



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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TRANSCRIPT OF GOVERNOR'S MEDIA SESSION

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FOLLOWING IS A TRANSCRIPT OF THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER VISITING TUEN MUN DISTRICT THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON:

GOVERNOR: THIS IS THE SECOND OFFICIAL VISIT I'VE MADE TO TUEN MUN DISTRICT, THOUGH NOT THE SECOND VISIT THAT I'VE MADE TO TUEN MUN AS I'VE BEEN ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, THE LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION STONE AT THE NEW LINGNAN COLLEGE BUILDING.

I THINK IT'S CLEAR TO ALL OF US THAT THE MAIN PROBLEMS THAT TUEN MUN FACES. FIRST OF ALL DEALING WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF SOME OF THE MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS THE COMMUNITIES HAVE TO COPE WITH IN THE LAST FEW YEARS. AND SECONDLY, TRANSPORTATION NEEDS WHICH IN THE NORTH-WEST OF THE NEW TERRITORIES ARE PARTICULARLY BIG PROBLEM. THE CREATION OF NEW COMMUNITIES WITH TRANSPORTATION PERHAPS INEVITABLY LAGGING SOMEWHAT BEHIND. I WAS REMINDED ONCE AGAIN BY A NUMBER OF DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THAT, BEARING IN MIND THE NEEDS OF THE NORTH-WEST NEW TERRITORIES IN OUR RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND OF COURSE IN OUR ROAD BUILDING PROGRAMME AS WELL. SO WE HAVE TO GET ON WITH ROUTE 3, FOR EXAMPLE, AS RAPIDLY AS WE CAN.

QUESTION: ANY COMMENTS ON DEVELOPMENTS IN ONE OF THE TERRITORY'S NEWSROOMS?

QUESTION: THE ATV MANAGEMENT HAS ACCEPTED THE RESIGNATION OF ALL SIX SENIOR STAFF. DO YOU SEE AS A THREAT TO PRESS FREEDOM?

GOVERNOR: I THINK IT'S VERY SAD WHEN SIX SENIOR AND RESPECTED JOURNALISTS RESIGNED FROM A NEWS ORGANISATION. I THINK THAT THERE ARE TWO ISSUES WHICH PERHAPS ARE RAISED BY A CASE LIKE THIS. THE FIRST IS THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING SEPARATE THE MANAGEMENT AND THE EDITORIAL FUNCTIONS IN ANY MEDIA ORGANISATION, WHETHER A BROADCASTING COMPANY OR A NEWSPAPER. AND I THINK WE KNOW THAT NOT ONLY FROM THIS EXPERIENCE IN HONG KONG BUT FROM WIDER EXPERIENCE. SECONDLY, I THINK IT UNDERLINES THE IMPORTANCE OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. PEOPLE OFTEN TALK ABOUT HONG KONG AS BEING THE BEST POSSIBLE EXAMPLE OF AN OPEN MARKET ECONOMY. I DON'T THINK IT'S A COINCIDENCE THAT HONG KONG ALSO HAS PROBABLY THE LARGEST NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS PER HEAD ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD AND HAS THE NUMBER OF VIBRANT BROADCASTING ORGANISATIONS AS WELL. THAT, TOO, IS AN ASPECT OF HONG KONG'S OPENNESS AND HONG KONG'S NATURE AS A PLURAL SOCIETY WHICH VALUES THE FREE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS. SO I THINK THESE ARE IMPORTANT MATTERS FOR OUR COMMUNITY AND THEY ARE MATTERS WHICH DESERVE A GOOD DEAL OF DISCUSSION AND DEBATE. BUT I REPEAT THAT WHEN SIX DISTINGUISHED JOURNALISTS RESIGN FROM ANY ORGANISATION, IT'S A VERY SAD DAY ALL ROUND.

QUESTION: DO YOU THINK THE SITUATION WILL GET WORSE WHEN WE ARE APPROACHING THE YEAR 1997?

/GOVERNOR:

GOVERNOR: I VERY MUCH HOPE NOT AND WE WILL DO ALL THAT WE CAN AS A GOVERNMENT TO TRY TO ENSURE THAT IT DOESN'T GET WORSE. FOR EXAMPLE, WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF REVIEWING ALL THOSE ORDINANCES WHICH MIGHT IN CIRCUMSTANCES, WHICH IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE, BE ABUSED AND UNDERMINE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. WE'VE AGREED ON A PROGRAMME OF REFORM AND IF THE JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION THINK THERE ARE OTHER ORDINANCES IN ADDITION TO THOSE WHICH WE'VE PROMISED TO LOOK AT, WHICH NEED REVIEW, THEN WE ARE PREPARED TO LOOK AT THOSE AS WELL, ALWAYS BEARING IN MIND THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING PRIVACY OF THE INDIVIDUAL. BUT I REPEAT, HONG KONG IS A COMMUNITY WHICH VALUES ITS FREE PRESS, WHICH VALUES ITS BROADCASTING ORGANISATIONS AND I THINK A LOT OF PEOPLE WILL REGARD DECISION BY THE SIX VERY PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS AS A SAD ONE FOR THE TERRITORY.

QUESTION: SIR, WHY HAS EXCO DECIDED TO TURN DOWN THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION AND EXISTING....?

GOVERNOR: EXCO HASN'T MADE FINAL DECISION. EXCO IS STILL DISCUSSING A NUMBER OF MEASURES WHICH HAVE A BEARING ON HUMAN RIGHTS. BUT WE WILL BE MAKING AN ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT ONE OF THE QUESTIONS WHICH IS INVOLVED IN THIS WHOLE DEBATE, ONE OF THE CENTRAL QUESTIONS. WE WILL BE MAKING AN ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE PRESS CONFERENCE ON FRIDAY. AND IN THE MEANTIME, DISCUSSION IN EXCO AND IN THE ADMINISTRATION ON RELATED ISSUES IS CONTINUING.

QUESTION : BUT DO YOU THINK IT IS TOO MUCH TO SPEND \$ 60 MILLION TO SET UP A HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION.

GOVERNOR : I AM NOT ADDING TO THE ANSWER I'VE GIVEN.

QUESTION : DO YOU THINK THAT A HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CAN...

GOVERNOR : I AM NOT ANSWERING.. I HAVE SAID THAT WE ARE HAVING A PRESS CONFERENCE ON FRIDAY ON ONE ASPECT OF THE WHOLE QUESTION AND I DON'T THINK IT'S HELPFUL OF ME TO SAY ANY MORE WHILE DISCUSSIONS ON OTHER MATTER ARE CONTINUING.

QUESTION : DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THE AIRPORT PROBLEM WILL BE SOLVED BEFORE THIS SUMMER OR JULY ?

GOVERNOR : I WOULD LIKE IT TO BE RESOLVED BEFORE HALF PAST FIVE. I REALLY DON'T THINK THAT THERE IS VERY MUCH IF ANYTHING BETWEEN THE VARIOUS PARTIES TO NEGOTIATIONS AT THE MOMENT. YOU CAN SEE LOOKING OUT FROM THE FRONT OF THIS SPECTACULAR DEVELOPMENT THE AIRPORT BEING BUILT. BY ANYBODY ELSE'S STANDARD, IT'S BEING BUILT RATHER RAPIDLY. BY OUR STANDARD, WE COULD DO EVEN BETTER IF WE HAD AN OVERALL AGREEMENT. I WELCOME WHAT MR ZHU RONGJI AND DIRECTOR LU PING HAVE SAID ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATION ON ECONOMIC MATTERS AND BOTH ON THE AIRPORT AND ON THE CONTAINER TERMINAL. I WHOLLY ENDORSE WHAT MR ZHU RONGJI SAID ABOUT THE REQUIREMENT OF TWO HANDS IN ORDER TO CLAP.

QUESTION : CONCERNING LAND AUCTION LAST WEEK, COULD YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT WHAT SPECIFIC MEASURES WILL THE GOVERNMENT CARRY OUT IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE SAME THING HAPPENING AGAIN?

/GOVERNOR:

GOVERNOR : I CAN'T TELL YOU MORE NOW BUT I HOPE I'LL BE ABLE TO TELL YOU MORE BEFORE LONG. OBVIOUSLY, WE WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO PUT FORWARD ANY PROPOSALS THAT WE HAVE ON THAT PARTICULAR SUBJECT AT THE SAME TIME AS WE MAKE OUR STATEMENT SOON ON THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PROPERTY PRICES. IF WE CAN'T SAY ANYTHING ON LAND AUCTIONS, THEN WE'LL SAY SOMETHING AS SOON AFTERWARD AS POSSIBLE. BUT, OBVIOUSLY, IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE IF WE COULD SAY SOMETHING ON LAND AUCTIONS AT THE SAME TIME. THE ONLY POINT I WOULD ADD IS THAT I AM SURE THAT DEVELOPERS MUST HAVE NOTED THE CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC CONCERN ON THIS ISSUE AND I HOPE THEY WOULD HAVE NOT ONLY NOTED BUT INWARDLY DIGESTED.

QUESTION : HAS THE GOVERNMENT MADE ANY ADVANCE TO LET EXILED CHINESE DISSIDENTS TO COME TO HONG KONG?

GOVERNOR : WE DON'T COMMENT ON INDIVIDUAL CASES. I'VE COMMENTED FROM TIME TO TIME ON THE POSITION OF MR HAN DONGFANG SINCE HIS POSITION HERE HAS BEEN TAGGED BY NAMELESS CHINESE OFFICIALS. I AM SURE HE'LL MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORK HE'S DOING WITH, I THINK, THE CHRISTIAN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY OR COUNCIL. AS FOR OTHERS, I DON'T THINK IT'S SENSIBLE TO COMMENT ON INDIVIDUAL CASES BUT I WILL MAKE THE POINT ONCE AGAIN THAT THIS IS A PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TIME AND "ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS" WORKS IN BOTH DIRECTIONS. IT INVOLVES A BIT OF GIVE AND TAKE BOTH WAYS.

QUESTION : THERE ARE REPORTS THAT CHINA WILL BAN THE HONG KONG ALLIANCE AFTER 1997 AND IS THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT GOING TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT NOW.

GOVERNOR : THAT IS A QUESTION TO ASK DIRECTOR LU PING NEXT TIME HE COMES TO HONG KONG WHICH I HOPE WILL BE SOON.

QUESTION : BUT CAN THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT DO ANYTHING ?

GOVERNOR : THE SAR GOVERNMENT IS BY DEFINITION DIFFERENT FROM THE GOVERNMENT AT THE MOMENT. THERE WILL BE A TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY ON JULY 1, 1997. SO UNLESS I AM, PERHAPS LIKELY IMPROBABLY ASKED TO STAY ON, THIS WILL NOT BE A RESPONSIBILITY WHICH I HAVE TO DISCHARGE. BUT, TO BE ABSOLUTELY SERIOUS, I AM SURE THAT THE CLOSER WE GET TO 1997, THE MORE SENIOR CHINESE OFFICIALS WILL UNDERSTAND THE ROLE THAT THEY HAVE TO PLAY IF THEY ARE TO ENCOURAGE CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE AND IF THEY ARE TO ENCOURAGE STABILITY AND PROSPERITY IN THE PRESENT AND IT WILL BE A MATTER OF CONCERN IF THINGS SAID PERHAPS THOUGHTLESSLY OR BY PEOPLE WHO AREN'T REALLY IN ANY POSITION TO MAKE IMPORTANT STATEMENTS CAUSE UNNECESSARY WORRY IN THE COMMUNITY ABOUT FUTURE COMMITMENTS TO OUR VALUES AS AN OPEN AND PLURAL SOCIETY. THANK YOU VERY MUCH INDEED.

GOVERNOR COMMENTS ON RESIGNATION OF JOURNALISTS

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THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON SAID IT WAS VERY SAD WHEN SIX SENIOR AND RESPECTED JOURNALISTS HAD RESIGNED FROM A NEWS ORGANISATION.

RESPONDING TO MEDIA QUESTIONS AFTER VISITING THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT, MR PATTEN SAID THERE WERE TWO ISSUES WHICH WERE RAISED BY A CASE LIKE THIS.

"THE FIRST IS THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING SEPARATE THE MANAGEMENT AND THE EDITORIAL FUNCTIONS IN ANY MEDIA ORGANISATION, WHETHER A BROADCASTING COMPANY OR A NEWSPAPER," HE SAID.

"SECONDLY, I THINK IT UNDERLINES THE IMPORTANCE OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS."

MR PATTEN SAID PEOPLE TALKED ABOUT HONG KONG AS BEING THE BEST POSSIBLE EXAMPLE OF AN OPEN MARKET ECONOMY AND IT WAS NOT A COINCIDENCE THAT IT ALSO HAD PROBABLY THE LARGEST NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS PER HEAD ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD AND HAD A NUMBER OF VIBRANT BROADCASTING ORGANISATIONS AS WELL.

"THAT, TOO, IS AN ASPECT OF HONG KONG'S OPENNESS AND HONG KONG'S NATURE AS A PLURAL SOCIETY WHICH VALUES THE FREE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS.

"SO, I THINK THESE ARE IMPORTANT MATTERS FOR OUR COMMUNITY AND THEY ARE MATTERS WHICH DESERVE A GOOD DEAL OF DISCUSSION AND DEBATE," HE SAID.

