 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY, SO THAT FOR TOTAL EXPORTS, PRICES ALSO ROSE BY 3 PER CENT. PRICES OF IMPORTS, ON THE OTHER HAND, ROSE BY 4 PER CENT. AS A RESULT, THE TERMS OF TRADE INDEX (EXPRESSED AS A RATIO OF THE TOTAL EXPORT PRICE INDEX TO THE IMPORT PRICE INDEX) DROPPED BY 1 PER CENT.

PRICES ARE BASED ON UNIT VALUES WHICH DO NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT CHANGES IN THE COMPOSITION OR QUALITY OF GOODS TRADED, EXCEPT FOR SOME SELECTED COMMODITIES FOR WHICH SPECIFICATION PRICE INDEXES ARE COMPILED. THE VOLUME OF TRADE IS DERIVED FROM TRADE VALUES BY DISCOUNTING THE EFFECT OF PRICE CHANGES.

AS TRADE FIGURES FOR THE BEGINNING MONTH OF A YEAR TEND TO BE AFFECTED BY SEASONAL FACTORS, IT IS ALSO USEFUL TO CONSIDER FIGURES FOR THE LATEST THREE MONTHS TOGETHER. COMPARING THE THREE MONTHS ENDING JANUARY 1987 WITH THE THREE MONTHS ENDING JANUARY 1986, THE VOLUME OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS INCREASED BY 23 PER CENT, WHILE THAT OF RE-EXPORTS INCREASED BY 34 PER CENT, SO THAT FOR TOTAL EXPORTS, A GROWTH OF 28 PER CENT WAS RECORDED IN VOLUME TERMS.

THE VOLUME OF IMPORTS ALSO ROSE BY 20 PER CENT. ON THE SAME BASIS OF COMPARISON, PRICES OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS AND RE-EXPORTS ROSE BY 5 PER CENT AND 3 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY. IMPORT PRICES INCREASED BY 5 PER CENT.

EXTENDING THE PERIOD OF COMPARISON TO THE 12 MONTHS ENDING JANUARY 1987 WITH THE 12 MONTHS ENDING JANUARY 1986, THE VOLUME OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS INCREASED BY 19 PER CENT WHILE THAT OF RE-EXPORTS INCREASED BY 18 PER CENT, GIVING AN INCREASE OF 18 PER CENT IN THE VOLUME OF TOTAL EXPORTS. THE VOLUME OF IMPORTS ROSE BY 16 PER CENT. OVER THE SAME PERIOD, PRICES OF RE-EXPORTS AND DOMESTIC EXPORTS BOTH INCREASED BY 2 PER CENT, WHILE THOSE OF IMPORTS ROSE BY 5 PER CENT.

/THE CHANGES

THE CHANGES IN THE VALUE, UNIT VALUE AND VOLUME OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS BY COMMODITY GROUP FOR JANUARY 1987 AS COMPARED WITH JANUARY 1986 ARE SHOWN IN TABLE 1.

AS CAN BE SEEN FROM TABLE 1, DOMESTIC EXPORT PRICES OF MANY COMMODITY GROUPS INCREASED IN JANUARY 1987 COMPARED WITH JANUARY 1986. THESE INCLUDED TEXTILE MADE-UPS AND RELATED ARTICLES (+8 PER CENT); CLOTHING (+7 PER CENT); WATCHES AND CLOCKS (+5 PER CENT); TRAVEL GOODS, HANDBAGS AND SIMILAR ARTICLES (+4 PER CENT); TEXTILE YARN AND THREAD (+4 PER CENT); TEXTILE FABRICS (+3 PER CENT); METAL MANUFACTURES (+2 PER CENT) AS WELL AS FOOTWEAR (+1 PER CENT).

DECREASES IN DOMESTIC EXPORT PRICES WERE, HOWEVER, RECORDED IN ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS (-7 PER CENT); RADIOS OF ALL KINDS (-6 PER CENT); METAL ORES AND SCRAP (-2 PER CENT) AS WELL AS DOMESTIC ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES (-1 PER CENT).

