



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1982

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/CONTAINER PROJECT

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A MATTER OF CONFIDENCE

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THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD REGARD BOOSTING THE CONFIDENCE OF HONG KONG PEOPLE AS ITS FIRST AND FOREMOST TASK, THE HON WONG LAM SAID.

HE TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE WAS NEEDED IF HONG KONG WERE TO MAINTAIN ITS PROSPERITY.

+IT IS ONLY WITH CONFIDENCE THAT WE CAN INVEST AND SETTLE DOWN TO WORK,+ HE SAID.

MR WONG SAID IT WAS APPARENT THAT THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT SET GREAT STORE BY THE CONTINUING PROSPERITY OF HONG KONG AND ITS CONTINUING CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHINA.

+THESE ARE VERY IMPORTANT FACTORS,+ HE STRESSED.

+IF HONG KONG CONTINUES TO ENJOY PROSPERITY, ITS FUTURE WILL BE BRIGHT BE THERE A NEW AGREEMENT BETWEEN CHINA AND BRITAIN OR NOT.

+BUT, IF HONG KONG NO LONGER ENJOYED PROSPERITY, EVEN AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES WOULD BE NO GUARANTEE AGAINST CHANGES WITHIN THESE 15 YEARS.+

WHILE SUPPORTING THE GOVERNMENT POLICY +TO INVEST VIGOROUSLY IN THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG AND ITS PEOPLE,+ MR WONG POINTED OUT THAT SOME INVESTMENT COMMITMENTS WITH WHICH THE PUBLIC WERE GREATLY CONCERNED, HAD COME TO A STANDSTILL BECAUSE OF VARIOUS REASONS.

HE QUOTED THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW AIRPORT AND THE SECOND CROSSING OF THE HARBOUR AS EXAMPLES OF MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PLANS WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAD TALKED ABOUT FOR MANY YEARS WITHOUT MAKING ANY SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS.

+I BELIEVE THAT NOW IS THE TIME FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO ANNOUNCE THAT IT IS READY TO IMPLEMENT OR ADVANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUCH LONG-TERM PROJECTS.

+THESE PROJECTS, BEING INVESTMENT COMMITMENTS REQUIRING MORE TIME TO FULFILL, HAVE FAR-REACHING INFLUENCE AND WILL CERTAINLY HAVE A DIRECT BEARING ON THE STRENGTHENING OF PEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE AND THEIR DESIRE TO INVEST.+

HE SAID HE APPRECIATED THAT, UNDER THE PRESENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE, IT WAS QUITE IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO EMBARK ON DIFFERENT MAJOR PROJECTS AT THE SAME TIME.

+HOWEVER,+ MR WONG SUGGESTED, +THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD AT LEAST CONSIDER PROCEEDING WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ONES, FOR EXAMPLE, THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW AIRPORT.+

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BE TACTFUL AND PATIENT, PUBLIC TOLD

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DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI URGED THE PUBLIC TO TAKE A +CAUTIOUS, TACTFUL AND PATIENT APPROACH+ ON THE ISSUE OF HONG KONG'S FUTURE AND TO REFRAIN FROM COMPLICATING EFFORTS UNNECESSARILY.

HE SAID THE FACT THAT DIPLOMATIC TALKS HAD STARTED IN PEKING SO SOON AFTER THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT, HAD MANY SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS.

AS HE SAW IT, THE MOST CRUCIAL IMPLICATION WAS THAT THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WISHED TO SETTLE THE ISSUE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, TO REDUCE THE PUBLIC'S ANXIETY TO THE MINIMUM.

+GIVEN THAT A MUTUAL AIM HAS BEEN AGREED, THAT HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT HAS REAFFIRMED ITS RESPONSIBILITY AND COMMITMENT TO HONG KONG, AND THAT THE VIEWS OF THE PUBLIC WILL BE TAKEN FULLY IN THE COURSE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, I HAVE GOOD REASONS TO SUGGEST THAT THE PEOPLE IN HONG KONG SHOULD KEEP UP THEIR FAITH ABOUT THE FUTURE AND AVOID OVER REACTIONS IN THE MEANTIME,+ DR HO SAID.

+NERVOUSNESS AND PANIC ARE CONTAGIOUS; IDLE SPECULATIONS COULD ONLY BREED DISTORTIONS.

+WE SHOULD NOT ALLOW ANY OF THEM TO UNDERMINE OUR OWN CONFIDENCE, AS WELL AS OTHER PEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE IN US.+

COMMUNITY BODIES AND GROUPS, PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND CONCERNED INDIVIDUALS MAY BE COLLECTING PUBLIC VIEWS AND OPINIONS ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE NOW.

BUT DR HO SUGGESTED THAT THEY FIRST CONFINE THEIR ACTIONS TO A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE VIEWS THEY RECEIVE AND THEN HANDLE THEIR FINDINGS CAREFULLY.

+ANY PREMATURE EXPRESSION OF VIEWS, UNDENIABLY WITH GOODWILL, IS LIKELY TO PUT HONG KONG INTO THE PROBLEMS I HAVE JUST MENTIONED,+ HE SAID.

DR HO ALSO SPOKE ON THE HOUSING PROBLEM FOR THE ELDERLY.

HE DESCRIBED THE PROPOSED EXPERIMENTAL SCHEME TO PROVIDE PRIVATE HOUSING ACCOMMODATION FOR SOME 700 ELDERLY PEOPLE AS AN +INNOVATIVE AND POSITIVE+ MOVE TO ALLEVIATE THE PROBLEM.