THE GOVERNOR ADDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS IN THE PROCESS OF REVIEWING ALL THOSE ORDINANCES WHICH MIGHT BE ABUSED AND MIGHT UNDERMINE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS.

"WE'VE AGREED ON A PROGRAMME OF REFORM AND IF THE JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION THINK THERE ARE OTHER ORDINANCES IN ADDITION TO THOSE WHICH WE'VE PROMISED TO LOOK AT, WHICH NEED REVIEW, THEN WE ARE PREPARED TO LOOK AT THOSE AS WELL, ALWAYS BEARING IN MIND THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING PRIVACY OF THE INDIVIDUAL," HE ADDED.

IN RESPONSE TO A MEDIA QUESTION ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, MR PATTEN SAID EXCO HAD NOT MADE FINAL DECISIONS ON THE MATTER.

"EXCO IS STILL DISCUSSING A NUMBER OF MEASURES WHICH HAVE A BEARING ON HUMAN RIGHTS," HE SAID.

MR PATTEN SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE MAKING AN ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT ONE OF THE QUESTIONS INVOLVED IN THIS WHOLE DEBATE AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ON FRIDAY.

"AND IN THE MEANTIME, DISCUSSION IN EXCO AND IN THE ADMINISTRATION ON RELATED ISSUES IS CONTINUING," HE ADDED.

KEEP GUARD AGAINST PROTECTIONISM: GOVERNOR

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THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SHARED WITH POLICY-MAKERS ATTENDING THE 21ST PACIFIC TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE THE ISSUES OF FREE TRADE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

MR PATTEN SAID MOST ECONOMISTS AND POLITICIANS RECOGNISED THE MERITS OF FREE TRADE.

BUT THE PRESSURES FROM BUSINESS AND THE TEMPTATION OF POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY TO GIVE WAY TO SHORT-TERM, SHORT-SIGHTED DEFENCE OF MISUNDERSTOOD NATIONAL INTEREST THROUGH SUBSIDY AND PROTECTION REMAINS AS STRONG AS EVER, HE SAID.

"WE REALLY CANNOT RELAX OUR GUARD."

MR PATTEN SAID THE RECENT SETTLEMENT OF THE URUGUAY ROUND OF GATT NEGOTIATIONS, THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE SETUP OF THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION AND THE RENEWAL OF CHINA'S MOST FAVOURED NATION STATUS ALL HAD A MAJOR IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC.

UNDER THE URUGUAY ROUND AGREEMENT, TARIFF IS TO BE REDUCED BY 30 PER CENT.

THE GOVERNOR SAID THAT WAS A BIG REDUCTION, BUT THE COST OF PROTECTIONIST MEASURES TO CONSUMERS WORLDWIDE WAS ESTIMATED IN 1992 TO HAVE BEEN OVER US\$450 BILLION.

"A 30 PER CENT REDUCTION STILL MEANS THAT THE COST OF PROTECTIONISM IS OVER US\$300 BILLION," HE SAID.

THE GATT AGREEMENT ALSO PROVIDES THAT THERE SHOULD BE MUCH TIGHTER DISCIPLINES AND CLEARER RULES RELATING TO FAIR COMPETITION, ANTI-DUMPING, SUBSIDIES AND SAFEGUARDS, SO AS TO CURB ABUSE OF SUCH MEASURES.

"THESE AGREEMENTS REFLECT GOOD INTENTIONS, BUT A CONSTANT WATCH ON THE WORKINGS OF THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION WILL BE NEEDED TO ENSURE THAT THE PROMISE IS FULFILLED," HE SAID.

TURNING TO HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS, MR PATTEN SAID HE WAS CONVINCED THAT TRYING TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH WARNINGS ABOUT TRADE WAS NOT THE BEST WAY OF MAKING PROGRESS.

"ALL TOO EASILY, THE CLAIM OF DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS CAN BE USED TO CLOAK PROTECTIONISM."

"THE GREATEST PROSPECT FOR DEVELOPING LONG-TERM, PROFITABLE AND TRUSTING PARTNERSHIPS IN TRADE IS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES THAT TRUST AND RESPECT THEIR OWN PEOPLE," HE ADDED.

EXPANDING ON HIS CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MR PATTEN SAID THE EFFICIENT, RESPONSIBLE USE OF RESOURCES WAS OF FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE TO THE ECONOMICS OF GOVERNMENTS AND OF INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES.

DESCRIBING THE PACIFIC OCEAN AS THE WORLD'S LARGEST SEWER, HE SAID: "THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF GROWING POPULATIONS AND GROWING ECONOMIES ARE SEVERE."

"UNLESS THEY ARE ADDRESSED COMPREHENSIVELY, OUR ABILITY TO SUSTAIN DEVELOPMENT AND TO SUSTAIN POPULATIONS WILL BE UNDERMINED," HE SAID.

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GIS PERFORMANCE PLEDGE PUBLISHED

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THE INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING PROMPT AND EFFICIENT SERVICE TO THE MEDIA AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, AS ANNOUNCED IN ITS PERFORMANCE PLEDGE PUBLISHED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID THE DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES WOULD CLOSELY MONITOR PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS SET AND WOULD PUBLISH PERFORMANCE RESULTS ANNUALLY.

THE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND TARGETS OUTLINED IN THE PERFORMANCE PLEDGE OF THE DEPARTMENT ARE:

* REQUESTS FOR PRESS RELEASES AND PRESS PHOTOS FROM THE MEDIA WILL RECEIVE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION FROM THE DUTY OFFICERS;

* ENQUIRIES FROM THE MEDIA AND THE PUBLIC WILL BE DEALT WITH IMMEDIATELY BY THE DUTY OFFICER, WHO WILL IDENTIFY HIMSELF BY NAME, OR IF NECESSARY, REFERRED TO AN APPROPRIATE SUBJECT OFFICER WHO WILL ALSO BE IDENTIFIED BY NAME;

* AN OFFICER WILL BE ASSIGNED TO FOLLOW THROUGH A REQUEST TO ARRANGE MEDIA FACILITIES FOR LOCAL OR FOREIGN MEDIA. THE OFFICER WILL CONTACT THE JOURNALIST/ORGANISATION WITHIN ONE DAY OF RECEIPT OF THE REQUEST;

* MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC CALLING AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATION CENTRE WILL NORMALLY BE SERVED WITHIN 10 MINUTES OR WITHIN 20 MINUTES WHEN THE SALES STAFF ARE ENGAGED. REQUESTS FOR SALES ITEMS BY MAIL WILL BE ANSWERED WITHIN SEVEN DAYS.

* MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC COMING IN PERSON TO OBTAIN FREE PUBLICATIONS AND LEAFLETS AT THE DEPARTMENT'S MARKETING OFFICE AT FRENCH MISSION BUILDING WILL NORMALLY RECEIVE PROMPT SERVICE OR WITHIN 10 MINUTES IF THE STAFF ARE ENGAGED. REQUESTS FOR ITEMS BY MAIL WILL BE ANSWERED WITHIN SEVEN DAYS.

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT'S WORK WOULD BE WELCOME, THE SPOKESMAN SAID. THEY SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE DEPARTMENTAL SECRETARY AT BEACONSFIELD HOUSE IN CENTRAL.

COPIES OF THE PERFORMANCE PLEDGE AVAILABLE AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATION CENTRE, GROUND FLOOR, GENERAL POST OFFICE BUILDING, CONNAUGHT PLACE, CENTRAL; THE DEPARTMENT'S MARKETING OFFICE AT FRENCH MISSION BUILDING, 1 BATTERY PATH, CENTRAL AND DISTRICT OFFICES OF THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION.

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LAND REGISTRY TO STANDARDISE FEES

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THE LAND REGISTRY IS TO STANDARDISE FEES FOR LAND REGISTRATION AND OTHER SERVICES PROVIDED IN ALL LAND REGISTRIES IN THE URBAN AREA AND THE NEW TERRITORIES.

THE NEW ARRANGEMENT WILL ENABLE THE LAND REGISTRY TO IMPROVE EXISTING SERVICES AND TO INTRODUCE NEW SERVICES IN THE EIGHT DISTRICT LAND REGISTRIES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES IN LINE WITH SERVICES PROVIDED AT THE URBAN LAND REGISTRY.

THE NEW SERVICES WILL INCLUDE COMPUTERISATION AND MICROFILMING-CUM-IMAGING OF THE NEW TERRITORIES LAND RECORDS.

THE STANDARDISATION OF FEES MEANS FEES PAYABLE IN THE DISTRICT LAND REGISTRIES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WILL BE BROUGHT IN LINE WITH THE LEVELS CHARGED AT THE URBAN LAND REGISTRY ON A COST-RECOVERY BASIS.

EXISTING FEES PAYABLE AT THE URBAN LAND REGISTRY WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED. BUT THE SCOPE OF SERVICES IN THE URBAN LAND REGISTRY WILL BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE ON-LINE SEARCHES OF THE COMPUTERISED LAND RECORDS THROUGH COMPUTER TERMINALS AT THE CLIENTS' OFFICES.

DETAILS OF THE AMENDMENTS AND THE STANDARDISATION OF FEES WILL BE GAZETTED ON FRIDAY (JUNE 3) UNDER THE LAND REGISTRATION FEES (AMENDMENT) REGULATION 1994 AND LAND REGISTRATION (NEW TERRITORIES) FEES (AMENDMENT) REGULATION 1994.

THE AMENDED REGULATIONS WILL COME INTO EFFECT ON A DAY TO BE APPOINTED BY THE LAND REGISTRAR BY NOTICE IN THE GAZETTE.

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IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT REVISES FEES

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FEES FOR A NUMBER OF CERTIFICATES AND DOCUMENTS ISSUED BY THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT ARE TO BE REVISED, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

PENDING LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S ENDORSEMENT, THE NEW FEES WILL TAKE EFFECT FROM JULY 15, HE SAID.

THE FEES ARE CHARGED UNDER VARIOUS ORDINANCES AND COVER THE RANGE OF IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT-RELATED CHARGES, FOR EXAMPLE FOR THE ISSUE OF CERTIFICATES OF IDENTITY, RE-ENTRY PERMITS AND SEAMEN'S TRAVEL DOCUMENTS, AND ALSO BIRTH, DEATH AND MARRIAGE CERTIFICATES.

THE SPOKESMAN REITERATED GOVERNMENT'S POLICY THAT FEES CHARGED SHOULD BE SET AT LEVELS GENERALLY SUFFICIENT TO RECOVER THE FULL COSTS INCURRED SO THAT THOSE RECEIVING THE SERVICE, NOT THE TAXPAYER, SHOULD PAY FOR IT.

MOST OF THE FEES INVOLVED IN THE REVISION WERE LAST INCREASED IN 1993.

HE EXPLAINED THAT A RECENT REVIEW HAD SHOWN THAT AFTER LAGGING BEHIND IN THE 1980'S SOMEWHAT, THERE IS STILL UNDER-RECOVERY, RANGING BETWEEN EIGHT PER CENT AND 59 PER CENT.

"IN THE PREVIOUS FEE REVISION EXERCISES IN 1991 AND 1993, IT WAS AGREED THAT THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD TRY TO ACHIEVE FULL COST RECOVERY IN THE PERIOD 1992 TO 1994," HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID IN PROPOSING THE INCREASES THIS TIME, THE GOVERNMENT HAD CAREFULLY CONSIDERED THE DEFICIT POSITION OF THE SERVICES AND THE IMPACT THAT VARIOUS FEE REVISIONS MIGHT HAVE ON THE PUBLIC.

"THE INCREASES IN DOLLAR TERMS ARE MOSTLY SMALL, BELOW \$100, FOR SERVICES WHICH IN MANY CASES WILL ONLY BE USED ONCE IN A LIFETIME," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"EVEN AFTER THE PROPOSED REVISIONS HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED, SOME OF THE SERVICES, SUCH AS REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGE, WILL STILL BE OPERATING AT SOMETHING OF A DEFICIT. BUT WE HOPE TO BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE FULL-COST RECOVERY IN MOST RESPECTS BY NEXT YEAR," HE SAID.

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GUANGDONG AND HK OFFICIALS DISCUSS WATER SUPPLY

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AT THE INVITATION OF MR JAMES BLAKE, SECRETARY FOR WORKS, A DELEGATION FROM THE GUANGDONG PROVINCIAL BUREAU OF WATER CONSERVANCY AND HYDRO-POWER, LED BY DIRECTOR GUAN ZONGZHI, VISITED HONG KONG FROM MAY 30 TO JUNE 1, 1994 FOR THE FIFTH BUSINESS MEETING TO DISCUSS WATER SUPPLY TO HONG KONG UNDER THE DONGJIANG-SHENZHEN WATER SUPPLY WORKS.

ITEMS DISCUSSED INCLUDED A REVIEW OF WATER SUPPLY IN THE 1993/94 WATER YEAR, THE PLAN FOR WATER SUPPLY IN THE 1994 WATER YEAR, PROGRESS OF WORKS OF BOTH SIDES, QUALITY OF THE WATER SUPPLY AND OTHER MATTERS OF MUTUAL CONCERN.