THE DOMESTIC EXPORT VOLUME OF MOST COMMODITY GROUPS INCREASED IN JANUARY 1987 COMPARED WITH JANUARY 1986, INCLUDING TEXTILE FABRICS (+70 PER CENT); RADIOS OF ALL KINDS (+66 PER CENT); METAL MANUFACTURES (+27 PER CENT); DOMESTIC ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES (+23 PER CENT); CLOTHING (+21 PER CENT); WATCHES AND CLOCKS (+21 PER CENT); TEXTILE YARN AND THREAD (+18 PER CENT); FOOTWEAR (+16 PER CENT); ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS (+8 PER CENT); TRAVEL GOODS, HANDBAGS AND SIMILAR ARTICLES (+6 PER CENT) AS WELL AS TEXTILE MADE-UPS AND RELATED ARTICLES (+4 PER CENT). HOWEVER, A DECREASE IN DOMESTIC EXPORT VOLUME WAS RECORDED IN METAL ORES AND SCRAP (-12 PER CENT).

THE CHANGES IN THE VALUE, UNIT VALUE AND VOLUME OF IMPORTS BY END-USE CATEGORY FOR JANUARY 1987 AS COMPARED WITH JANUARY 1986 ARE SHOWN IN TABLE 2.

AS PRESENTED IN TABLE 2, IMPORT PRICES OF MOST END-USE CATEGORIES INCREASED IN JANUARY 1987 AS COMPARED WITH JANUARY 1986, RANGING FROM 1 PER CENT FOR FOODSTUFFS TO 10 PER CENT FOR CAPITAL GOODS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE IMPORT PRICES OF FUELS DROPPED BY 34 PER CENT.

SOME OF THE MAJOR IMPORTED FOODSTUFFS INCREASED IN VOLUME TERMS IN JANUARY 1987 COMPARED WITH JANUARY 1986. SIGNIFICANT GROWTH WAS RECORDED IN FISH AND FISH PREPARATIONS; MILK, BUTTER, CHEESE AND EGGS AS WELL AS WHEAT AND FLOUR. HOWEVER, NOTABLE DECREASES IN IMPORT VOLUME WERE REGISTERED FOR CEREALS AND CEREAL PREPARATIONS OTHER THAN RICE, WHEAT AND FLOUR; TEA AND COFFEE; SUGAR AS WELL AS ANIMALS OF THE BOVINE SPECIES.

OVER THE SAME PERIOD, THE IMPORT VOLUME OF MANY CONSUMER GOODS INCREASED, THE MORE SUBSTANTIAL ONES BEING CAMERAS, FLASHLIGHT APPARATUS AND SUPPLIES FOR PHOTOGRAPHY; RADIOS, TELEVISION SETS, GRAMOPHONES, RECORDS, TAPE RECORDERS AND AMPLIFIERS; FOOTWEAR; CLOTHING; ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AS WELL AS HOUSEHOLD TYPE ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES. HOWEVER, DECREASES IN IMPORT VOLUME WERE REGISTERED FOR MISCELLANEOUS MADE-UP ARTICLES OF TEXTILE MATERIALS; PASSENGER MOTOR CARS AS WELL AS WATCHES.

THE IMPORT VOLUME OF MOST RAW MATERIALS AND SEMI-MANUFACTURES ROSE IN JANUARY 1987 COMPARED WITH JANUARY 1986, INCLUDING WOOL AND OTHER ANIMAL HAIR; THERMIONIC CATHODE VALVES AND TUBES, DIODES, TRANSISTORS AND ELECTRICAL MICROCIRCUITS; PLASTIC MOULDING MATERIALS AS WELL AS WOOD, LUMBER AND CORK. DECREASES IN IMPORT VOLUME WERE NOTED FOR SILK FABRICS; CLAY AND REFRACTORY CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS, BUILDING MATERIALS, ET., EXCEPT GLASS; AS WELL AS FABRICS OF WOOL AND MIXTURES.

IMPORTS OF FUELS INCREASED BY 1 PER CENT IN VOLUME TERMS IN JANUARY 1987 AS COMPARED WITH JANUARY 1986.

IN THE CAPITAL GOODS CATEGORY, THE IMPORT VOLUME OF MOST COMMODITIES INCREASED IN JANUARY 1987 OVER JANUARY 1986, THE SUBSTANTIAL ONES BEING OFFICE MACHINES; INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY OTHER THAN TEXTILE AND ELECTRICAL MACHINERY; AS WELL AS TEXTILE MACHINERY. A DECREASE IN IMPORT VOLUME WAS RECORDED IN CONSTRUCTION MACHINERY.

THE CHANGES IN THE VALUE, UNIT VALUE AND VOLUME OF RE-EXPORTS BY END-USE CATEGORY FOR JANUARY 1987 AS COMPARED WITH JANUARY 1986 ARE SHOWN IN TABLE 3.