TO MAKE A SUCCESS OF THE SCHEME, HE SUGGESTED:

- * RULES, REGULATIONS AND OTHER RED TAPE IN MANAGING THE FLATS SHOULD BE KEPT TO A MINIMUM AND BE MADE PREDOMINANTLY WITH REGARD TO THE SAFETY OF THE RESIDENTS.

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- * IN FITTING OUT THE FLATS, THE OCCUPANTS' NEED FOR PRIVACY SHOULD BE GIVEN CONSIDERATION BECAUSE A CERTAIN DEGREE OF PRIVACY IN A GROUP OF UNRELATED ADULTS LIVING TOGETHER COULD FACILITATE A PERSON TO MAINTAIN HIS INDIVIDUALITY AND PERMIT HIM TO RETREAT IN TIMES OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS.
- * THE RESIDENTS SELECTED TO LIVE IN THESE PRIVATE FLATS, THOUGH MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY HEALTHY, WILL NEED A WIDE RANGE OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES TO KEEP THEMSELVES IN THE COMMUNITY AND OUTSIDE INSTITUTIONAL CARE FOR A TIME AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. MULTI-SERVICE CENTRES, CONCEIVED AS AN ECONOMIC AND EFFICIENT APPROACH IN MOBILISING RESOURCES, SHOULD THEREFORE BE ESTABLISHED IN LOCATIONS WITH A HEAVY CONCENTRATION OF ELDERLY POPULATION.
- * THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR BUILDING MAINTENANCE AND REGULAR INSPECTIONS, OTHERWISE THESE PRIVATE FLATS WILL SOON DETERIORATE INTO GHETTOS.
- * IRRESPECTIVE AS TO WHETHER THE SCHEME IS TO BE MANAGED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT OR A SUBVENTED VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION, THE GOVERNMENT MUST TAKE UP THE OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY AND SATISFY ITSELF THAT THE SCHEME IS OPERATED EFFICIENTLY AND IN A COST-EFFECTIVE MANNER.

DR HO ALSO SUGGESTED THAT IN THE INITIAL PHASE, SOCIAL WORKERS SHOULD PAY REGULAR VISITS TO THE ELDERLY RESIDENTS WITH A VIEW TO HELPING THEM TO SETTLE DOWN, TO OVERCOME EARLY ADJUSTMENT DIFFICULTIES AND TO ESTABLISH GOOD RELATIONS AMONG FELLOW-RESIDENTS.

IN ADDITION, HE SAID, SOCIAL WORKERS SHOULD ALSO PROVIDE SOCIAL CONTACT AND COUNSELLING TO THOSE RESIDENTS WHO ARE PRONE TO SUFFER FROM SOCIAL ISOLATION AND OTHER PERSONAL PROBLEMS, ASSESS THE ADEQUACY OF SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE AND ARRANGE FOR SPECIALIST SERVICES FROM RELEVANT AGENCIES WHERE NECESSARY.

ON THE SHORTAGE OF TRAINED SOCIAL WORKERS, DR HO FELT THAT EXPANSION OF STUDENTS INTAKE AT THE TWO UNIVERSITIES ALONE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO BRING ABOUT THE DESIRED EFFECTS.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICE IS LOSING ITS MUCH NEEDED STAFF THROUGH INCREASING TRANSFERS OUTSIDE THE WELFARE FIELD, TOGETHER WITH A DECREASING INPUT FROM SOCIAL WORK GRADUATES WHO TAKE UP THE PROFESSION.

IT IS ALSO NOTED THAT IN RECENT YEARS QUITE A FEW SOCIAL WORK GRADUATES DID NOT TAKE UP SOCIAL WORK AFTER THEIR FORMAL TRAINING.

+THE MAJOR FACTORS ACCOUNTING FOR THIS ACUTE PROBLEM HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS POOR PROMOTION AND CAREER PROSPECTS, UNFAVOURABLE SALARY STRUCTURE, LIMITED STAFF DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND UNPLEASANT JOB NATURE,+ SAID DR HO.

/FURTHERMORE,

FURTHERMORE, THE ADOPTION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF REPORT NO. 8 OF THE STANDING COMMISSION ON CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE TO LOWER THE ENTRY POINT OF THE SOCIAL WORK ASSISTANT WILL ALSO DISCOURAGE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN FROM ACQUIRING SOCIAL WORK TRAINING, AND HAMPER THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTEMPTS TO EXPAND SOCIAL WORK STUDENT ENROLMENTS.

+TO EFFECTIVELY ALLEVIATE THE SOCIAL WELFARE PERSONNEL SHORTAGE,+ DR HO SAID, +COUNTER-MEASURES IN IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS OF WORK AND EMPLOYMENT MUST BE TAKEN ALONGSIDE THE EXPANSION OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENT INTAKE.

+AS A FIRST AND IMMEDIATE STEP, I SUGGEST THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER REINSTATEMENT OF THE ENTRY SALARY POINT FOR SOCIAL WELFARE ASSISTANTS TO THE ORIGINAL POINT 17 OF THE MASTER PAY SCALE.+

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CALL FOR STUDY OF IMMIGRATION POLICY
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THE HON ALLEN LEE CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO EXAMINE ITS EXISTING POLICY ON LEGAL IMMIGRATION FROM CHINA.

HE RECALLED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD GREATLY REDUCED THE ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION BY PUTTING A STOP TO THE +REACH-BASE+ POLICY IN 1980.

BUT THERE WERE STILL SOME 55 000 LEGAL IMMIGRANTS WHO ENTERED HONG KONG FROM CHINA LAST YEAR, HE SAID.