UPON THE PROPOSITION OF MR BLAKE, BOTH SIDES AGREED TO WRITE UP A REPORT ON THE EXPERIENCE AND TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE GAINED IN THE CNSTRUCTION OF THE DONG-SHEN SCHEME AND THAT OF THE CORRESPONDING WORKS IN HONG KONG.

MR M S HU, DIRECTOR OF WATER SUPPLIES, NOTED THAT THE CURRENT STORAGE POSITION IN HONG KONG WAS SATISFACTORY AND IN THE ABSENCE OF DRASTIC UNFORESEEABLE SITUATIONS, NO AD HOC INCREASE IN CHINA WATER WOULD BE REQUIRED IN THE 1994 WATER YEAR.

DIRECTOR GUAN CONFIRMED THAT THE DONG-SHEN STAGE III EXTENSION WORK HAD BEEN COMPLETED EARLIER THIS YEAR.

/DIRECTOR HU

DIRECTOR HU CONFIRMED THAT THE CORRESPONDING WORKS IN HONG KONG TO RECEIVE THE INCREASED SUPPLY WERE ON SCHEDULE.

RECENT CONCERNS RAISED BY WATER USERS IN HONG KONG HAD BEEN DEALT WITH BY CLOSE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN TECHNICAL EXPERTS OF BOTH SIDES.

DIRECTOR GUAN MADE SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE LONG-TERM AND SHORT-TERM MEASURES BEING TAKEN BY THE GUANGDONG PROVINCIAL PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT FOR IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH THE BUREAU, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES, TO PROTECT WATER RESOURCES IN THE EAST RIVER AND EN-ROUTE THE DONG-SHEN WATER SUPPLY SCHEME FROM POLLUTION WITH A VIEW TO ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF WATER SUPPLY TO HONG KONG.

MR BLAKE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION TO DIRECTOR GUAN FOR THE CONTINUED ATTENTION BY THE GUANGDONG BUREAU IN MEETING THE WATER NEEDS OF HONG KONG.

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HK MONETARY AUTHORITY PUBLISHES FIRST REPORT

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THE FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY (HKMA), ESTABLISHED ON APRIL 1, 1993, IS PUBLISHED AND TABLED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE REPORT, RUNNING TO ALMOST A HUNDRED PAGES, CONTAINS A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION ON HONG KONG'S MONETARY AND BANKING SYSTEMS, THE CURRENCY AND THE EXCHANGE FUND. IT ALSO CONTAINS CLEAR DESCRIPTIONS OF THE HKMA'S FUNCTIONS AND HOW THEY ARE PERFORMED.

"THE HKMA'S PHILOSOPHY OF OPERATIONS IS TO BE OPEN, FAIR AND TRANSPARENT, AND TO BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR ITS ACTIONS," THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE HKMA, MR JOSEPH YAM, SAID IN A PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY.

IN THE ANNUAL REPORT, MR YAM PLEDGED THAT HIS TEAM OF PEOPLE IN THE HKMA WOULD DO THEIR BEST TO WORK FOR THE STABILITY AND PROSPERITY OF HONG KONG IN THE IMPORTANT AND HISTORICAL TRANSITIONAL PERIOD LEADING UP TO 1997 AND BEYOND.

HE ALSO QUOTED CLEAR STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION FROM THE CENTRAL BANKS OF BOTH BRITAIN AND CHINA OF THE HKMA AND ITS ROLE AS THE RESPONSIBLE MONETARY AUTHORITY IN HONG KONG BEFORE AND AFTER 1997.

IN REVIEWING THE WORK OF THE HKMA LAST YEAR, MR YAM SAID HE WAS HAPPY TO REPORT THAT THE EXCHANGE RATE HAD REMAINED STABLE AT VERY CLOSE TO HK\$7.80 TO THE US DOLLAR THROUGHOUT 1993, AS THE MAINTENANCE OF EXCHANGE RATE STABILITY WAS ONE OF THE IMPORTANT TASKS OF THE HKMA.

ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE EXCHANGE FUND, MR YAM NOTED THAT THE SIZE OF THE FUND STOOD AT HK\$348 BILLION (US\$45 BILLION) AT THE END OF 1993, REPRESENTING A 21 PER CENT INCREASE OVER 1992.

MR YAM CAUTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT 1994 WAS LIKELY TO BE A DIFFICULT YEAR IN THE MANAGEMENT OF RESERVES BECAUSE OF THE ADVERSE IMPACT OF RISING INTEREST RATES ON BOND PRICES.

"THE EXCHANGE FUND CONTINUES TO HOLD BONDS AND A SMALL AMOUNT OF EQUITIES AS THIS IS THE CORRECT APPROACH TO MAXIMISING RETURN IN THE LONG RUN FOR A CONSERVATIVE FUND. BUT WE HAVE ALREADY TAKEN DEFENSIVE MEASURES TO REDUCE THE POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF RECENT MARKET MOVEMENTS ON OUR PORTFOLIO," HE SAID.

TURNING TO THE SUPERVISORY ROLE OF THE MONETARY AUTHORITY IN SAFEGUARDING THE STABILITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE BANKING SYSTEM IN HONG KONG, MR YAM NOTED THAT THE HKMA HAD BEEN INCREASING THE INTENSITY OF ITS OPERATIONAL SUPERVISION.

IT HAD ALSO BEEN FOCUSING ITS ATTENTION ON THE LARGE OVER-SUBSCRIPTION OF NEW SHARE ISSUES, MORTGAGE LENDING, INTRODUCTION OF NEW LIQUIDITY REQUIREMENTS AND OTHER SUPERVISORY ISSUES LIKE NETTING, INTEREST RATE RISK, MARKET RISK, FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE AND LOAN CLASSIFICATION.

"THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE IS TO ENSURE THAT THE SUPERVISORY SYSTEM IN HONG KONG REMAINS IN LINE WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS," MR YAM SAID.

THE HKMA ALSO CONSIDERS IT IN HONG KONG'S INTEREST AS AN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL CENTRE TO PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FINANCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE.

"A WORKING PARTY ON THE PAYMENT AND SETTLEMENT SYSTEM CONCLUDED THAT HONG KONG'S PAYMENT AND SETTLEMENT SYSTEM SHOULD MOVE ON TO A REAL TIME GROSS SETTLEMENT BASIS. MEANWHILE, A NUMBER OF INTERIM RISK MANAGEMENT MEASURES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN 1994," MR YAM SAID.

WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE AGENDA OF THE HKMA IN THE LEAD-UP TO 1997, MR YAM SAID: "THERE ARE MANY OTHER MATTERS, ON BOTH THE MONETARY AND SUPERVISORY FRONTS, MAINLY CONCERNING THE RELEVANT LEGISLATION, THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THESE CAN BE DEALT WITH, AS IN THE PAST, SMOOTHLY AND EXPEDITIOUSLY."

THE HKMA'S 1993 ANNUAL REPORT WILL BE ON SALE FROM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE AT \$138 A COPY.

STAMP DUTY CONCESSION FOR STOCK BORROWING AND LENDING

* * * * *

THE STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1994 AND THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1994 WILL BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON JUNE 15 TO RELAX THE STAMP DUTY CONCESSION FOR STOCK BORROWING AND LENDING ACTIVITIES, SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES, MR MICHAEL CARTLAND, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY MENTIONED IN HIS BUDGET FOR 1994/95 THAT PROPOSALS WOULD SOON BE PUT FORWARD FOR THE EXEMPTION FROM STAMP DUTY OF STOCK BORROWED UP TO 12 MONTHS. THE TWO BILLS SERVE THIS PURPOSE.

AT PRESENT, A STOCK BORROWING AND LENDING TRANSACTION WILL NOT GIVE RISE TO STAMP DUTY LIABILITY IF IT IS CARRIED OUT BY AN APPROVED BORROWER FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF SETTling A SALE OF HONG KONG STOCK EFFECTED IN THE STOCK EXCHANGE OF HONG KONG (SEHK) AND THE BORROWED STOCK MUST BE RETURNED WITHIN 14 DAYS.

SUCH ARRANGEMENTS WERE INTRODUCED IN 1989 TO HELP RESOLVE GENUINE SETTLEMENT PROBLEMS CAUSED BY TEMPORARY DELAYS IN THE DELIVERY OF STOCK SOLD, FOR INSTANCE, WHERE THE STOCK IS HELD OVERSEAS.

MR CARTLAND SAID: "THE MEASURES WERE SATISFACTORY TO THAT END, BUT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NEVERTHELESS RECEIVED SUBMISSIONS FROM MARKET PRACTITIONERS THAT THE CURRENT STAMP DUTY RELIEF WAS TOO RESTRICTIVE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STOCK BORROWING AND LENDING MARKET IN HONG KONG WHICH IN TURN WAS CRUCIAL FOR THE SHORT-SELLING OF SECURITIES.

"THE SHORT STOCK RETURN PERIOD, THE SOLE PURPOSE REQUIREMENT AND THE NEED TO CONDUCT THE TRANSACTION THROUGH AN APPROVED BORROWER ARE THE MAJOR CONCERNS," HE SAID.

STOCK BORROWING IS A TOOL TO FACILITATE SHORT-SELLING OF SECURITIES FOR, SAY, HEDGING A LONG POSITION IN FUTURES/OPTIONS CONTRACTS.

THE SECURITIES ORDINANCE IN EFFECT PROHIBITS THE SHORT-SELLING OF STOCKS UNLESS A BROKER OR HIS CUSTOMER CAN PROVIDE THE NECESSARY STOCK FOR SETTLEMENT. IF HE DOES NOT HAVE THE STOCK AT HIS DISPOSAL, HE WOULD HAVE TO BORROW IT IN THE MARKET.

THE SEHK INTRODUCED REGULATED SHORT-SELLING FOR SELECTED LISTED SECURITIES IN JANUARY 1994.

HOWEVER, THE STOCK BORROWING AND LENDING MARKET AND SHORT-SELLING HAVE REMAINED INACTIVE.

THE PRIMARY REASON RESTS WITH THE CURRENT RESTRICTIONS ON STAMP DUTY CONCESSION FOR STOCK BORROWING AND LENDING.

TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM, THE STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL SEEKS TO EXTEND THE STOCK RETURN PERIOD FROM 14 DAYS TO 12 MONTHS OR SUCH LONGER PERIOD THE COMMISSIONER OF INLAND REVENUE MAY ALLOW.

IT IS ALSO PROPOSED TO REMOVE THE APPROVED BORROWER REQUIREMENT AND TO REPLACE THE SOLE PURPOSE TEST WITH A NUMBER OF "SPECIFIED PURPOSES" SUCH AS THE BORROWING OF STOCK FOR SETTling A FUTURE SALE, FOR ON-LENDING TO ANOTHER PERSON OR FOR SETTling A SALE EFFECTED OUTSIDE HONG KONG.

THE INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE WILL BE AMENDED AT THE SAME TIME.

IN THE ABSENCE OF SPECIFIC PROVISIONS, A STOCK BORROWING AND LENDING WOULD BE TREATED AS INVOLVING A TRANSFER OF TITLE AND AS A SALE AND PURCHASE OF STOCK FOR PROFITS TAX PURPOSE.

IT IS NOW PROPOSED TO TREAT A DISPOSAL AND THE SUBSEQUENT RE-ACQUISITION OF STOCK UNDER A STOCK BORROWING ARRANGEMENT AS A LOAN TRANSACTION. CONSEQUENTLY NO PROFIT OR LOSS WILL EMERGE FOR PROFITS TAX PURPOSE.

"THE AMENDMENTS WILL HELP THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACTIVE STOCK BORROWING AND LENDING MARKET AND SHORT-SELLING IN HONG KONG.

"THIS IS ALSO INSTRUMENTAL FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF STOCK OPTIONS BY THE SEHK SINCE OPTIONS ARE COMMONLY TRADED IN CONJUNCTION WITH SHORT-SELLING," MR CARTLAND SAID.

"MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STOCK BORROWING AND LENDING INDUSTRY IN HONG KONG WILL IMPROVE OUR COMPETITIVENESS WITH OTHER MAJOR SECURITIES MARKETS IN THE WORLD," HE ADDED.

THE TWO BILLS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE GAZETTE ON FRIDAY (JUNE 3).

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GOVERNOR VISITS TUEN MUN

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THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) VISITED TUEN MUN TO FAMILIARISE HIMSELF WITH THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE DISTRICT TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE FIRST PROCEEDED TO THE CMA CHOI CHEUNG KOK PRE-VOCATIONAL SCHOOL WHICH PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH A WIDE SPECTRUM OF SUBJECTS RANGING FROM ELECTRICAL SKILLS AND TECHNICAL DRAWING TO ART AND DESIGN.

MR PATTEN THEN TOURED THE SECOND FLOOR ARCADE OF WALDORF GARDEN WHERE KARAOKES, JAPANESE COMIC BOOK STORES, MODEL TOY SHOPS AND A TELEVISION GAME PARLOUR NOW DOMINATE THE BUSINESS UNITS.

OFFICIALS ALSO DESCRIBED IT AS A POSSIBLE BREEDING GROUND FOR JUVENILE DELINQUENCY.

THE THIRD FLOOR, HOWEVER, IS A POPULAR SHOPPING AREA.