AS DEPICTED IN TABLE 3, THE RE-EXPORT VOLUME OF ALL END-USE CATEGORIES INCREASED IN JANUARY 1987 WHEN COMPARED WITH JANUARY 1986, RANGING FROM 8 PER CENT FOR FOODSTUFFS TO 118 PER CENT FOR FUELS.

FURTHER DETAILS ARE CONTAINED IN THE JANUARY 1987 ISSUE OF THE HONG KONG TRADE INDEX NUMBERS+ AVAILABLE FOR SALE AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE ON FRIDAY AT HK\$2.50 PER COPY. ENQUIRIES REGARDING REGULAR SUBSCRIPTION TO THIS REPORT MAY BE DIRECTED TO THE INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT AT BASKERVILLE HOUSE, HONG KONG, ON 5-214375 AND ENQUIRIES ON TRADE INDEXES TO THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT ON 5-8234918.

TABLE 1: INCREASES IN DOMESTIC EXPORTS BY COMMODITY GROUP

COMMODITY GROUP	COMPARING JANUARY 1987 WITH JANUARY 1986		
	VALUE %	UNIT VALUE %	VOLUME %
CLOTHING	30	7	21
TEXTILE FABRICS	75	3	70
TEXTILE YARN AND THREAD	22	4	18
TEXTILE MADE-UPS AND RELATED ARTICLES	13	8	4

RADIOS OF ALL KINDS	56	-6	66
ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS	1	-7	8
FOOTWEAR	16	1	16
METAL MANUFACTURES	30	2	27
METAL ORES AND SCRAP	-14	-2	-12
WATCHES AND CLOCKS	26	5	21
TRAVEL GOODS HANDBAGS AND SIMILAR ARTICLES	10	4	6
DOMESTIC ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES	22	-1	23
ALL COMMODITIES	33	3	30

NOTE: PERCENTAGE CHANGES ARE CALCULATED FROM TRADE INDEXES TAKEN TO MORE DECIMAL PLACES THAN THOSE TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE +HONG KONG TRADE INDEX NUMBERS+. THEY MAY THEREFORE DIFFER FROM THE PERCENTAGE CHANGES TO BE COMPUTED FROM THE PUBLISHED FIGURES.

TABLE 2: INCREASES IN IMPORTS BY END-USE CATEGORY

COMPARING JANUARY 1987
WITH JANUARY 1986

END-USE CATEGORY	VALUE %	UNIT VALUE %	VOLUME %
FOODSTUFFS	6	1	5
CONSUMER GOODS	31	7	22
RAW MATERIALS AND SEMI-MANUFACTURES	29	3	25
FUELS	-34	-34	1
CAPITAL GOODS	31	10	18
ALL COMMODITIES	25	4	21

TABLE 3: INCREASES IN RE-EXPORTS BY END-USE CATEGORY

COMPARING JANUARY 1987
WITH JANUARY 1986

END-USE CATEGORY	VALUE %	UNIT VALUE %	VOLUME %
FOODSTUFFS	7	-1	8
CONSUMER GOODS	64	4	58
RAW MATERIALS AND SEMI-MANUFACTURES	27	1	25
FUELS	49	-32	118
CAPITAL GOODS	30	4	25
ALL COMMODITIES	40	2	37

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MORE DIALOGUE BETWEEN MANAGEMENT, WORKERS ENCOURAGED
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GOOD LABOUR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS WILL LEAD TO HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF WORKERS' LIVES, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, MR TONY HAMMOND, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

+IN THE WIDER CONTEXT, A HARMONIOUS WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND THEIR EMPLOYEES IS ESSENTIAL TO THE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND SOCIAL STABILITY OF HONG KONG,+ HE ADDED.

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING OF A ONE-DAY SYMPOSIUM ON LABOUR RELATIONS IN THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY, MR HAMMOND SAID THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT HAD ALWAYS ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO ENCOURAGING MORE DIALOGUE BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND WORKERS.

+TO HELP ACHIEVE THIS, IT HAS ORGANISED SEVERAL SYMPOSIA ON LABOUR RELATIONS WHICH HAVE PROVIDED A USEFUL FORUM FOR EMPLOYERS, MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL, OFFICIALS OF BOTH TRADE UNIONS AND EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS, AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON SUBJECTS OF COMMON INTEREST,+ HE SAID.