+WHAT I DO NOT UNDERSTAND IS WHAT IS SO 'LEGAL' ABOUT THESE PEOPLE WHO ONLY POSSESS AN EXIT PERMIT?+ MR LEE ASKED.

+WHAT RIGHT DO THEY HAVE TO STAY IN HONG KONG?

+IS IT THE POLICY OF OUR GOVERNMENT TO PERMIT A CHINESE NATIONAL TO STAY IN HONG KONG UPON ARRIVAL?

+IF IT IS, THEN I BELIEVE WE NEED TO EXAMINE THIS POLICY,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE POINTED OUT THAT THIS UNPLANNED POPULATION GROWTH, WHICH HONG KONG COULD NOT AFFORD TO ALLOW, WERE ASSOCIATED WITH TOO MANY PROBLEMS, SUCH AS HOUSING, SQUATTERS, SOCIAL WELFARE, MEDICAL SERVICES, TRANSPORT, LAW AND ORDER, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT.

ALTHOUGH HE BELIEVED A CORDIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA WAS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE, HE NEVERTHELESS CONSIDERED IT NOT IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT IF HONG KONG'S PROGRAMMES WERE DISRUPTED BY IMMIGRATION.

+I DO HOPE THAT AN EARLY SOLUTION COULD BE ARRIVED AT WITH THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES IN THE CONTROL OF THE NUMBER OF LEGAL IMMIGRANTS FROM THE MAINLAND,+ HE SAID.

DEALING WITH THE ECONOMY, MR LEE SAID HE WAS SURPRISED TO SEE THAT THE GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT WOULD GROW BY FOUR PER CENT DESPITE THE PROLONGED RECESSION EXPERIENCED BY THE WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED COUNTRIES.

BUT THE EXPORT PERFORMANCE IS LIKELY TO BE DOWN BY TWO PER CENT IN REAL TERMS THIS YEAR COMPARED WITH 1981.

EVEN THOUGH THERE WERE INDICATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY, HE SAID, HONG KONG WOULD NOT EXPERIENCE IT FOR SOME TIME TO COME.

+NORMALLY I AM OPTIMISTIC, AS WE ARE FORTUNATE THAT WE POSSESS ONE OF THE MOST EFFICIENT LABOUR FORCES IN THE WORLD AND WE CAN RESPOND TO THE DEMANDS QUICKLY.

+HOWEVER, I MUST STRESS AGAIN THAT UNLESS WE SEE AN UPTURN IN THE ECONOMY OF OUR TRADING PARTNERS PARTICULARLY THE UNITED STATES, WE MUST TIGHTEN OUR BELTS,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE BELIEVED THAT OUR ECONOMIC SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON THE COHESIVENESS OF OUR SOCIETY.

+THEREFORE I URGE THE GOVERNMENT AND THOSE INTERESTED PARTIES IN CONTEMPLATING THE INTRODUCTION OF AND IN SUGGESTING NEW LABOUR LEGISLATIONS SHOULD CONSIDER CAREFULLY THE VULNERABLE SITUATION THAT WE ARE IN, OTHERWISE, IT WOULD BE 'ADDING OIL TO THE FIRE',+ HE SAID.

COMMENTING ON OVERSEAS INVESTMENT, MR LEE NOTED THAT NOT ONLY WOULD IT BRING CAPITAL INTO HONG KONG, BUT MORE IMPORTANT STILL, IT WOULD BRING IN MODERN MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY.

+WE CAN CERTAINLY COMPLEMENT THE OVERSEAS INVESTMENT WITH OUR WORKING EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTION OF QUALITY PRODUCTS AT A LOWER COST,+ HE SAID.

+THEREFORE IT IS MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL, AND WE SHOULD PURSUE AND EXPAND OUR ACTIVITIES IN INVESTMENT PROMOTION.+

BUT IN SELECTING STAFF FOR THE OVERSEAS INDUSTRIAL PROMOTION OFFICES, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PLACE IMPORTANCE ON QUALITY RATHER THAN QUANTITY AS THEY ARE REPRESENTING HONG KONG.

MR LEE ALSO ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO INDUSTRIAL TRAINING.

+TRAINING OF OUR PEOPLE IS AN INVESTMENT INTO OUR FUTURE,+ HE STRESSED.

+ALL OTHER PROMOTIONAL EFFORTS ARE MEANINGLESS IF WE DO NOT HAVE A CORRESPONDING EXPANSION IN THE PROVISION OF TRAINING FOR OUR LABOUR FORCE.

+WITHOUT AN EFFECTIVE AND SKILLED LABOUR, WE CANNOT MOVE UP THE MARKET AND NO ONE WILL BE CONVINCED THAT HONG KONG IS THE RIGHT PLACE FOR INVESTORS,+ HE ADDED.

SOCIAL SECURITY AS AN INVESTMENT

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A REASONABLE AND WELL-DEvised SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEME SUITABLE TO LOCAL CONDITIONS IS THE BEST INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE, THE HON ANDREW SO SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR SO SAID THAT THE SOCIAL WELFARE AND SECURITY PROVISIONS AT PRESENT DO NOT PROVIDE REASONABLE COVERAGE IN THE CASE OF ILLNESS, UNEMPLOYMENT AND RETIREMENT.

FURTHERMORE, HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT WHEN CONSIDERING THESE ISSUES, FREQUENTLY PUT TOO MUCH STRESS ON WHETHER THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES CAN AFFORD THEM AND WHETHER THEY HAVE WIDER IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ECONOMY AS A WHOLE.