/MR PATTEN'S

MR PATTEN'S NEXT STOP WAS THE TUEN MUN PUBLIC RIDING SCHOOL.

BEFORE CONCLUDING HIS VISIT, MR PATTEN MET DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS AT A RECEPTION.

MR PATTEN WAS ACCOMPANIED BY THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MISS CHRISTINE CHOW AND THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT OFFICER, MR PETER LEUNG.

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CERTAIN MARITIME FEES AND CHARGES TO BE REVISED
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THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT FIVE CATEGORIES OF FEES COLLECTED BY THE MARINE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE REVISED FROM AUGUST 23 THIS YEAR.

THE FIRST CATEGORY IS PORT DUES AND FEES, WHICH INCLUDED PORT AND LIGHT DUES, ANCHORAGE DUES, HARBOUR AND PRIVATE MOORING FEES, MISCELLANEOUS PERMIT AND CERTIFICATE FEE.

THE OTHER FOUR CATEGORIES ARE: LICENCE AND RELATED FEES FOR LOCAL CRAFT AND RIVER TRADE VESSEL; SURVEY FEES FOR CONVENTION SHIPS AND LOCAL CRAFT; EXAMINATION FEES AND FEES FOR THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY MERCANTILE MARINE AND SEAMEN'S RECRUITING OFFICES.

THE FEES WERE LAST REVISED IN AUGUST 1993. THE REVISION THIS YEAR WAS A 10 PER CENT INCREASE, AN ADJUSTMENT IN LINE WITH INFLATION, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

DETAILS OF THE NEW FEES AND CHARGES WILL BE GAZETTED THIS FRIDAY (JUNE 3).

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APPLICATIONS INVITED FOR MORTGAGE INTEREST SUBSIDY SCHEME
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THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IS INVITING ELIGIBLE FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES HOLDING SUBVENTED POSTS IN AIDED SCHOOLS TO APPLY FOR ASSISTANCE UNDER THE 1994/95 MORTGAGE INTEREST SUBSIDY SCHEME (MISS).

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT ELIGIBLE STAFF ARE:

- * THOSE RECEIVING A MONTHLY BASIC SALARY EQUIVALENT TO MASTER PAY SCALE POINT 22 OR ABOVE (\$19,070 OR MORE) AND HAVE A MINIMUM OF 10 YEARS' CONTINUOUS RECOGNISED SERVICE AS AT APRIL 30, 1994; OR
- * THOSE RECEIVING A MONTHLY BASIC SALARY BELOW MASTER PAY SCALE POINT 22 WHO HAVE A MINIMUM OF 20 YEARS' CONTINUOUS RECOGNISED SERVICE AS AT APRIL 30, 1994.

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THE CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS IS JULY 15, 1994.

"CIRCULARS, APPLICATION FORMS AND RELEVANT INFORMATION LEAFLETS HAVE BEEN SENT TO HEADS OF SCHOOLS TODAY. UNDER THE SCHEME, SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS WILL RECEIVE A MONTHLY SUBSIDY FOR PAYMENT OF INTEREST ON THEIR HOME MORTGAGE LOAN," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THIS YEAR'S QUOTA WAS ESTIMATED TO BE 1,700 BUT THAT THIS WAS SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS. PRIORITY FOR ADMISSION TO THE SCHEME WOULD BE BASED ON THE LENGTH OF SERVICE IN EXCESS OF THE MINIMUM RECOGNISED SERVICE.

ENQUIRIES ABOUT THE SCHEME SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE MORTGAGE INTEREST SUBSIDY SCHEME SECTION ON TEL 892 6104 OR 892 6596.

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CALL TO ESTABLISH BUSINESS ETHICS CODES

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, MRS ANSON CHAN, TONIGHT (WEDNESDAY) URGED COMPANIES TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO A CALL BY THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (ICAC) TO ESTABLISH CODES OF PRACTICE OF BUSINESS ETHICS.

ONLY 20 OF THE NEAR 200 COMPANIES SO FAR TARGETED BY THE ICAC TO ESTABLISH THE CODES HAVE DONE SO.

THE ICAC WILL BE TACKLING ALL MAJOR COMPANIES WITH MORE THAN 100 STAFF MEMBERS IN THE NEXT 18 MONTHS WITH THE AIM OF ESTABLISHING THE CODES OF CONDUCT.

MRS CHAN MADE THE APPEAL AT THE INAUGURAL DINNER OF A CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF BUSINESS VALUES.

SHE SAID THE CENTRE WAS DESTINED TO PLAY A KEY ROLE IN SHAPING THE ATTITUDES AND STANDARDS OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR IN BUSINESS OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENTREPRENEURS AND PROFESSIONALS.

MRS CHAN SAID IN A LITTLE OVER THREE YEARS, SOVEREIGNTY OVER HONG KONG WOULD REVERT TO CHINA UNDER THE CONCEPT OF "ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS".

"BUT IN THE AREA OF BUSINESS CONDUCT AND MANAGEMENT I HOPE YOU WILL ALL AGREE THAT THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE ETHIC, THAT IS THE ETHIC THAT PRESERVES THE RULE OF LAW AND LEVEL PLAYING FIELD FOR ALL.

"WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING CLOSELY WITH OUR BUSINESS PARTNERS IN CHINA TO ENSURE THAT BUSINESS IS CONDUCTED CLEANLY AND FAIRLY TO THE BENEFIT OF ALL," SHE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 1994

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COURTESY CALL ON SOCIAL WELFARE DIRECTOR

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THE NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF YAN CHAI HOSPITAL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PAID A COURTESY CALL ON THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MR IAN STRACHAN, AND EXCHANGED WITH HIM VIEWS ON WELFARE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE HOSPITAL IN THE COMING YEAR.

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, MRS SILVANA HO, SAID THE YAN CHAI HOSPITAL HAD BEEN DEVELOPING AND DIVERSIFYING ITS SOCIAL SERVICES TO CATER FOR THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE OF ALL WALKS OF LIFE.

SHE THANKED THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT FOR RENDERING SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE TO THE HOSPITAL OVER THE PAST YEARS.

DURING THE VISIT, MR STRACHAN PLEDGED THAT HIS DEPARTMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO CO-OPERATE WITH THE HOSPITAL TO PROVIDE MORE WELFARE SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR THE COMMUNITY.

AT PRESENT, THE YAN CHAI HOSPITAL HAS ABOUT 30 SOCIAL SERVICES UNITS PROVIDING SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY, YOUTH, CHILDREN AND THE MENTALLY RETARDED.

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HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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	\$ MILLION	TIME (HOURS)	CUMULATIVE CHANGE (\$ MILLION)
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OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,330	0930	+178
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,569	1000	+178
CHANGE ATTRIBUTABLE TO :		1100	+258
MONEY MARKET ACTIVITY	+259	1200	+259
LAF TODAY	-20	1500	+259
		1600	+259
LAF RATE 2.50 BID/4.50 OFFER	TWI 124.8	**+0.0*	1.6.94

/HONG KONG

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 1994

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HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY

EF BILLS

EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS

TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	3.33	18 MONTHS	2511	4.15	97.83	5.79
1 MONTH	3.56	24 MONTHS	2605	6.35	100.36	6.25
3 MONTHS	4.02	29 MONTHS	3610	4.20	94.98	6.59
6 MONTHS	4.51	32 MONTHS	3701	4.60	95.16	6.72
12 MONTHS	5.22	35 MONTHS	3704	6.15	98.50	6.84

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 20,309 MN

CLOSED 1 JUNE 1994

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DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

SUPPLEMENT

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 1994

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POLICY ON OVERHANGING SIGNBOARDS IS TO ENSURE SAFETY

* * * * *

THE PRIMARY CONCERN OF THE GOVERNMENT AS REGARDS OVERHANGING SIGNBOARDS IS SAFETY, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID THE POLICY WAS TO ENSURE THAT SIGNBOARDS WHICH COULD POSE A THREAT TO PUBLIC SAFETY WERE REMOVED EITHER BY THE OWNERS THEMSELVES OR, IF NECESSARY, BY THE BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT.

SPEAKING DURING A MOTION DEBATE ON OVERHANGING SIGNBOARDS, MR EASON SAID: "ACTION TAKEN TO DATE TO DEAL WITH DANGEROUS OR POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS SIGNS HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE AND APPEARS TO REPRESENT A BETTER APPLICATION OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES THAN A LICENSING SYSTEM.

"THE POSSIBILITY OF INTRODUCING A LICENSING SYSTEM HAS BEEN CAREFULLY CONSIDERED AND THE CONCLUSION REACHED WAS THAT SUCH A SYSTEM WOULD BE RESOURCE INTENSIVE AND COSTLY.

"IT WOULD TAKE YEARS TO DEAL WITH EXISTING SIGNS WHERE THE MAIN POTENTIAL SAFETY PROBLEMS LIE AND TO DEAL ONLY WITH NEW SIGNS WOULD BE TO DIRECT RESOURCES AWAY FROM THE AREA OF POTENTIAL RISK.

"THE CASE WITH WHICH LICENSING CONTROLS COULD BE EVADED AND THE DIFFICULTY OF ENFORCEMENT ARE ALSO FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED," HE SAID.

THE BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT ESTIMATES THAT THERE ARE ABOUT 170,000 ADVERTISING SIGNS IN THE TERRITORY; THAT THIS FIGURE INCREASES BY ABOUT SIX PER CENT PER YEAR; AND THAT ABOUT THREE PER CENT OF EXISTING SIGNS WILL BE REPLACED EACH YEAR.

MR EASON SAID MEASURES BEING TAKEN BY THE BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT WERE GENERALLY SUFFICIENT TO ENSURE THAT SIGNBOARDS DID NOT POSE A HAZARD TO THE PUBLIC.

"WHEN A DANGEROUS OR POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS SIGN IS IDENTIFIED, A NOTICE WILL BE SERVED ON THE OWNER REQUIRING THE SIGN TO BE REMOVED OR RENDERED SAFE.

"IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, THE BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT MAY REMOVE A DANGEROUS SIGN WITHOUT GIVING PRIOR NOTICE TO THE OWNER.

"AS PART OF THEIR DAILY WORK IN THE FIELD OF BUILDING SAFETY, STAFF OF THE BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT BOTH SEEK OUT DANGEROUS SIGNS AND RESPOND TO PUBLIC REPORTS ABOUT THEM.

HE SAID: "SINCE APRIL 1987 WHEN THE BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT TOOK ON THE TASK OF DEALING WITH DANGEROUS SIGNS, MORE THAN 5,800 NOTICES HAVE BEEN SERVED ON OWNERS, AND OVER 3,900 (ABOUT 67 PER CENT) HAVE BEEN COMPLIED WITH VOLUNTARILY. THE REMAINDER WERE DEALT WITH BY GOVERNMENT CONTRACTORS.

THE NUMBER OF CASES HAS DIMINISHED FROM A PEAK OF ABOUT 2,240 IN 1988 TO 67 IN 1993. IN THE FIRST FOUR MONTHS OF THIS YEAR THERE WERE NINE CASES.

AS REGARDS THE ATTACHMENT OF ADVERTISING SIGNS TO PRIVATE BUILDINGS, IT IS WITHIN THE POWER OF THE OWNERS, UNDER THE DEED OF MUTUAL COVENANT, TO EXERCISE CONTROL IF THEY CHOOSE TO.

MOTION DEBATE ON EMPLOYEE SAFETY

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FOLLOWING IS A SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON EMPLOYEE SAFETY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

MR PRESIDENT,

SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK IS AN AREA OF MAJOR CONCERN TO THE GOVERNMENT. HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC SUCCESS RELIES HEAVILY ON OUR HAVING A HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE WORK FORCE. MUCH OF OUR LEGISLATIVE, PROMOTION AND ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS HAVE BEEN TARGETTED AT THIS ESSENTIAL SUBJECT AREA.

FOR EXAMPLE, IN 1992 AND 1993, WE HAVE INTRODUCED A TOTAL OF 28 PIECES OF PRIMARY AND SUBSIDIARY LABOUR LEGISLATION. 16 OF THESE WERE AIMED AT ENHANCING INDUSTRIAL SAFETY, PROMOTING OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND IMPROVING EMPLOYEES COMPENSATION. BETWEEN THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT AND THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COUNCIL, A TOTAL OF 81 SEMINARS, 768 PROMOTION VISITS, 33 EXHIBITIONS AND 519 TALKS ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH WERE ORGANISED IN 1993. THESE PROMOTION EFFORTS WERE TARGETTED AT OUR ENTIRE 2.8 MILLION WORKFORCE. MANY OF THESE MESSAGES WERE MEANT FOR ALL EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES, NOT JUST THOSE WORKING IN INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS.

IT IS GOVERNMENT'S FIRM BELIEF THAT ENSURING SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK MUST BE THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES. IT IS CLEARLY IN EMPLOYERS' INTEREST TO ENSURE THAT THEY HAVE A SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT SO THAT THEIR EMPLOYEES' PRODUCTIVITY MAY BE MAXIMISED AND THEIR WORK PROCESSES WILL NOT BE DISRUPTED BY FREQUENT ACCIDENTS. EQUALLY, IT MUST ALSO BE IN THE INTEREST OF EMPLOYEES THEMSELVES TO FOLLOW SAFETY PROCEDURES TO PROTECT THEIR OWN LIFE AND LIMB. NO COMPENSATION SCHEME CAN ADEQUATELY PAY FOR THE LOSS IN LIVES OR PERMANENT CAPACITY, NO MATTER HOW GENEROUS.