+THESE SUBJECTS HAVE INCLUDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH ENLIGHTENED MANAGEMENT PRACTICES, AND WAYS AND MEANS OF IMPROVING LABOUR RELATIONS.+

/MR HAMMOND

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MR HAMMOND SAID THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO ORGANISE, IN CONJUNCTION WITH EMPLOYERS' AND EMPLOYEES' ORGANISATIONS, MORE SUCH SEMINARS AND FORUMS TO PROMOTE BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF LABOUR RELATIONS MATTERS BY BOTH PARTIES.

TODAY'S SYMPOSIUM, THE THIRD INDUSTRY-BASED TRIPARTITE SYMPOSIUM ON LABOUR RELATIONS ORGANISED BY THE PROMOTION UNIT OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT, WAS ATTENDED BY MORE THAN 100 PEOPLE FROM THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY.

SIX GUEST SPEAKERS WERE INVITED TO ADDRESS THE PARTICIPANTS. THEY INCLUDED THE PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATION OF HONG KONG GARMENT MANUFACTURERS MR CHAN SUI-KAU; THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GARMENT MAKING TRADE WORKERS UNION MR KAN CHI-SHING; THE DIRECTOR OF CARLO GARMENT FACTORY LIMITED AND SWEETMART GARMENT WORKERS LIMITED MR JAMES Y.Y. CHAN; SENIOR LECTURER FROM THE INSTITUTE OF TEXTILES AND CLOTHING OF THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC MR ALLEN T.S. NG; THE SENIOR CONSULTANT OF THE HONG KONG PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL MR PETER Y.F. MOK; AND AN INDUSTRIAL TRAINING OFFICER OF THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL MR K.K. FUNG.

THE TOPICS DISCUSSED INCLUDED PROSPECTS OF THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY, WAYS TO TACKLE LABOUR SHORTAGE, NEW TREND IN PAYROLL SYSTEM, ALTERNATIVE PRODUCTION PROCESS AND ITS IMPACT ON WORKERS, AND DIFFICULTIES FACED BY EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES.

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EPD TASKED TO HANDLE ASBESTOS PROBLEMS
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INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT HAVE ESTABLISHED THAT RECENT RENOVATION WORK CARRIED OUT IN THE OCEAN TERMINAL BUILDING HAS DISTURBED ASBESTOS-CONTAINING MATERIALS.

AIR SAMPLES IN THE BUILDING WERE TAKEN ON MARCH 27 AND 28 AND THESE INDICATED THAT THE LEVEL OF ASBESTOS FIBRES marginally EXCEEDED THE LEVEL RECOMMENDED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO BE MET AFTER ASBESTOS ABATEMENT WORK IN A BUILDING HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT. THE HIGHEST LEVEL FOUND IN THE SAMPLES TESTED WAS 30 TIMES LOWER THAN THAT SET FOR THE PROTECTION OF PERSONS EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS IN THE WORK PLACE.

THE EPD HAS ADVISED WHARF PROPERTIES LIMITED, THE OWNER OF OCEAN TERMINAL, ON MEASURES TO BE TAKEN TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION.

/A DEPARTMENT

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A DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN EMPHASISED THAT, ALTHOUGH THE ASBESTOS LEVELS POSED A POTENTIAL HEALTH RISK, SUCH A RISK WAS STATISTICALLY VERY SMALL, AND THAT MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SHOULD NOT BE UNDULY CONCERNED.

+ALL PEOPLE LIVING IN HONG KONG ARE EXPOSED DAILY TO ASBESTOS FIBRES WHICH ARE INEVITABLY PRESENT EVEN IN THE OUTSIDE ATMOSPHERE,+ HE ADDED.

A BRIEF VISIT TO THE OCEAN TERMINAL BUILDING WOULD NOT, IN HIS VIEW, RESULT IN ANY DETECTABLE INCREASE OF ASBESTOS RELATED DISEASES.

COMMENTING ON AN ARTICLE IN AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER YESTERDAY WHICH REPORTED THAT THERE WERE NO CONTROLS TO MAKE SURE THAT CONTRACTORS USED THE CORRECT PROCEDURES TO DISPOSE OF ASBESTOS MATERIAL AFTER THEIR REMOVAL FROM BUILDINGS, THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT SUCH CONTROLS DO EXIST.

+THE EPD HAS ISSUED A CODE OF PRACTICE ON THE HANDLING, TRANSPORT AND DISPOSAL OF ASBESTOS WASTES UNDER THE WASTE DISPOSAL ORDINANCE,+ HE SAID.