CITING AN EXAMPLE, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT LAST YEAR SCRAPPED A PROPOSED CENTRALLY-ADMINISTERED SICKNESS AND INJURIES INSURANCE SCHEME TO EMPLOYEES, WHICH HAD BEEN UNDER STUDY FOR QUITE SOME YEARS.

THE DECISION WAS TAKEN MAINLY ON THE GROUND OF FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION AND ON THE RESULTS OF A LIMITED OPINION SURVEY.

+I VIEW THIS AS A BIG RETROGRADE STEP IN PROMOTING A WELL-DEvised SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM,+ HE SAID.

+I DO BELIEVE THAT SOCIAL WELFARE HAS AN ECONOMIC FUNCTION, AND ITS EXTENSIVE PROMOTION IS CONDUCIVE TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

+THE SOCIETY AND ITS ECONOMY ARE CLOSELY RELATED AND MUTUALLY DEPENDENT LIKE LIPS AND TEETH - IT IS TRUE THAT WITHOUT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SOCIAL WELFARE CANNOT BE EXPANDED, BUT IF THE WORKFORCE IS DENIED SOCIAL SECURITY THEIR WORKING SPIRIT WILL BE AFFECTED AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WILL THUS BE RESTRAINED.+

MR SO SAID THAT SOME PEOPLE MAY CONSIDER HONG KONG HAS PROMULGATED TOO MUCH LABOUR LEGISLATION IN RECENT YEARS AND, COUPLED WITH THE RECENT WEAKENING OF OUR ECONOMY, IT WOULD BE INADVISABLE TO INCREASE SOCIAL SECURITY AND OTHER WELFARE BENEFITS FOR OUR WORKERS.

BUT HE SAID: +I FEEL THAT THE EXPENDITURE ON SOCIAL WELFARE SHOULD NOT BE FORMULATED MERELY ON THE BASIS OF OUR CURRENT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, BUT SHOULD TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION OUR LONG TERM ECONOMIC POTENTIAL.

+HONG KONG'S ECONOMY IS HIGHLY RESILIENT AND IS CONSTANTLY GROWING.

+IT CAN AFFORD TO PROVIDE A BETTER SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM,+ HE STATED.

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COMMENT ON HOUSING PROBLEM

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HONG KONG'S HOUSING PROBLEM CAME IN FOR SPECIAL COMMENT TODAY FROM AN UNOFFICIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR.

THE HON F.K. HU SAID THAT HOUSING +IS THE MOST SERIOUS SOCIAL PROBLEM WHICH MUST BE TACKLED ON DIFFERENT FRONTS+.

SPEAKING FIRST ON THE SQUATTER PROBLEM, HE SAID HE AGREED THAT EFFECTIVE ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN TO IMPROVE THE LIVING CONDITIONS IN SUCH AREAS.

HOWEVER, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT MUST AT THE SAME TIME ENDEAVOUR TO CONTAIN THE PROBLEM BY PREVENTING THE PROLIFERATION OF NEW SQUATTING, ADDING THAT A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF NEW SQUATTERS WERE IMMIGRANTS WHO CAME FROM CHINA IN RECENT YEARS.

+WHILE THERE COULD BE GOOD REASONS FOR THESE PEOPLE TO COME TO HONG KONG, THERE IS NO WAY TO ASCERTAIN THAT THEIR RELATIVES OR FRIENDS WOULD WELCOME OR LOOK AFTER THEM AFTER THEIR ARRIVAL.

+WE MAY BE ABLE TO RELIEVE SOME OF OUR SOCIAL PROBLEMS, HOUSING AND LAW AND ORDER BEING OUR TWO MAIN CONCERNS, IF THERE WILL BE SOME REDUCTION IN THE NUMBERS WHO ENTER AND REMAIN HERE.

+IT WILL BE HELPFUL TO THE ADMINISTRATION IF THESE IMMIGRANTS, BEFORE THEIR ARRIVAL, ARE REQUIRED TO PRODUCE EVIDENCE TO THE EFFECT THAT THEIR RELATIVES OR FRIENDS HERE WILL GUARANTEE THEIR GOOD CONDUCT AND SOLVE THEIR ACCOMMODATION PROBLEM ONCE THEY ENTER HONG KONG,+ HE SAID.

TURNING TO PUBLIC HOUSING, MR HU SAID HE THOUGHT THAT THE BETTER-OFF PUBLIC HOUSING TENANT SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO PURCHASE HIS OWN FLAT UNDER THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME AND TO VACATE HIS HEAVILY SUBSIDISED RENTAL UNIT.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE RENT FOR EACH PUBLIC HOUSING UNIT SHOULD BE SET AT A LEVEL AROUND 20 PER CENT OF THE TENANT'S INCOME INSTEAD OF THE EXISTING FIVE TO 10 PER CENT.

+RENTAL INCOME SHOULD GENERATE A REASONABLE SURPLUS THAT MAY BE USED TO MEET PART OF THE COST OF IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS OF PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES AND TO SPEED UP THE REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES OF OLD, DILAPIDATED RESETTLEMENT ESTATES.

+A SEPARATE RENTAL SUBSIDY SCHEME SHOULD BE INTRODUCED TO ASSIST NEEDY TENANTS TO MEET PART OR WHOLE OF THE RENTAL PAYMENT IF THEY PASS A MEANS TEST,+ HE SAID.

MR HU ALSO SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL TO PURCHASE FLATS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO ACCOMMODATE ELDERLY PERSONS.

HE URGED THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO ENLARGE SUCH WORTHWHILE SCHEMES WHICH WILL CERTAINLY +STIMULATE PRIVATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND ENCOURAGE ITS PARTICIPATION IN BUILDING CONSTRUCTION+.