GOVERNMENT OF COURSE HAS A KEY ROLE TO PLAY AS WELL. WE PROVIDE THE NECESSARY LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AND THE ENFORCEMENT MACHINERY TO MAKE SURE THAT THOSE WHO SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK, I.E. EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES, WILL NOT SHIRK THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES OR CUT CORNERS. WE UNDERTAKE PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY EFFORTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR TO KEEP DRIVING THE MESSAGE HOME THAT NO ONE SHOULD BE COMPLACENT. WE GIVE INFORMATION AND ADVICE TO ALL EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES TO HELP THEM IN IMPROVING THEIR WORK ENVIRONMENT.

OUR EFFORTS ARE PAYING OFF AND GRADUAL IMPROVEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE. FOR EXAMPLE, OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, TOTAL WORK ACCIDENT RATE, INCLUDING BOTH INDUSTRIAL AND NON-INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS, HAS DROPPED FROM 40.2 TO 27.6 PER THOUSAND WORKERS. FATALITIES IN THE INDUSTRY SECTOR HAVE ALSO DROPPED FROM 82 TO 65 IN 1992, THOUGH REGRETTABLY WE DID HAVE A SORRY RECORD LAST YEAR, DUE TO SEVERAL TRAGIC ACCIDENTS AT CONSTRUCTION SITES.

/WE ARE

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 1994

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WE ARE NEVER COMPLACENT ABOUT OUR WORKPLACE'S SAFETY RECORDS. WE ARE STILL VERY UNHAPPY ABOUT THE ACCIDENT RATES, ESPECIALLY THOSE IN CONSTRUCTION SITES AND SHIPYARDS. WE ARE WORKING HARD TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION, THROUGH LEGISLATION, EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY.

I HAVE LISTENED CAREFULLY TO MANY MEMBERS' PLEA TO EXTEND THE SCOPE OF OUR INDUSTRIAL SAFETY LEGISLATION TO COVER ALL TRADES IN ORDER TO SAFEGUARD THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF ALL OUR WORKERS. I FULLY APPRECIATE THE SENTIMENT BEHIND THE PROPOSAL. I AM SUPPORTIVE OF THE SPIRIT BEHIND IT. BUT WE HAVE TO GET OUR PRIORITIES RIGHT. TO BE EFFECTIVE, WE NEED TO FOCUS OUR LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS AND ENFORCEMENT CAPACITY ON THOSE AREAS WHICH CALL URGENT ATTENTION. WE MUST NOT SPREAD THESE EFFORTS SO THIN THAT WE MAY END UP WITH NO NOTICEABLE IMPROVEMENTS ON THE ENTIRE FRONT.

LET US EXAMINE THE SUBJECT CLOSELY AND SEE WHETHER WE NEED TO ADOPT AN ALL-EMBRACING APPROACH AT THIS STAGE. LET US LOOK AT THE ACCIDENT RECORD FIRST. WE SHOULD FOCUS ON THE SERIOUS INJURY ACCIDENT RECORD FOR THEY ARE OF GREATEST CONCERN TO US IN DECIDING ON WHERE TO PLACE ENFORCEMENT PRIORITY. ACCORDING TO LABOUR DEPARTMENT'S STATISTICS, SERIOUS INJURY ACCIDENTS ARE DEFINED AS ACCIDENTS WHICH RESULT IN PERMANENT DISABILITY OF OVER 5 PER CENT TO THE INJURED EMPLOYEES OR WHICH RESULT IN THE INJURED EMPLOYEES HAVING TO TAKE SICK LEAVE OF MORE THAN 30 DAYS.

IN 1993, A TOTAL OF 3,386 SERIOUS INJURY ACCIDENTS WERE SETTLED UNDER THE EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION ORDINANCE. OF THESE, ONLY 58 CASES TOOK PLACE IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES NOT COVERED BY THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE. THIS REPRESENTS 1.7 PER CENT OF SUCH RECORDED ACCIDENTS.

LEST MEMBERS MAY SAY THAT WE SHOULD LOOK AT THE OVERALL ACCIDENT STATISTICS AS WELL TO MAKE SURE THAT WE ARE NOT NEGLECTING THE MINOR INJURIES, LET US EXAMINE THE RELATIVE ACCIDENT RATES BETWEEN THOSE SECTORS THAT ARE ALREADY COVERED UNDER THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE TO THOSE THAT ARE NOT. IN 1993, ACCIDENT RATE FOR THE FORMER IS 52.6 PER THOUSAND WORKERS, WHILE THE RATE FOR THE LATTER IS 13.4.

IF WE LOOK AT SPECIFIC SECTORS, IN 1993, THE ACCIDENT RATE PER THOUSAND WORKERS WAS 294.8 FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, 52.6 FOR ALL INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT, 6.1 FOR WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND HOTELS AND 7.0 FOR FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES, THE LATTER TWO CATEGORIES BEING AMONG THE MAJOR TRADES IN TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE NON-MANUFACTURING SECTOR.

THESE COMPARISONS DO INDICATE THAT THE OCCURRENCE OF EMPLOYMENT-RELATED ACCIDENTS IN THOSE AREAS THAT ARE AS YET NOT COVERED BY THE LEGISLATION IS INDEED SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER, AND WHERE ACCIDENTS DID TAKE PLACE, THEY ARE LARGELY OF A RELATIVELY LESS SERIOUS NATURE.

/LET US

LET US ALSO LOOK AT THE NATURE OF THE ACCIDENTS IN THE TWO SECTORS. ACCIDENTS IN INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS AND CONSTRUCTION SITES ARE DUE LARGELY TO UNSAFE INDUSTRIAL PRACTICES OR INADEQUATE SAFEGUARDS IN THE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF HEAVY OR DANGEROUS MACHINERY. RECTIFICATION OFTEN INVOLVES EXPERT INPUT IN SAFE OPERATION METHODS AND IN PROPER EXAMINATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE MACHINERY CONCERNED. WHILE EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES ARE STILL TASKED WITH THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT THE MACHINES AND PRACTICES ARE SAFE, GOVERNMENT CAN PLAY A POSITIVE ROLE HERE IN MAKING SURE THAT THE DESIRED SAFETY PRACTICES ARE FOLLOWED. WHERE IT INVOLVES COMPLICATED WORK PROCEDURES, WE ALSO NEED LEGISLATION TO SPECIFY THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THOSE WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE PROCEDURES.

ACCIDENTS IN THE OFFICE AND SHOP-FLOOR ENVIRONMENT ARE VERY DIFFERENT THEY ARE DUE LARGELY TO MINOR ENVIRONMENTAL INADEQUACIES SUCH AS POOR ILLUMINATION, SLIPPERY FLOOR, OR CARELESS HANDLING OF OFFICE FURNITURE OR EQUIPMENT, OR IN SOME CASES SIMPLE ABSENT-MINDEDNESS. THEY ARE MAINLY MATTERS THAT CAN BE CORRECTED EASILY AND QUICKLY THROUGH EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE INITIATIVES, WITHOUT RESORTING TO LEGISLATION AND INSPECTION.

THAT IS WHY WE HAVE EMPHASISED ON PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY WHEN IT COMES TO SAFETY AND HEALTH IN THE NON-INDUSTRIAL WORKPLACE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE OCCUPATIONAL AND HEALTH DIVISION OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT GAVE A TOTAL OF 519 TALKS ON SAFETY AND HEALTH IN NON-INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS IN 1993. IT ALSO PUBLISHED MANY EDUCATION PAMPHLETS ON SUBJECTS SUCH AS HEALTH ADVICE ON VENTILATION SYSTEMS, USE OF VISUAL DISPLAY UNITS, AND PREVENTION OF BACK INJURY. THESE PUBLICATIONS ARE MAILED REGULARLY TO TRADE ORGANISATIONS, TRADE UNIONS AND EMPLOYERS.

THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH COUNCIL IS ALSO RESPONSIBLE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, FOR THE PROMOTION OF BETTER SAFETY AND HEALTH STANDARDS FOR ALL WORKERS. FORMED IN 1988, THE COUNCIL IS FUNDED BY THE EMPLOYEE'S COMPENSATION INSURANCE LEVY. IT PUBLISHES A BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE, THE "GREEN CROSS", TO PUBLICISE SAFE PRACTICES IN THE WORKPLACE. MANY ARTICLES IN THIS MAGAZINE DEAL SPECIFICALLY WITH HOW TO ENHANCE SAFETY IN THE OFFICE AND NON-INDUSTRIAL ENVIRONMENT.

GOVERNMENT HAS NOT IGNORED THE SAFETY OF NON-INDUSTRIAL WORKERS. WE HAVE INDEED BEEN VERY PRAGMATIC IN CONSIDERING WHETHER THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO COVER NON-INDUSTRIAL AREAS. DESPITE THE TITLE OF THE ORDINANCE, THIS LEGISLATION ACTUALLY APPLIES TO WORK IN CONSTRUCTION SITES AND SHIPYARDS; LOADING, UNLOADING AND HANDLING OF GOODS AND CARGOES; AND THE TRANSPORTATION OF PASSENGERS AND GOODS. IN 1990, IN VIEW OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF WORK ACCIDENTS IN CATERING ESTABLISHMENTS, THE SCOPE OF THE ORDINANCE HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO COVER RESTAURANTS AND OTHER CATERING BUSINESSES WHICH DO NOT NORMALLY FALL WITHIN THE AMBIT OF INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS. THE RESULT HAS BEEN ENCOURAGING: THE ACCIDENT RATE PER THOUSAND WORKERS HAS DECLINED FROM 79.8 TO 66.3 BETWEEN 1992 AND 1993.

WE SHALL CONTINUE TO ADOPT THIS PRAGMATIC APPROACH. WHERE THERE ARE AREAS THAT GENUINELY CALL FOR SPECIFIC LEGISLATIVE CONTROL TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND HEALTH, WE WOULD GIVE THOSE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION.

/BUT I

BUT I SHOULD EMPHASISE THAT IT WOULD BE MUCH MORE COST-EFFECTIVE FOR US TO FOCUS ON AREAS WHERE THEY WOULD GENUINELY BENEFIT FROM LEGISLATIVE CONTROL. WE SHALL HAVE TO JUDGE EACH AND EVERY CASE ON ITS OWN MERITS.

THE REASON FOR THIS IS SIMPLE. DESPITE THE DECLINE IN THE NUMBER OF MANUFACTURING WORKERS, THE NUMBER OF FACTORIES REMAINS AT ABOUT 60,000. THOUGH THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE ITS INSPECTION ON FACTORIES, SOME STAFF WILL BE RE-DEPLOYED TO MONITOR SAFETY AT CONSTRUCTION SITES WHERE THE ACCIDENT RATE IS STILL UNACCEPTABLY HIGH.

WE NOW HAVE 220,000 NON-INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS NOT COVERED BY THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE. IF GOVERNMENT WERE TO EXTEND THE SCOPE OF THE LEGISLATION TO COVER ALL OF THESE ESTABLISHMENTS, THE ADDITIONAL MANPOWER REQUIRED COULD RANGE FROM ONE-THIRD TO TWICE THAT OF THE PRESENT FACTORY INSPECTORATE ESTABLISHMENT, DEPENDING ON WHETHER WE CHOOSE TO ACT ON COMPLAINTS AND INSPECT LARGE ESTABLISHMENTS ONLY, OR WHETHER WE UNDERTAKE FULL-SCALE INSPECTIONS OF ALL BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS.

IN ADDITION, WE MIGHT ALSO NEED ABOUT 20 MEDICAL DOCTORS, OCCUPATIONAL HYGIENISTS AND NURSES. EVEN LEAVING ASIDE THE AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES, SUCH A SCALE OF INCREASE IN THE STAFF ESTABLISHMENT WOULD IMPOSE TREMENDOUS RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING DIFFICULTIES FOR THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT. IN THE SHORT-TERM, IT WOULD PUT ENORMOUS PRESSURE ON EXISTING STAFF RESOURCES, DILUTE THE MUCH NEEDED EFFORTS ON THE MONITORING OF THOSE INDUSTRIES MOST URGENTLY REQUIRING ATTENTION, AND OVER-STRETCH THE MANAGEMENT'S ATTENTION IN PLANNING FOR BETTER INDUSTRIAL SAFETY IN THE HIGH-RISK SECTORS. IN REALITY, THEREFORE, WE WOULD HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO PROGRESS STEP BY STEP.