FOLLOWING RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITHIN GOVERNMENT AND BEFORE THE OCEAN TERMINAL INCIDENT CAME TO LIGHT, EPD HAS BEEN GIVEN THE TASK OF DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM OF ASBESTOS IN PRIVATE SECTOR BUILDINGS, HE STRESSED.

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DEADLINE REMINDER FOR TAXI VOUCHER APPLICANTS
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APPLICANTS FOR SUBSIDIES UNDER THE PILOT TAXI VOUCHER SCHEME ARE REMINDED TO SUBMIT THEIR APPLICATIONS TO THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT BY NEXT TUESDAY (APRIL 14).

UNDER THE SCHEME, WHEELCHAIR-BOUND DISABLED WILL BE ISSUED WITH VOUCHERS OF \$55 A MONTH TO PAY FOR TAXI FARES.

APPLICANTS SHOULD RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATIONS BEFORE THE DEADLINE TO ENSURE THAT THEY CAN BENEFIT FROM THE SCHEME WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN IMPLEMENTED SINCE APRIL 1.

COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS SHOULD BE RETURNED BY POST OR BY AGENT TO THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT, SECOND FLOOR, LOW BLOCK, QUEENSWAY GOVERNMENT OFFICES, HONG KONG.

/FORMS CAN

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FORMS CAN ALSO BE SUBMITTED IN PERSON OR BY AGENT TO:

- * TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT'S HEADQUARTERS ON THE 28TH FLOOR, HIGH BLOCK, QUEENSWAY GOVERNMENT OFFICES, 66 QUEENSWAY, HONG KONG;
- * TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT'S HONG KONG LICENSING OFFICE AT 2 MURRAY ROAD, HONG KONG;
- * TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT'S SHA TIN LICENSING OFFICE AT KCR HOUSE, FIFTH FLOOR, SHA TIN STATION, NEW TERRITORIES;
- * TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT'S KOWLOON LICENSING OFFICE AT 56 DUNDAS STREET, NINTH FLOOR, KOWLOON; AND
- * TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT'S KWUN TONG LICENSING OFFICE AT KOWLOON EAST GOVERNMENT OFFICES, FIFTH FLOOR, 12 LEI YUE MUN ROAD.

THE DEPARTMENT ALSO URGED TAXI DRIVERS TO SUPPORT THE SCHEME BY ACCEPTING THE VOUCHERS FROM WHEELCHAIR-BOUND PASSENGERS AS PAYEMNT FOR TAXI FARES.

+ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO LEGAL REQUIREMENT FOR TAXI DRIVERS TO ACCEPT THE VOCHERS, THEIR COOPERATION WILL HELP MAKE THE TRIAL SCHEME A SUCCESS,+ A DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

TAXI DRIVERS CAN CASH THE VOUCHERS AT THE OFFICES OF THE DEPARTMENT PRINTED AT THE BACK OF THE VOUCHERS BY SHOWING THEIR TAXI DRIVING LICENCES.

SPECIMENS OF THE VOUCHERS WITH DENOMINATIONS OF \$1, \$2 AND \$5 HAVE BEEN SENT TO THE TAXI TRADE ASSOCIATIONS FOR THEIR REFERENCE. THE ASSOCIATIONS HAVE ALSO BEEN REQUESTED TO CIRCULATE THE VOUCHERS AMONG MEMBERS AND TO DISPLAY THEM AT PROMINENT PLACES IN THEIR OFFICES.

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TWO IMMIGRATION LAUNCHES COMMISSIONED * * * * *

THE COMMISSIONING OF TWO HIGH-SPEED IMMIGRATION LAUNCHES MARKED THE COMPLETION OF THE MODERNISATION PROGRAMME OF THE DEPARTMENT'S FIVE VESSELS, THE DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION, MR ALAN CARTER, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE COMMISSIONING CEREMONY OF THE TWO VESSELS AT JOSS HOUSE BAY, MR CARTER SAID THEY WOULD PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN IMMIGRATION EXAMINATION DUTIES AT THE ENCHORAGES AND OTHER SHIP SEARCHING AND PATROL DUTIES.

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THE NEW LAUNCHES ARE EQUIPPED WITH UP-TO-DATE MACHINERY INCLUDING MARINE RADARS AND VHF RADIOS.