GOVT ASKED TO KEEP PUBLIC ADVISED ABOUT TALKS

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URGING THE PUBLIC TO FOLLOW WHAT HE TERMED +A CULT OF COMMON SENSE+, THE HON W.C.L. BROWN TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE THE PUBLIC WITH FREQUENT AND MEANINGFUL REPORTS AS TO HOW TALKS BETWEEN THE AUTHORITIES IN PEKING AND LONDON ON HONG KONG'S FUTURE ARE PROGRESSING.

ONLY THEN WILL DANGEROUS SPECULATION BE AVOIDED, HE SAID.

MR BROWN SAID THAT THE INNOVATION OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS SHOULD BE SEEN AS ONLY THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS A GREATER INVOLVEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY IN THOSE DECISIONS AFFECTING THEIR DAILY LIVES.

HE BELIEVED THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG WERE CONCERNED THAT THEIR VIEWS WOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT AND THAT THEY WOULD BE KEPT INFORMED WHILE TALKS WERE IN PROGRESS.

HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT THAT NO INTELLIGENT PERSON SHOULD SERIOUSLY QUESTION THAT THE ACTUAL CONTENT OF THE TALKS MUST REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL, ADDING THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WAS RIGHT IN SAYING THAT NEGOTIATIONS OF THIS NATURE COULD NOT BE CONDUCTED VIA THE MEDIA.

+IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT I PARTICULARLY WELCOMED THE STATEMENT IN YOUR ADDRESS THAT MEETINGS IN PEKING HAD BEGUN,+ HE SAID.

+THE PROMPT RELEASE OF THIS INFORMATION IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE FACT ITSELF, AND I TRUST THAT THIS WILL BE ONLY THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF STATEMENTS WE CAN EXPECT TO HEAR IN THIS CHAMBER ON THIS IMPORTANT SUBJECT.+

DESCRIBING THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER AS +THE CORRECT AND PROPER PLACE+ FOR DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING HONG KONG'S FUTURE TO BE REVEALED AND RECORDED IN THE PUBLIC RECORD, MR BROWN SAID HE CONSIDERED IT ALSO DESIRABLE THAT RESPONSIBLE DEBATE SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN THE CHAMBER TO COUNTER IRRESPONSIBLE COMMENT, RUMOUR AND GOSSIP OUTSIDE.

+THE CURRENT PROBLEMS IN OUR STOCK AND EXCHANGE MARKETS ARE BY NO MEANS DUE ONLY TO POLITICAL FACTORS BUT MUCH OF THE UNEASINESS IN OUR MARKETS - AND PROBABLY IN OUR HEARTS - COMES FROM SUCH CASUAL COMMENT EMANATING FROM PEKING, LONDON AND LOCAL SOURCES,+ HE SAID.

+THOSE WHO LISTEN TO THESE VERBAL COMMENTS SHOULD REMEMBER THE CHINESE SAYING, 'ORAL STATEMENTS VANISH LIKE BREEZES, BUT WRITTEN WORDS REMAIN LIKE HILLS AND STREAMS'.

+SIR, THE WRITTEN WORDS ON THIS SUBJECT GIVE US EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT OUR FUTURE IS NOT SO PRECARIOUS AS IT MAY AT SOMETIMES SEEM, AND I FEEL CONFIDENT THAT PROVIDED WE ALL FOLLOW THE CULT OF COMMON SENSE YOUR FUTURE REPORTS TO US WILL BEAR THIS OUT.+

EARLIER IN HIS SPEECH, MR BROWN CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE A POSITIVE LEAD TO LIMIT THE SALARY AND WAGE LEVELS OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR.

/+LEAVING ASIDE

+LEAVING ASIDE ARGUMENTS AS TO WHETHER GOVERNMENT LEADS OR FOLLOWS THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AND SPECIFICALLY ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE PUBLIC SECTOR IS NOT OVERPAID, THE FACT IS THAT IT IS WELL PAID - PARTICULARLY WHEN THE VALUE OF VARIOUS ALLOWANCES AND FRINGE BENEFITS IS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT,+ HE NOTED.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE CURRENT STATE OF OUR ECONOMY WOULD INHIBIT MOST OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR FROM GIVING ANY SIGNIFICANT SALARY OR WAGE INCREASES IN THE COMING YEAR DESPITE THE CONTINUING INCREASE IN THE COST OF LIVING.

AND THE STATE OF THE PUBLIC FINANCES MAKES IT CLEAR THAT GOVERNMENT IS IN A SIMILAR SITUATION, HE ADDED.

+WHILE IT IS PERHAPS WISHFUL THINKING TO EXPECT CIVIL SERVICE PAY TO BE FROZEN AT ITS EXISTING LEVEL, IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES ANY INCREASE NEXT YEAR BEYOND A LOW SINGLE DIGIT PERCENTAGE WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO JUSTIFY AND TO AVOID EXPECTATIONS BEING BUILT UP IT WOULD BE WISE TO SAY SO NOW,+ HE SAID. MR BROWN WENT ON TO POINT OUT THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO BE MADE AWARE OF GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS PRIOR TO GIVING CONSIDERATION TO ANY ADJUSTMENTS TO THOSE SALARIES AND WAGES IT NORMALLY REVIEWED AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH CALENDAR YEAR.

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PUBLIC URGED TO IGNORE RUMOURS
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THE HON CHAN KAM-CHUEN CALLED ON THE PUBLIC TO IGNORE ONE-SIDED CLAIMS AND RUMOURS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG.