I WOULD LIKE TO CONCLUDE BY REITERATING THAT GOVERNMENT IS FULLY DETERMINED TO ENHANCE THE STANDARD OF SAFETY AND HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE:

- TOGETHER WITH THE WORKS BRANCH, WE ARE WORKING VIGOROUSLY ON AN ACTIVE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA. WE AIM TO INTRODUCE 5 PIECES OF PRIMARY AND SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION IN THE NEXT LEGISLATIVE SESSION;
- WE HAVE INCREASED THE ENFORCEMENT CAPACITY OF THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE SUBSTANTIALLY OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS THROUGH THE REDEPLOYMENT OF STAFF AND THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL POSTS;
- TOGETHER WITH THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COUNCIL, WE SHALL BE PROMOTING SAFETY MESSAGES EVEN MORE VIGOROUSLY IN THE MONTHS AHEAD; AND
- WE ARE ALSO GIVING SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO HOW WE MAY EMBARK ON AN EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIAL SAFETY PROGRAMME IN THE LONGER TERM, AND HOW BEST TO EMBED A SAFETY CULTURE IN THE WORKPLACE. AT THE END OF THE DAY, NOBODY CAN BETTER LOOK AFTER SAFETY IN EMPLOYMENT THAN THE EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES THEMSELVES.

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THERE IS A LONG WAY TO GO BUT WE ARE DETERMINED TO TAKE THESE STEPS. I LOOK FORWARD TO MEMBERS' CONTINUING SUPPORT TO THESE EFFORTS SO THAT WE MAY TOGETHER MAKE HONG KONG A MUCH SAFER AND HEALTHIER WORKPLACE.

WITH THESE REMARKS, THE ADMINISTRATION SUPPORTS THE MOTION.

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BILL HELPS ENHANCE TRAVELLERS' SECURITY

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THE SECURITY OF THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY ENHANCED UNDER THE CRIMES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994 INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE BILL SEEKS TO IMPLEMENT MEASURES SET OUT IN THE MONTREAL CONVENTION ON THE MARKING OF PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES FOR DETECTION PURPOSES.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR KEN WOODHOUSE, SAID: "THESE MEASURES, IF APPROVED, WILL HELP US PLAY OUR PART IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM."

"THE BILL FOLLOWS THE CONVENTION IN PROSCRIBING THE IMPORT OF UNMARKED PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES INTO THE TERRITORY.

"ADDITIONALLY, IT PROPOSES TO MAKE IT AN OFFENCE TO EXPORT, TO POSSESS OR TO TRANSFER, FOR ALL BUT A FEW CLEARLY DEFINED PURPOSES, UNMARKED PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES," HE SAID.

PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES ARE ATTRACTIVE WEAPONS FOR TERRORISTS BECAUSE THEY ARE EASY TO TRANSPORT AND CONCEAL, AS WELL AS DIFFICULT TO DETECT BY CONVENTIONAL MEANS.

UNDER THE CONVENTION, ALL PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES HAVE TO BE MANUFACTURED WITH A CHEMICAL MARKER THAT EMIT A READILY DETECTABLE VAPOUR.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL TO QUICKEN TRANSLATION OF LAWS

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A BILL TO SIMPLIFY AND QUICKEN THE PROCEDURES FOR AUTHENTICATING THE CHINESE TEXTS OF ORDINANCES ENACTED ORIGINALLY ONLY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, SAID THE TASK OF PRODUCING A FULLY BILINGUAL SET OF ORDINANCES AND SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION WAS OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE AND A DAUNTING TASK.

IT INVOLVES THE TRANSLATION INTO CHINESE OF 529 ORDINANCES AND THEIR SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION OR SOME 22,000 PAGES OF LAW.

"WE HAVE SET OURSELVES THE TARGET OF COMPLETING THIS WORK BEFORE JUNE 30, 1997," HE NOTED.

HE SAID THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE AT PRESENT PROVIDED THAT, BEFORE A TRANSLATED TEXT MIGHT BE DECLARED AUTHENTIC BY THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL, THE BILINGUAL LAWS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MUST BE CONSULTED, AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MUST APPROVE THE TEXT BY RESOLUTION.

THE WORK OF TRANSLATION WAS UNDERTAKEN BY THE LAW DRAFTING DIVISION OF THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT.

MR MATHEWS SAID THIS PROCEDURE WAS RECENTLY REVIEWED BY THE LAW DRAFTING DIVISION, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE LEGCO'S SUB-COMMITTEE ON AUTHENTIC CHINESE TEXTS.

IT WAS AGREED THAT A SIMPLIFIED PROCEDURE WOULD HELP THE TIMELY COMPLETION OF THE WHOLE AUTHENTICATION EXERCISE.

"THE BILL THEREFORE PROPOSES TO REPEAL THE NEED FOR THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S PRIOR APPROVAL OF A CHINESE TEXT.

"HOWEVER, UNDER SECTION 34 OF THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES ORDINANCE, ALL ORDERS OF THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL DECLARING A CHINESE TEXT TO BE AUTHENTIC WILL BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THIS COUNCIL AND WILL BE SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT," MR MATHEWS SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

PUBLIC HOUSING AREAS SAFE

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SECURITY PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES UNDER REDEVELOPMENT ARE CONFINED MAINLY TO MINOR BURGLARY CASES AND TRESPASS INTO VACANT PREMISES, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON MARTIN LEE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR EASON SAID PREVENTIVE MEASURES TAKEN BY THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT TO TACKLE THESE PROBLEMS INCLUDED THE PROPERLY SEALING OR LOCKING UP OF VACANT UNITS AND THE INSTALLING OF GATES TO BUILDING ENTRANCES, STAIRCASES AND CORRIDORS BUT WITHOUT COMPROMISING FIRE SERVICES REQUIREMENTS.

HE SAID WHEN A BLOCK WAS HALF VACANT, SECURITY GUARDS WERE NORMALLY PROVIDED ROUND THE CLOCK AND ADDITIONAL GUARDS WERE EMPLOYED IF NEEDED.

ALSO, VACANT FLATS WERE PATROLLED BY ESTATE STAFF AND THE POLICE, AND ESTATE STAFF STAYED IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH TENANTS AND MEMBERS OF MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES, AREA COMMITTEES AND DISTRICT BOARDS.

IN ADDITION, MR EASON SAID THE POLICE DID DISTRIBUTE POSTERS AND LEAFLETS IN ESTATES UNDERGOING REDEVELOPMENT TO PROMOTE RESIDENTS' AWARENESS OF THE NEED TO TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS.

HE NOTED THAT CRIME RATES IN HOUSING ESTATES WERE GENERALLY LOWER THAN TERRITORY-WIDE RATES AND THE LAW AND ORDER SITUATION IN HOUSING ESTATES UNDER REDEVELOPMENT WAS GENERALLY NO WORSE THAN THAT IN OTHER ESTATES.

A COMPARISON OF FIGURES FOR REPORTED CRIME OVER THE 1992 TO 1994 PERIOD INDICATES A MIXED PATTERN OF IMPROVEMENT, DETERIORATION AND A POSITION HOLDING RELATIVELY STEADY.

THE MAIN AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT WERE AT LOK FU AND TSZ ON; WHILE TSZ CHING AND TUNG TAU WERE THE MAIN AREAS OF DETERIORATION.

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CLOSE LIAISON TO REVIEW GOLDSMITH SHOP SECURITY

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SENIOR POLICE OFFICERS MEET REGULARLY WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF GOLDSMITH AND JEWELLERY SHOPS TO REVIEW PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING SECURITY MEASURES.

THESE RELATE MAINLY TO ACCESS CONTROL, ACCESS TO THE GOODS, SURVEILLANCE DEVICES, SAFE STORAGE OF STOCK, THE MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS AND PROMPT REPORTING TO POLICE IN CASE OF A ROBBERY.

RESPONDING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON EDWARD S T HO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR KEN WOODHOUSE, SAID THERE HAD BEEN A GREAT DEAL OF LIAISON BETWEEN THE POLICE AND THE SHOPS.

THIS HAS RESULTED IN A NUMBER OF IMPROVEMENTS TO SECURITY, HE SAID.

REFERRING TO THE ARMED ROBBERY IN CENTRAL ON MAY 18, MR WOODHOUSE SAID A NUMBER OF MEASURES HAD BEEN TAKEN TO MINIMISE SUCH ROBBERIES.

THE POLICE HAVE GIVEN PRIORITY TO PATROLS OF HIGH-RISK PREMISES IN RECENT YEARS. THEY HAVE ALSO DEPLOYED INCREASED INTELLIGENCE-GATHERING RESOURCES TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ON THE WHEREABOUTS OF ILLEGAL FIREARMS AND GUN GANGS.

IN THE CASE OF CRIMES INVOLVING CRIMINALS FROM CHINA, THE GOVERNMENT HAS STEPPED UP LIAISON WITH CHINA TO ENLIST THEIR HELP IN PREVENTING THE IMPORTATION OF ILLEGAL FIREARMS AND HIRED CRIMINALS INTO THE TERRITORY.

"THE MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE POLICE HAVE LED TO A SHARP DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF ROBBERIES OF WATCH AND JEWELRY SHOPS OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS," HE SAID.

THERE WERE 153 SUCH ROBBERIES IN 1991; THIS FIGURE REDUCED TO 42 IN 1992 AND AGAIN TO 17 IN 1993.

THE OVERALL CRIME RATE FOR FEBRUARY TO APRIL THIS YEAR HAS REDUCED BY ABOUT 7 PER CENT AS COMPARED WITH THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR. ROBBERY, INCLUDING ARMED ROBBERY, HAS ALSO DECREASED BY SOME 18 PER CENT.

"CLEARLY THE MEASURES WE HAVE BEEN TAKING ARE BRINGING RESULTS AND WE MUST MAINTAIN THEM," MR WOODHOUSE SAID.

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POWER COMPANIES TO RELEASE DATA ON ELECTRICITY DEMAND
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THE POWER COMPANIES HAVE AGREED TO THE GOVERNMENT'S REQUEST IN RELEASING DATA COMPARING ACTUAL DEMAND WITH THE CORRESPONDING FORECAST IN PREVIOUS FINANCING PLANS APPROVED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MR GORDON SIU, SAID THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHRISTINE LOH.

MR SIU NOTED THAT IT WAS REASONABLE FOR THE PUBLIC TO EXPECT TO BE INFORMED OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH PAST FORECASTS OF DEMAND FOR ELECTRICITY HAD PROVED TO BE CORRECT.

"THE POWER COMPANIES HAVE ALSO AGREED TO ASSIST IN BRIEFING MEMBERS, AT A FUTURE MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC SERVICES AND PUBLIC UTILITIES PANEL OF THIS COUNCIL, ON THE METHODOLOGY AND ASSUMPTIONS USED IN PRODUCING FORECASTS OF DEMAND.

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"AT THE MEETING THE COMPANIES WOULD PROVIDE MEMBERS WITH COMPARATIVE DATA ON PAST FORECASTS AND ACTUAL DEMAND AND THEIR RESPECTIVE DEMAND PROFILES," MR SIU SAID.

UNDER THEIR RESPECTIVE SCHEME OF CONTROL AGREEMENTS, THE TWO POWER COMPANIES ARE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT FINANCING PLANS TO THE ADMINISTRATION.

THESE PLANS CONTAIN FORECASTS OF DEMAND FOR ELECTRICITY WHICH FORM THE BASIS FOR DECISIONS ON THE BUILDING OF GENERATING FACILITIES.

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BDC PASSPORTS NO GUARANTEE TO CONTRACT RENEWAL

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OVERSEAS AGREEMENT OFFICERS WHO ACQUIRE BDC PASSPORTS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS STATUS ARE NOT AUTOMATICALLY ENTITLED TO RENEW THEIR AGREEMENTS ON LOCAL CONDITIONS OF SERVICE, THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR MICHAEL SZE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN HIS REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ALLEN LEE, MR SZE SAID APART FROM MEETING THE PERMANENT RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT, APPLICANTS WERE ASSESSED AGAINST OTHER CRITERIA.

THESE INCLUDE SERVICE NEED, CONDUCT, AND PERFORMANCE AND PHYSICAL FITNESS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT REQUIRE CIVIL SERVANTS TO REPORT CHANGES IN THEIR NATIONALITY OR PASSPORT.

"HENCE WE DO NOT KNOW HOW MANY OVERSEAS AGREEMENT OFFICERS HAVE A BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORIES CITIZEN PASSPORT OR WHETHER THEY HAVE GIVEN UP THEIR ORIGINAL NATIONALITY," MR SZE SAID.

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CONTAINER VEHICLE PARKING PROBLEM TO BE DEALT WITH POSITIVELY

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THE GOVERNMENT AIMS TO DEAL WITH THE PARKING PROBLEM FOR CONTAINER VEHICLES IN A COMPREHENSIVE AND POSITIVE WAY, INVOLVING CO-ORDINATION AND CO-OPERATION WITH THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED, AS WELL AS CLOSE LIAISON WITH THE INDUSTRY AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN HE REPLIED TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MRS MIRIAM LAU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR EASON SAID A DEDICATED TEAM WOULD BE SET UP UNDER THE BLACK SPOTS TASK FORCE TO LOOK INTO CONTAINER-RELATED MATTERS.

/HE SAID

HE SAID AREAS SUITABLE FOR OPEN STORAGE USES WOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE 30 NEW RURAL OUTLINE ZONING PLANS WHICH WOULD BE PUBLISHED NEXT MONTH.

"THE TOTAL AREA ZONED FOR OPEN STORAGE PURPOSES WILL INCREASE FROM THE 250 HECTARES PRESENTLY SHOWN ON THE DEVELOPMENT PERMISSION AREA PLANS TO ABOUT 300 HECTARES.