THE-16-METRE-LONG LAUNCHES, WITH THE HULL MADE OF MELDED STEEL AND A SPEED OF 12.5 KNOTS, WERE BUILT BY A LOCAL SHIPYARD AT A COST OF ABOUT \$1.7 MILLION EACH.

MR CARTER LIT JOSS STICKS AT THE CEREMONY AND PAID TRIBUTE TO THE SEA GODDESS 'TIN HAU' AT THE TIN HAU TEMPLE. AFTER THE CEREMONY, THE NEW LAUNCHES CAST OFF AND SALUTED TO THE GODDESS BY COMPLETING THREE FIGURES-OF-EIGHT AT JOSS HOUSE BAY.

THREE NEW LAUNCHES WERE COMMISSIONED IN FEBRUARY LAST YEAR UNDER THE FIRST PHASE OF THE MODERNISATION PROGRAMME.

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TWO STORAGE SITES UP FOR RENT
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TWO SITES IN TUEN MUN AND KOWLOON BAY RECLAMATION ARE TO BE LET ON SHORT-TERM TENANCY BY THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT.

MEASURING 2 336 SQUARE METRES, THE TUEN MUN SITE NEAR WU KING ESTATE IS FOR OPEN STORAGE PURPOSE.

HOWEVER, THE STORAGE OF DANGEROUS GOODS IS NOT PERMITTED.

TENANCY FOR THE SITE IS FOR ONE YEAR, RENEWABLE QUARTERLY AFTERWARDS.

THE KOWLOON BAY SITE, LOCATED AT WANG HOI ROAD, MEASURES 2 200 SQUARE METRES AND IS FOR STORING NON-DANGEROUS GOODS.

TENANCY IS FOR TWO YEARS, RENEWABLE QUARTERLY AFTERWARDS.

TENDERS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY NOON ON APRIL 24.

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SUMMER PROGRAMME DESIGN CONTEST ENTRIES SOUGHT
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CREATIVE AND ARTISTIC-MINDED RESIDENTS ARE INVITED TO ENTER A POSTER DESIGN COMPETITION FOR THIS YEAR'S SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAMME IN TSUEN WAN.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE 1987 SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAMME ARE GEARED TO THE THEME OF +SHARE THE FUN AND SERVE THE COMMUNITY+.

THE CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE OF THE PROGRAMME HAS SENT OUT LETTERS TO SCHOOLS AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN THE DISTRICT TO PROMOTE THE DESIGN COMPETITION.

DESIGNS SHOULD BE CENTRED ON THIS YEAR'S THEME.

MEASUREMENTS OF THE ENTRIES ARE A4 (210 X 297 MM) FOR PRIMARY STUDENTS SECTION AND A2 (420 X 594 MM) FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS SECTION AND THE OPEN SECTION.

THE CLOSING DATE FOR ALL ENTRIES IS MAY 2.

ENTRIES SUBMISSION AND ENQUIRIES ON THE POSTER DESIGN COMPETITION SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE OFFICE OF THE TSUEN WAN DISTRICT BOARD ON THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE TSUEN WAN STATION MULTI-STOREY CARPARK BUILDING, 174-208 CASTLE PEAK ROAD OR ON 0-449662.

THE FIRST THREE WINNERS OF EACH SECTION WILL BE AWARDED BOOK COUPONS.

THE FIRST WINNING ENTRY OF EACH SECTION WILL BE USED AS THE DESIGN FOR THE PROGRAMME'S POSTER AND COVER DESIGN OF THE PUBLICATIONS ON THE PROGRAMME.

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CSD HEADQUARTERS ON THE MOVE
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THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT'S HEADQUARTERS WILL MOVE TO WANCHAI TOWER I OVER THE WEEKEND.

AFTER THE REMOVAL, THE DEPARTMENT'S ADMINISTRATION, INDUSTRIES AND ACCOUNTS SECTIONS, WHICH HAD BEEN OPERATING AT DIFFERENT LOCATIONS, WILL NOW COME UNDER ONE ROOF.

THE DEPARTMENT'S HEADQUARTERS WILL OCCUPY THE 23RD AND 24TH FLOORS OF THE BUILDING AT 12, HARBOUR ROAD, WAN CHAI. THE NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER IS 5-8235117.

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DISCUSSION ON CONTROL OF UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS
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KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT BOARD WILL MEET ON FRIDAY (APRIL 10) TO DISCUSS THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT ON THE CONTROL OF UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS.