HE SAID THE ONLY TRUE INFORMATION ON OUR FUTURE WILL BE THE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE FROM TIME TO TIME ARISING FROM THE OFFICIAL SINO-BRITISH TALKS.

MR CHAN TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT HE HAS WATCHED WITH CONCERN THE COUNT-DOWN OF CONFIDENCE REFLECTED BY THE DECLINE OF THE SHARE INDICES AND THE STEEP DROP OF THE HONG KONG DOLLAR.

HE POINTED OUT THAT TOO OFTEN, SENSATIONAL POINTS ARE HIGHLIGHTED TO THE DETRIMENT OF CONFIDENCE WHILE FAVOURABLE POINTS ARE NOT GIVEN THE SAME TREATMENT OR ARE EVEN IGNORED COMPLETELY.

+TRAVELLERS' TALES, WITHOUT IDENTIFIABLE SOURCES, WERE QUOTED AS IN THE DAYS WHEN THE BAMBOO CURTAIN WAS DRAWN.

+THE AVERAGE MAN IN THE STREET IN HONG KONG MAY BE A GOOD MONEY-MAKER BUT IS NOT SO GOOD IN POLITICAL ANALYSIS, AND IT IS UP TO THE MEDIA AND THE INTELLIGENSIA TO PROVIDE AN IMPARTIAL ANALYSIS THEREBY RESTORING CONFIDENCE TO THE COMMUNITY.

+OTHERWISE OUR PEOPLE MAY WELL TALK THEMSELVES INTO A CRISIS,+ HE WARNED.

HE STATED THAT HONG KONG PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE NO CAUSE FOR ALARM IF THEY TRY TO LOOK AT THE BRIGHTER SIDE OF THINGS:-

- * ALL THREE PARTIES - CHINA, BRITAIN AND HONG KONG - HAVE A MUTUAL INTEREST IN KEEPING HONG KONG STABLE AND PROSPEROUS.

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- * BOTH CHINA AND BRITAIN HAVE AGREED TO TALKS AND A JOINT COMMUNIQUE TO THIS EFFECT HAS BEEN ISSUED.
- * THE STATEMENTS ON SOVEREIGNTY ARE JUST STATEMENTS OF THE OPENING POSITIONS AND IT IS QUITE COMMON FOR SIDES TO BE POLES APART BEFORE NEGOTIATIONS COMMENCE. NEVERTHELESS, SOVEREIGNTY CLAIMS HAVE BEEN MADE BY CHINA FOR YEARS, BUT BEING A PEACEFUL NATION, SHE SELDOM FORCES THE ISSUE.
- * AS MATURE DIPLOMACY TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND INTERESTS OF THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, WHY SHOULD BRITAIN, CHINA AND HONG KONG NOT BE FRIENDS AND COME TO A SENSIBLE SOLUTION WHEN BRITAIN WAS AMONG THE FIRST TO RECOGNISE CHINA AMONG WESTERN NATIONS, AND WHEN HONG KONG SUPPLIES UP TO 40 PER CENT OF CHINA'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE, AND TRANSFERS TECHNOLOGY, CAPITAL AND OTHER FACILITIES TO CHINA?

+CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG IS LIKE LIFE TO A BODY,+ SAID MR CHAN.

+ONE CAN HAVE A CITY THAT LOOKS LIKE HONG KONG, BUT WITHOUT CONFIDENCE THERE BE NO LIFE, JUST FIVE MILLION MORE MOUTHS TO FEED.+

MR CHAN URGED EMPLOYERS TO KEEP THEIR WORKERS AS LONG AS POSSIBLE, EVEN WHEN IT MEANS SLIM OR NO PROFIT.

HE POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG'S ECONOMY IS SENSITIVE TO THAT OF THE UNITED STATES WHICH REMAINS OUR MAJOR EXPORT MARKET.

+IF OUR CLIENTS ARE WORRIED BY MASSIVE UNEMPLOYMENT, IT WOULD MEAN LESS ORDERS FOR OUR FACTORIES AND MORE CRACKED RICE BOWLS FOR OUR WORKERS,+ HE SAID.

AS FOR WORKERS, THEY SHOULD HOLD ON TO THEIR JOBS AND ASK ANYONE WHO SUGGESTS INDUSTRIAL ACTION WHERE THE NEXT JOB MAY BE FOUND IN THESE HARD TIMES.

MR CHAN SUGGESTED THAT TAI TAM BAY ON HONG KONG ISLAND SHOULD BE TURNED INTO A RESERVOIR FOR STORING WATER FROM CHINA OR FROM RAINFALL.

+IT MAY NOT BE AN IDEAL LOCATION AT PRESENT, BUT WITH LARGE SCALE AFFORESTATION, DEVELOPMENT OF MORE WATER CATCHMENTS AND CONNECTIONS TO NEIGHBOURING RESERVOIRS TO CATCH THEIR OVERFLOW DURING TYPHOONS, IT MAY DO THE JOB.+

HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT STONECUTTERS ISLAND SHOULD BE DEVELOPED INTO A SECOND CONTAINER TERMINAL TO COPE WITH THE HEAVY DEMAND.

+AS WE ARE NOW THE THIRD LARGEST CONTAINER PORT IN THE WORLD BY VOLUME, WE SHALL NEED MORE CONTAINER TERMINAL FACILITIES WHEN THE WORLD RECESSION IS OVER,+ HE NOTED.

+IF A ROAD LINK TO KOWLOON IS PROVIDED, A SECOND CONTAINER TERMINAL THERE WOULD BE NEARER TO URBAN AND INDUSTRIAL AREAS, ON LAND AND BY SEA, THAN THE KWAI CHUNG CONTAINER TERMINAL.