"SUBJECT TO THE PERMISSION OF THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD, MANY OF THESE AREAS COULD BE USED FOR CONTAINER VEHICLE PARKING.

"FURTHERMORE, THE CONSULTANTS FOR THE PORT BACK-UP AND OPEN STORAGE REQUIREMENTS STUDY ARE CURRENTLY EXAMINING OTHER SITES IN THE SAN TIN, HA TSUEN, NGAU TAM MEI AND TUEN MUN WEST AREAS WHICH MAY ALSO BE SUITABLE FOR SUCH USES," HE SAID.

MR EASON NOTED THAT A NUMBER OF MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE CONTAINER VEHICLE PARKING SITUATION IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WERE IN HAND.

ABOUT 13 NEW SHORT TERM TENANCY SITES, PROVIDING SOME 1,400 PARKING SPACES, WILL BE TENDERED IN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS.

THE RECENTLY COMPLETED FREIGHT TRANSPORT STUDY HAD MADE SOME STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATION ON CONTAINER VEHICLE PARKING AND THE PARKING DEMAND STUDY, SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION IN EARLY 1995, WOULD ALSO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM, HE SAID.

THERE ARE ABOUT 130 CONTAINER VEHICLE PARKING SITES IN THE TERRITORY, WITH A TOTAL LAND AREA OF ABOUT 80 HECTARES AND PARKING SPACE FOR ABOUT 7,300 VEHICLES.

OF THESE, 30 SITES COVERING 21 HECTARES AND PARKING SPACES FOR ABOUT 1,900 VEHICLES ARE UNAUTHORISED.

THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF CONTAINER VEHICLES CROSSING THE BORDER EACH DAY DURING THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1994 WAS ABOUT 3,200 IN EACH DIRECTION.

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HK/CHINA/MACAU WORKING CLOSELY TO TACKLE POLLUTION

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES IN GUANGDONG AND MACAU ON MEASURES TO TACKLE POLLUTION PROBLEMS IN THE PEARL RIVER DELTA (PRD).

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON PETER WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THESE MEASURES INCLUDE:

- * THE ESTABLISHMENT UNDER THE HONG KONG-GUANGDONG ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LIAISON GROUP OF A JOINT TECHNICAL GROUP TO EXAMINE THE POLLUTION PROBLEMS IN DEEP BAY AND TO RECOMMEND ACTION PLANS TO ABATE SUCH POLLUTION;

- * AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE SHENZHEN RIVER TRAINING PROJECT, JOINTLY CONDUCTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT (EPD) AND THE SHENZHEN AUTHORITIES;
- * A JOINT SURVEY BY EPD AND THE SOUTH CHINA SEA BRANCH OF THE STATE OCEANIC ADMINISTRATION OF CHINA TO STUDY THE WATER QUALITY OF THE OUTER PRD; AND
- * A WORKING GROUP COMPRISING EPD, THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION BUREAU OF GUANGDONG PROVINCE (GEPB), AND THE MACAO GABINETE TECNICO DO AMBIENTE (MGTA) TO FORMULATE A PRD WASTE WATER DISPOSAL STRATEGY, THE OBJECT OF WHICH WILL BE TO PROVIDE A COMMON FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROPER PLANNING, MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION WHICH MAY HAVE SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS.

MR EASON SAID THE WORK IN DEEP BAY AND ON THE SHENZHEN RIVER WAS ONGOING.

"THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF THE OUTER PRD ARE BEING ANALYSED AS PART OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE STRATEGIC SEWAGE DISPOSAL SCHEME.

"DETAILED PROPOSALS FOR THE PRD WASTE-WATER DISPOSAL STRATEGY STUDY ARE UNDER EXAMINATION BY EPD, GEPB AND MGTA WITH A VIEW TO SETTING UP A WATER QUALITY COMPUTER MODEL AND TO DEVISING AN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN," HE SAID.

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OVERWHELMING RESPONSE TO SENIOR CITIZEN CARD

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THE SENIOR CITIZEN CARD OFFICE OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT HAS RECEIVED MORE THAN A QUARTER OF A MILLION APPLICATIONS SINCE THE SCHEME WAS IMPLEMENTED ON APRIL 1 THIS YEAR, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MRS WONG DESCRIBED THE RESPONSE AS "OVERWHELMING."

SHE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HUI YIN-FAT.

IN ORDER TO COPE WITH THIS LARGE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS, MRS WONG SAID THE DEPARTMENT HAD REDEPLOYED AN ADDITIONAL 14 STAFF MEMBERS TO AUGMENT THE CARD OFFICE, EMPLOYED TEMPORARY STAFF AND RECRUITED VOLUNTEERS.

IN ADDITION, SOME WORK HAS BEEN CONTRACTED OUT TO SHELTERED WORKSHOPS WHILE THE OPERATING HOURS OF THE CARD OFFICE HAVE BEEN EXTENDED.

THE OFFICE NOW WORKS FROM 9 AM TO 9 PM FROM MONDAY TO FRIDAY AND FROM 9 AM TO 6 PM ON SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS.

"WE HOPE TO CLEAR THE BACKLOG CREATED BY THE INITIAL TIDAL WAVE OF APPLICATIONS BY JULY THIS YEAR," MRS WONG SAID.

ON PROGRESS MADE TO RECOMMEND THE SCHEME TO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ORGANISATIONS, THE SECRETARY SAID SHE HAD WRITTEN PERSONALLY TO OVER 600 COMPANIES AND ESTABLISHMENTS TO INVITE THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SCHEME.

"I HAVE ALSO INVITED GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS TO SUPPORT THE SCHEME," SHE SAID.

AT PRESENT, 110 COMPANIES, ESTABLISHMENTS AND DEPARTMENTS WITH OVER 1,400 OUTLETS HAVE JOINED THE SCHEME.

"WE WILL CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE MORE COMPANIES AND ESTABLISHMENTS TO TAKE PART IN THIS WORTHWHILE PROJECT," MRS WONG SAID.

AS REGARDS THE QUESTION OF LOWERING THE QUALIFYING AGE FROM 65 TO 60, MRS WONG SAID MOST COMPANIES AND ESTABLISHMENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE SCHEME OFFER CONCESSIONS, DISCOUNTS AND PRIORITY SERVICE TO PERSONS AGED 65 AND ABOVE.

"TO ISSUE A CARD FOR PERSONS AGED 60 AND ABOVE MIGHT REDUCE THE USEFULNESS OF THE EXISTING CARD," SHE SAID.

"AS THE SCHEME HAS ONLY JUST STARTED AND HAS BEEN IN OPERATION FOR TWO MONTHS, WE SHOULD FIRST SEE HOW THE PRESENT SCHEME WORKS BEFORE CHANGING IT," MRS WONG SAID.

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OVER 270 GUESTHOUSES STOP OPERATION

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A TOTAL OF 273 GUESTHOUSES HAVE CEASED OPERATION OWING TO THEIR INABILITY TO COMPLY WITH REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE HOTEL AND GUESTHOUSE ACCOMMODATION ORDINANCE, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MOSES CHENG MO-CHI, MR SUEN SAID UP TO MAY 28 THIS YEAR, 252 GUESTHOUSES HAD BEEN LICENSED.

HE ALSO SAID NO PROSECUTION HAD BEEN TAKEN OUT SO FAR BUT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CLOSELY MONITOR THE SITUATION.

"THOSE UNLICENSED GUESTHOUSES WHICH CONTINUE TO OPERATE WITHOUT LICENCE OR FAIL TO CARRY OUT THE NECESSARY IMPROVEMENT WORKS ARE BEING WARNED.

"PROSECUTIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED IF THOSE WARNINGS ARE NOT BEING TAKEN HEED OF BY THE OPERATORS," HE ADDED.

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REMUNERATION PACKAGE FOR HA STAFF

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THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY EMPLOYMENT TERMS ARE DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR ITS STAFF ON THE BASIS OF COMPARABLE COSTS TO THE PUBLIC PURSE AND EQUITY TO CIVIL SERVANTS ON TRANSFER, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HUANG CHEN-YA IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MRS WONG SAID IN KEEPING WITH THE PRINCIPLE, THE REMUNERATION PACKAGE OF MANAGEMENT STAFF EMPLOYED IN THE AUTHORITY INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING COMPONENT PARTS:

- * A BASIC SALARY ACCORDING TO THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY PAY SCALE;
- * A CASH ALLOWANCE RANGING FROM 16.5% TO 65% OF THE BASIC SALARY IN LIEU OF FRINGE BENEFITS;
- * A NON-CONTRIBUTORY PROVIDENT FUND FOR PERMANENT STAFF OR A GRATUITY FOR CONTRACT STAFF EQUIVALENT TO 15%-25% OF THE BASIC SALARY ;
- * ANNUAL LEAVE AND MEDICAL/DENTAL BENEFITS;
- * PARTICIPATION IN THE HOME LOAN INTEREST SUBSIDY SCHEME FOR EMPLOYEES WITH AT LEAST FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE; AND
- * A NON-CONTRIBUTORY LIFE INSURANCE SCHEME AND A NON-CONTRIBUTORY DISABILITY INCOME INSURANCE SCHEME.

MRS WONG SAID A REMUNERATION PACKAGE WHICH INCLUDED A PERFORMANCE-RELATED ELEMENT APPROVED BY GOVERNMENT WAS AVAILABLE TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE.

"THE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE-RELATED AWARD VARIES FROM 0% TO 30% OF THE BASIC SALARY PLUS CASH ALLOWANCE ACCORDING TO ACTUAL PERFORMANCE RATED BY A SPECIAL COMMITTEE COMPRISING MEMBERS OF THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY BOARD," SHE ADDED.

MRS WONG POINTED OUT THAT AS WITH OTHER STATUTORY ORGANISATIONS, THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ACTUAL REMUNERATION WAS A MATTER OF NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE.

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CROWN LAND RESUMPTION ORDINANCE INVOKED 51 TIMES

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LAND HAS BEEN RESUMED UNDER THE CROWN LAND RESUMPTION ORDINANCE FOR A TOTAL OF 51 PROJECTS OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHIM PUI-CHUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

/MR EASON

MR EASON SAID 20 FORMER OWNERS OF LAND RESUMED FOR A LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (LDC) PROJECT IN JUBILEE STREET HAD REFUSED COMPENSATION SO FAR.

ONE FORMER OWNER IS DECEASED AND PROBATE IS BEING ARRANGED.

ANOTHER HAS CHALLENGED THE VALIDITY OF THE RESUMPTION IN COURT.

NEGOTIATIONS ON COMPENSATION AMOUNTS ARE CONTINUING FOR THE MAJORITY OF CASES.

MR EASON SAID THE TOTAL RESUMPTION COST ESTIMATE FOR THE PROJECT WAS \$519 MILLION WHICH WOULD BE REIMBURSED BY LDC PLUS AN ADMINISTRATION FEE.

"AS THE RESUMPTION COSTS ARE FULLY RECOVERABLE AND ARE NOT THEREFORE GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE, A SEPARATE ACCOUNT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED UNDER THE CONTROL OF LANDS DEPARTMENT INTO WHICH THE LDC ADVANCES THE AMOUNT REQUIRED PRIOR TO ANY EXPENDITURE BEING MADE," HE SAID, ADDING THAT APPROVAL OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WAS THEREFORE NOT NECESSARY.

MR EASON SAID THE LAND WAS GRANTED TO LDC BY MEANS OF A PRIVATE TREATY GRANT AND NO STAMP DUTY WAS REQUIRED.

WHILE THE LAND GRANT DOCUMENTS ARE BEING PROCESSED, AN ADVANCE POSSESSION LICENCE HAS BEEN ISSUED IN THE MEANTIME TO LDC TO ALLOW CONSTRUCTION AND ASSOCIATED WORKS TO PROCEED.

THE LAND PREMIUM WHICH HAS BEEN AGREED WITH THE LDC IS IN THE ORDER OF \$1.7 BILLION, HE SAID.

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TUNNEL CLOSURE ESSENTIAL

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THE CLOSURE OF TUNNEL TUBES IS ESSENTIAL TO ALLOW CLEANING, REPAIRS AND PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE.

THERE IS NO PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE AS SUCH WORK CANNOT BE CARRIED OUT WHEN THERE IS MOVING TRAFFIC.

THE LEAST DISRUPTIVE APPROACH IS TO CLOSE ONE TUBE AT A TIME AND PERMIT TWO-WAY TRAFFIC IN THE OTHER TUBE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR HAIDER BARMA, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY REV THE HON FUNG CHI-WOOD IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR BARMA SAID AS RECORDS SHOWED THAT SOME OF THE MORE SERIOUS ACCIDENTS OCCURRED ON SATURDAY NIGHTS/EARLY SUNDAY MORNINGS, THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT HAD THEREFORE NOW GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL THE MANAGEMENT CONTRACTORS OF GOVERNMENT TUNNELS NOT TO CLOSE ANY TUBE AT THESE TIMES.

IF THIS EXPERIMENT DID NOT POSE UNDUE OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS, CONSIDERATION COULD BE GIVEN TO EXTENDING THIS ARRANGEMENT OVER LONG WEEKENDS, HE SAID, ADDING THAT PRIVATE TUNNEL OPERATORS HAD ALSO BEEN ADVISED TO ADOPT THIS PRACTICE.