GOVERNMENT BUILDING SURVEYOR, MR CHENG WEI-DART, WILL ATTEND TO INTRODUCE THE DOCUMENT AND ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM BOARD MEMBERS.

MEMBERS' VIEWS WILL ALSO BE SOUGHT ON THE LOCATIONS FOR THE INSTALLATION OF EMERGENCY HELPLINE TELEPHONES IN THE DISTRICT. THE HONG KONG TELEPHONE COMPANY INTENDS TO INSTALL FIVE SUCH TELEPHONES IN REMOTE AREAS IN EACH DISTRICT.

OTHER ITEMS ON THE AGENDA INCLUDE A PROPOSED KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT BOARD BUDGET OF \$1.85 MILLION IN 1987-88; AN APPLICATION FOR \$60 000 DISTRICT BOARD FUND TO PRODUCE AN INFORMATION KIT TO PROMOTE CIVIC EDUCATION IN THE DISTRICT; AND A PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE AN ELDERLY CENTRE AT HO MAN TIN ESTATE.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING ON FRIDAY AT 2.15 PM IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE DISTRICT OFFICE AT 141 KAU PUI LUNG ROAD, TO KWA WAN. THE MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED IN CHINESE AND NO SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION SERVICE WILL BE AVAILABLE.

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EASTER MAIL DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS
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THERE WILL BE NO MAIL DELIVERY ON FRIDAY (APRIL 17) AND ONE MAIL DELIVERY ON APRIL 18 AND APRIL 20 DURING THE EASTER HOLIDAYS, THE POST OFFICE ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HOWEVER, ALL POST OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED DURING THE HOLIDAYS, EXCEPT ON THE MORNINGS OF APRIL 18 AND APRIL 20, WHEN 42 POST OFFICES WILL BE OPEN FROM 9 AM TO NOON.

THE 42 POST OFFICES INCLUDE THE GENERAL POST OFFICE ON HONG KONG ISLAND, KOWLOON CENTRAL AND TSIM SHA TSUI POST OFFICES IN KOWLOON, AND TSUEN WING STREET, SHA TIN CENTRAL AND TAI PO POST OFFICES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

DETAILS OF THE 42 POST OFFICES CAN BE OBTAINED FROM LOCAL POST OFFICES OR FROM THE POST OFFICE ENQUIRY BUREAU ON 5-231071.

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SPECIAL TRAFFIC PLAN FOR NIGHT RACE MEETING
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MOTORISTS SHOULD WATCH OUT FOR SPECIAL TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN HAPPY VALLEY THIS WEEKEND (APRIL 11) FOR THE NIGHT RACE MEETING.

THE ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE SIMILAR TO THOSE IN FORCE FOR THE WEDNESDAY EVENING MEETINGS. HOWEVER, THEY WILL COME INTO EFFECT AROUND 4.30 PM TO COINCIDE WITH THE EARLIER START OF THE FIRST RACE, WHICH IS AT 6.30 PM INSTEAD OF THE USUAL 7.45 PM.

UNDER THE ARRANGEMENTS, TRAFFIC ON A NUMBER OF ROAD SECTIONS IN HAPPY VALLEY, WAN CHAI AND CAUSEWAY BAY WILL EITHER BE DIVERTED OR RE-ROUTED. LEARNER DRIVERS WILL BE BANNED FROM LEIGHTON ROAD, SHAN KWONG ROAD, VILLAGE ROAD, PERCIVAL STREET, CANAL ROAD EAST AND THE SERVICE ROADS LEADING TO CANAL ROAD FLYOVER BETWEEN 4.30 PM AND 11 PM.

ALSO FROM 4 PM ONWARDS UNTIL MIDNIGHT, PARKING SPACES IN WONG NAI CHUNG ROAD, SPORTS ROAD, VILLAGE ROAD, OI KWAN ROAD AND YIU WAH STREET WILL BE SUSPENDED.

IN ADDITION, A SPECIAL CMB ROUTE 1M WILL OPERATE BETWEEN ADMIRALTY MTR STATION AND HAPPY VALLEY FROM 4.30 PM AT A 15-MINUTE FREQUENCY. ROUTINGS OF BUSES AND MINIBUSES WILL ALSO BE DIVERTED TO AVOID THE RE-ROUTED ROADS.

THE RACE MEETING WILL END AROUND 10 PM AND THE SPECIAL TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS WILL LAST UNTIL THE CROWDS HAVE DISPERSED.

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