+ONCE THIS IS DECIDED, I BELIEVE THE PRIVATE SECTOR WOULD BE ABLE TO SUPPLY THE SUPPORT FACILITIES QUICKLY,+ HE SAID.

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MANUFACTURERS SEE RECOVERY SIGNS

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THE CONSENSUS AMONG LOCAL MANUFACTURERS IS THAT THE WORST IS BEHIND US AND THAT THE SIGNS LOOK GOOD FOR A SPEEDY ECONOMIC RECOVERY, THE HON STEPHEN CHEONG TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

HE POINTED OUT THAT ECONOMISTS IN THE UNITED STATES APPEAR TO BE EXPECTING A POSITIVE GROWTH RATE FOR ITS ECONOMY IN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF THIS YEAR WHILE THE LATEST LITERATURE SUGGESTS THAT THE US GOVERNMENT BELIEVES SOME EASING OF MONETARY RESTRAINT IS POSSIBLE WITHOUT REFUELLING INFLATION.

CITING STATISTICS, MR CHEONG SAID THAT TOTAL RETAIL SALES IN THE US LAST MONTH INCREASED BY ONE PER CENT, OR NEARLY US\$1 BILLION IN MONEY TERMS, OVER THE PREVIOUS MONTH.

+THIS IS ALL THE MORE SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE RETAIL SALES OF LIGHT CONSUMER GOODS - WHICH WE MANUFACTURE AND ARE SKILFUL IN MARKETING - MUST HAVE PICKED UP BY MORE THAN ONE PER CENT.

+GIVEN, ALSO, THAT THE PROCESS OF DE-STOCKING OF THE TYPE OF GOODS WE SUPPLY TO THE US IS VIRTUALLY COMPLETED, DEMAND FOR OUR EXPORTS IN OUR MOST IMPORTANT MARKET IS BEGINNING TO STRENGTHEN.

+EQUALLY ENCOURAGING SIGNS ARE DEVELOPING IN EUROPE - THE SECOND MOST IMPORTANT GROUP OF MARKETS FOR OUR MANUFACTURERS,+ HE STATED.

AS REGARDS HONG KONG, MR CHEONG NOTED THAT PRODUCTION CAPACITY IN TERMS OF PLANT AND EQUIPMENT HAS NOT BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY RUN DOWN.

+IN OTHER WORDS, THE SIGNS LOOK GOOD FOR A SPEEDY RECOVERY IN THE MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY, AND THERE IS EVERY INDICATION THAT THE MAJORITY OF MANUFACTURERS AND WORKERS ARE BEHAVING RESPONSIBLY AND SENSIBLY IN THE EXPECTATION OF BETTER THINGS TO COME.+

AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, MR CHEONG URGED:

- * DO NOT OVER-REACT TO ISOLATED BUT OVER-DRAMATISED INCIDENTS OF BUSINESS FAILURE BY IMMEDIATELY INTRODUCING A GOVERNMENT-FUNDED WAGES COMPENSATION FUND.
- * THE ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES SHOULD NOT APPLY ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LEGISLATION IN SUCH A WAY AS TO DISCOURAGE MANUFACTURERS FROM INVESTING IN NEW PLANT AND EQUIPMENT.
- * MONITOR CLOSELY THE HEALTH OF HONG KONG'S MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY AND GUARD AGAINST ANY FURTHER SUBSTANTIAL EROSION OF ITS COMPETITIVE COST STRUCTURE.
- * THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE SOME ACTION TO PREVENT PROPERTY PRICES FROM DRIFTING DOWN MUCH FURTHER, OTHERWISE IT WOULD HAVE THE DISASTROUS EFFECT OF UNDERMINING THE FOUNDATION OF HONG KONG'S FINANCIAL SECTOR.

* THE PRIVATE SECTOR SHOULD CONTINUE THEIR RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF SUCCESS BY INVESTING WISELY AND VIGOROUSLY IN THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG.

TURNING TO THE PRIMARY ONE ADMISSION SYSTEM, MR CHEONG SAID PARENTAL CHOICE IS HARDLY LIKELY TO BE SATISFIED IN THE SO-CALLED +POPULAR PRIMARY SCHOOLS+ WHERE THE NUMBER OF APPLICANTS FOR PLACES FAR EXCEEDS THE NUMBER OF DISCRETIONARY PLACES AVAILABLE.

HE EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT THE SCHEME IS LIKELY TO MEET THE OBJECT OF MINIMISING PRESSURES UPON YOUNG CHILDREN.

+WHILE I DO NOT DOUBT THAT THE ALLOCATION SYSTEM HAS BEEN WORKED OUT AFTER A GREAT DEAL OF CARE, I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT WOULD EFFECTIVELY RESOLVE THE PROBLEM,+ MR CHEONG ARGUED.

+IN MY VIEW, THE PROBLEM CANNOT BE RESOLVED UNLESS PARENTS ARE GIVEN A REAL CHOICE AS TO THE TYPE OF EDUCATION THEY WANT TO GIVE THEIR CHILDREN.+

HE SUGGESTED THAT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR SOME OF THE POPULAR SCHOOLS TO +GO PRIVATE+ IF THEY ELECT TO DO SO, OR BE ONLY MINIMALLY SUBSIDISED.

THESE SCHOOLS COULD THEN CHARGE A FEE TO MEET EITHER THE FULL COSTS OR A SUBSTANTIAL PROPORTION OF THE TOTAL COSTS.

+THIS MUST HAVE THE EFFECT OF REDUCING THE EXCESS OF DEMAND OVER THE SUPPLY OF PLACES IN THESE SCHOOLS,+ MR CHEONG SAID.