MR BARMA EXPLAINED THAT OTHER OPTIONS SUCH AS IMPOSING A ONE-WAY SYSTEM AND REQUIRING MOTORISTS TO DRIVE ALONG ALTERNATIVE ROADS HAD BEEN CONSIDERED BEFORE BUT WERE NOT VERY PRACTICAL BECAUSE OF THE TREMENDOUS INCONVENIENCE TO MOTORISTS AND THE LOGISTICAL PROBLEMS INVOLVED.

MR BARMA SAID THE SITUATION WAS REVIEWED FROM TIME TO TIME, AND THE FOLLOWING PREVENTIVE MEASURES HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED:

- * REDUCING THE SPEED LIMIT, FROM 70 KM PER HOUR TO 50 KM PER HOUR, WHEN THE ONE-TUBE TWO-WAY SYSTEM IS IN OPERATION;
- * PLACING ADDITIONAL SPEED LIMIT REPEATER SIGNS INSIDE THE TUNNELS TO ADVISE MOTORISTS;
- * STRENGTHENING THE ENFORCEMENT OF SPEED LIMITS BY RADAR SPEED CHECKS;
- * INTENSIFYING THE SURVEILLANCE OF THE TUNNELS BY PATROL CARS; AND
- * BROADCASTING MORE FREQUENT MESSAGES ON SAFE DRIVING.

OF THE 99 TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS OCCURRED IN TUNNELS WHEN ONE TUBE WAS CLOSED IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, THERE WERE FIVE FATAL AND 31 SERIOUS ACCIDENTS, RESULTING IN NINE DEATHS AND 54 SERIOUS INJURIES.

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CAUSES OF TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS EXPLAINED

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RECKLESS AND CARELESS DRIVING, SPEEDING AND OVERLOADING HAVE CAUSED THE MOST ACCIDENTS ON EXPRESSWAYS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR HAIDER BARMA, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON ROGER LUK IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR BARMA NOTED THAT APART FROM CONVENTIONAL METHODS, THE POLICE WERE NOW ALSO USING LASER SPEED DETECTORS AND UNMARKED CARS EQUIPPED WITH VIDEO RECORDERS AND SPEED DETECTION DEVICES TO DETECT SPEEDING.

AS A RESULT OF STEPPED-UP ENFORCEMENT, PARTICULARLY IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, A TOTAL OF 14,145 FIXED PENALTY TICKETS AND SUMMONSES HAVE BEEN ISSUED IN THE FIRST FOUR MONTHS OF 1994.

THIS REPRESENTS AN INCREASE OF 68 PER CENT WHEN COMPARED WITH 8,419 FOR THE CORRESPONDING QUARTER IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

MR BARMA SAID PUBLICITY TO CORRECT BAD DRIVING HABITS WAS ALSO BEING STEPPED UP.

"ADVICE ON SAFE DRIVING IN TUNNELS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE NEXT EDITION OF ROAD SAFETY QUARTERLY."

"IN ADDITION, A TELEVISION ANNOUNCEMENT OF PUBLIC INTEREST ON SAFE DRIVING ON EXPRESSWAYS IS NOW BEING PRODUCED AND WILL BE SCREENED IN A COUPLE OF MONTHS," MR BARMA SAID.

THE NUMBER OF FATAL ACCIDENTS WERE ON A RISING TREND FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS: 300 IN 1991, 318 IN 1992 AND 336 IN 1993.

MR BARMA NOTED THAT THIS TREND SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN ARRESTED AND REVERSED IN THE FIRST FOUR MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, WHICH HAD RECORDED 76 FATAL ACCIDENTS OR A 32 PER CENT DROP COMPARED WITH THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES OF THESE ACCIDENTS BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT AND THE POLICE HAS PINPOINTED 14 CASES TO "DRIVING TOO FAST" GIVEN ROAD CONDITIONS AND FOUR CASES TO "DRIVING TOO CLOSE TO THE VEHICLE IN FRONT".

IT HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE TO ESTABLISH SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS FOR THE REMAINING ACCIDENTS.

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HK POLYTECHNIC'S INVESTIGATION NOTED

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THE ADMINISTRATION IS AWARE THAT THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC HAS INVESTIGATED THE ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION AND UNETHICAL PRACTICES AGAINST A SENIOR STAFF MEMBER AND THAT THE FINDINGS OF ITS INTERNAL PANEL OF ENQUIRY WERE PUBLISHED LAST WEEK.

THIS WAS STATED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON EMILY LAU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR LEUNG SAID THE ADMINISTRATION UNDERSTOOD THAT SINCE THE PANEL HAD CONCLUDED THAT THERE WAS NO SUPPORTING EVIDENCE TO THE ALLEGATION OF CORRUPTION, THE POLYTECHNIC MANAGEMENT HAD NOT REFERRED THE CASE TO THE POLICE OR THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 1994

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HOSPITAL AUTHORITY HEAD OFFICE RESTRUCTURED

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THERE ARE NOW 31 MANAGEMENT STAFF MEMBERS IN THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY HEAD OFFICE AT AN ANNUALLY RECURRENT COST OF \$30.9 MILLION, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HUANG CHEN-YA, MRS WONG SAID THE COST REPRESENTED 0.3 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL STAFF COST IN THE AUTHORITY.

THIS COMPARES WITH 32 MANAGEMENT STAFF AT A RECURRENT COST OF \$32.9 MILLION PER ANNUM UNDER THE AUTHORITY'S PREVIOUS ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE.

MR WONG SAID THE CHANGE FOLLOWED A REVIEW ON THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE OF THE AUTHORITY UPON THE APPOINTMENT OF ITS CHIEF EXECUTIVE.

THE REVIEW RESULTED IN THE DELETION OF THREE PRINCIPAL OFFICER POSTS; THE CREATION OF ONE DEPUTY DIRECTOR POST IN ADDITION TO THE ORIGINAL 15 POSTS; AND ADJUSTMENTS TO THE SALARIES OF SOME MANAGEMENT POSTS.

"THE REMUNERATION OF ALL THE POSTS INVOLVED IN THIS REVIEW IS COMPARABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT DIRECTORATE PAY SCALE," MRS WONG SAID.

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NO NEED TO BAN ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT IN AIRCRAFT

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THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT CONSIDER IT NECESSARY TO ENACT LEGISLATION TO PROHIBIT THE USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT ON BOARD HONG KONG-REGISTERED AIRCRAFT, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MR GORDON SIU, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ALL HONG KONG-REGISTERED AIRLINES REQUEST PASSENGERS TO REFRAIN FROM USING PERSONAL ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT DURING TAKE-OFF AND LANDING.

"THIS IS A PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE AIMED AT REMOVING THE VERY SLIGHT POSSIBILITY THAT SUCH EQUIPMENT MAY CAUSE INTERFERENCE WITH THE NAVIGATION AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS OF THE AIRCRAFT," MR SIU SAID IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHIM PUI-CHUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

PASSENGERS ARE INFORMED OF THIS RESTRICTION BY MEANS OF ANNOUNCEMENTS, BY CABIN STAFF, PRIOR TO TAKE-OFF.

"THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTED INCIDENTS OF PASSENGERS ON HONG KONG-REGISTERED AIRLINES REFUSING TO COMPLY.

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"SHOULD A PASSENGER REFUSE TO CO-OPERATE WITH A REQUEST TO REFRAIN FROM USING ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT IT WOULD BE OPEN TO THE CAPTAIN OF A HONG KONG-REGISTERED AIRCRAFT TO ENFORCE THE RESTRICTION BY INVOKING POWERS UNDER THE AIR NAVIGATION (OVERSEAS TERRITORIES) ORDER," HE SAID.

WHILE THE GOVERNMENT UNDERSTOOD THAT MANY INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES HAD ADOPTED PRECAUTIONS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF HONG KONG, THE ADMINISTRATION WAS UNAWARE OF ANY LEGISLATION TO BAN COMPLETELY THE CARRIAGE OR USE OF ELECTRONIC APPLIANCES BY PASSENGERS, MR SIU ADDED.

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FEW OVERSEAS AOS SERVE BEYOND 57

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THE GENERALITY OF OVERSEAS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS WOULD NOT SERVE BEYOND THE AGE OF 57 ACCORDING TO AN ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINE INTRODUCED IN 1986 TO ACCELERATE LOCALISATION.

THERE HAVE, HOWEVER, OVER THE YEARS, BEEN A FEW EXCEPTIONS, INCLUDING THE CURRENT APPOINTMENTS OF THE HONG KONG COMMISSIONER IN LONDON AND THE COMMISSIONER FOR ECONOMIC AND TRADE AFFAIRS IN THE USA.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR MICHAEL SZE, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON EMILY LAU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE CURRENT HONG KONG COMMISSIONER IN LONDON WAS FORMERLY CHIEF SECRETARY.

"HIS PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE, BOTH AS CHIEF SECRETARY AND IN LONDON, MADE HIM ALMOST UNIQUELY QUALIFIED TO FILL THE VACANCY LEFT BY THE RETIREMENT OF THE FORMER COMMISSIONER IN NOVEMBER 1993," HE SAID.

AS REGARDS THE COMMISSIONER POST IN THE USA, MR SZE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD FOR SOME TIME BEEN ATTEMPTING TO FIND, FROM EITHER THE PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SECTOR, A PERSON OF SUFFICIENT STATURE AND SENIORITY TO FILL THE VACANCY.

"THE IDEAL CHOICE WOULD HAVE BEEN A SENIOR LOCAL OFFICER," HE SAID.

"ALTHOUGH IDENTIFIED, THEY SIMPLY COULD NOT BE SPARED FROM THEIR DUTIES IN HONG KONG," HE ADDED.

"THUS, WHEN THE CURRENT COMMISSIONER WAS IDENTIFIED AND COULD BE RELEASED, WE MOVED TO UPGRADE OUR REPRESENTATION," HE ADDED.

"THESE ISSUES WERE CONSIDERED IN DETAIL BY THE ESTABLISHMENT SUB-COMMITTEE WHEN WE SOUGHT APPROVAL FOR CREATION OF THE COMMISSIONER POST," MR SZE SAID.

HE STRESSED THAT THESE TWO APPOINTMENTS FELL INTO THE PATTERN OF OCCASIONAL EXCEPTIONS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINE.

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CNTA WILL CONTINUE HELPING OWNERS' CORPORATIONS

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THE STAFF OF THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION WILL CONTINUE TO ASSIST OWNERS AND TENANTS OF PRIVATE BUILDINGS TO SET UP RESIDENTS ASSOCIATIONS AND IN RE-ELECTIONS, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO THE HON ALBERT CHAN WAI-YIP, MR SUEN SAID THE ADMINISTRATION HAD NOT CEASED ASSISTING OWNERS OF PRIVATE BUILDINGS TO ESTABLISH AND REGISTER OWNERS' CORPORATIONS.

AS THE SERVICE HAD NOT BEEN SUSPENDED, HE SAID, NO RESOURCES HAD BEEN SAVED.

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TWO TOURISTS CHARGED WITH COMMON ASSAULT

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TWO AMERICAN CHINESE TOURISTS WHO SERIOUSLY INJURED A SALESWOMAN WORKING IN A DEPARTMENT STORE IN WAN CHAI WERE CHARGED WITH COMMON ASSAULT RECENTLY.

THEY WERE BOUND OVER FOR SIX MONTHS AND WERE ORDERED TO PAY \$500 EACH TO THE VICTIM FOR COMPENSATION.

EXPLAINING THE CASE TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN HIS WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ZACHARY WONG WAI-YIN, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR KEN WOODHOUSE, SAID THE INCIDENT AROSE FROM A DISPUTE OVER THE METHOD OF PAYMENT FOR GOODS BOUGHT IN THE DEPARTMENT STORE.

THE TOURISTS WERE CHARGED WITH COMMON ASSAULT ON THE BASIS OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SALESWOMAN'S INJURIES.

THE INJURY ASSESSMENT REPORT AVAILABLE TO THE POLICE ON THE DAY IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE INCIDENT WAS SUBMITTED TO THE COURT FOR CONSIDERATION.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 1994

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MOTION ON LICENSING SYSTEM
FOR OVERHANGING SIGNBOARDS PASSED

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A MOTION MOVED BY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBER THE HON MRS PEGGY LAM ON A LICENSING SYSTEM FOR OVERHANGING SIGNBOARDS WAS PASSED AT THE COUNCIL'S SITTING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MEMBERS DEBATED THE MOTION FOR ABOUT AN HOUR. THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, REPLIED FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

ANOTHER MOTION MOVED BY COUNCIL MEMBER THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG ON EMPLOYEE SAFETY WAS ALSO PASSED. THIS FOLLOWED A DEBATE BY MEMBERS AND A REPLY GIVEN BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR MICHAEL LEUNG.

A PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL - THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) (NO.3) BILL 1994 - MOVED BY MEMBER THE HON EMILY LAU WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE COUNCIL FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS.

IN ADDITION, THE TRAVEL AGENTS (ADMENDMENT) BILL 1994 WAS PASSED AT THE MEETING.

ANOTHER TWO BILLS - THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994 AND THE CRIMES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994 - WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE COUNCIL FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS.

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