+ABOVE ALL, THIS WOULD OFFER TO THE PARENTS A CHOICE AS TO WHAT TYPE OF EDUCATION THEY WOULD PREFER FOR THEIR OWN CHILDREN.

+AFTER ALL, IS IT RIGHT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE AWAY THAT BASIC RIGHTS OF PARENTAL CHOICE?+ HE ASKED.

MR CHEONG ENVISAGED THAT THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION WOULD OBJECT TO THIS SUGGESTION.

HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT THAT HE WAS MERELY REFLECTING THE CONCERN OF THOSE LOCALLY-DOMICILED PARENTS WHO, IF THEY WERE UNABLE TO SECURE ENTRY FOR THEIR CHILDREN INTO SCHOOLS THEY PREFER, WOULD FEEL THEY HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO SEND THEM ABROAD AT MUCH GREATER EXPENSE BOTH FINANCIALLY AND EMOTIONALLY.

+I AM CONFIDENT THAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO MEET THE FULL COST OF THIS EDUCATION PROVIDED THE SCHOOLS THEY PREFER REMAIN TRULY FREE IN SELECTING THEIR PUPILS.

+A GREATER NUMBER OF THESE PARENTS ARE AT A LOSS TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE GOVERNMENT INSISTS ON NON-INTERVENTIONISM IN THE ECONOMY, BUT CHOOSES TO BE HIGHLY INTERVENTIONISTIC IN EDUCATION.

+I THINK THEY ARE ENTITLED TO SOME CLEAR ANSWERS,+ MR CHEONG STATED.

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NT LANDOWNERS RIGHTS SUPPORTED

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THE HON BENTON CHEUNG CALLED FOR A +FAIR AND GENEROUS+ ARRANGEMENT IN LAND RESUMPTION SO THAT NEW TERRITORIES LANDOWNERS WILL NOT BE DENIED THEIR SHARE OF PROSPERITY.

MR CHEUNG WAS SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON THE PROPOSED ABOLITION OF THE LETTER B SYSTEM WHICH IS CURRENTLY UNDER DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE HEUNG YEE KUK.

HE WARNED THAT AN UNSATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT OF THIS ISSUE COULD CREATE RESISTANCE AMONG INDIVIDUAL LANDOWNERS, AS WELL AS RESENTMENT AND ALIENATION TOWARDS THE AUTHORITIES.

HE RECALLED THAT IN THE 1950'S, ANCESTRAL LANDS WERE RESUMED AT AGRICULTURAL PRICES THROUGH THE CROWN LANDS RESUMPTION ORDINANCE AND THEN RESOLD FOR BUILDING DEVELOPMENT AT SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER PRICES.

DURING THE 1960'S, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAND EXCHANGE ENTITLEMENTS SYSTEM INTRODUCED A +MORE EQUITABLE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT+.

+BUT MAY I PUT IT TO THIS COUNCIL THAT THE LANDOWNERS WHO WERE THE ORIGINAL HOLDERS OF LETTERS B WERE ORDINARY PEOPLE WHO HAD THE GIFT OF A ROCKET TO THE MOON THRUST UPON THEM, ONLY TO FIND THEY LACKED THE EXPERTISE AND RESOURCES TO OPERATE IT WITHOUT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE,+ HE SAID.

MR CHEUNG URGED THE GOVERNMENT, IN DISCUSSING THE FUTURE OF LETTERS B, TO TAKE THE VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE FULLY INTO ACCOUNT, TO RECONCILE DIFFERENCES, AND TO FACE THE FUTURE WITH CONFIDENCE.

+ALL THAT REMAINS TO BE DECIDED IS THE MUTUALLY AGREED FORMULA BY WHICH THESE AIMS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED,+ HE ADDED.

MR CHEUNG ALSO TOUCHED ON THE RECENT PROPOSAL OF ENHANCED PREMIA TO BE CHARGED FOR LAND USE UNDER THE GUISE OF SHORT TERM WAIVERS.

+QUITE APART FROM THE LEGAL AND MORAL ARGUMENTS PUT FORWARD BY NT LANDOWNERS, THE POSSIBLE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THIS UNTIMELY PROPOSAL SHOULD BE GIVEN WEIGHTY CONSIDERATION,+ HE ADDED.

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ADMINISTRATION PRAISED

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THE HON SELINA CHOW SAID TODAY THAT, IN SPITE OF ALL THE SHORTCOMINGS IN OUR SYSTEM, HONG KONG HAS BEATEN NUMEROUS ODDS TO BECOME ONE OF THE MOST PROSPEROUS AND EFFICIENT COMMUNITIES IN THE WORLD.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, SHE NOTED THAT A COUPLE OF PROFESSIONALLY CONDUCTED SURVEYS RECENTLY REVEALED THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE IN HONG KONG PREFER THE STATUS QUO.

+THIS I TAKE TO MEAN PREFERENCE FOR NO CHANGE IN THE ENTIRE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF OUR COMMUNITY,+ SHE SAID.

+IT IS THIS STRUCTURE THAT HAS ENABLED US TO IMPROVE OUR STANDARD OF LIVING UNHAMPERED THROUGH A PROCESS OF SELF CRITICISM OVER A SOUND BASE OF SYSTEMATIC MANAGEMENT MADE POSSIBLE BY AN ATMOSPHERE OF SOCIAL STABILITY.

+CREDIT IS DUE TO THE ADMINISTRATION UNDER WHICH THIS STRUCTURE HAS DEVELOPED AND FLOURISHED.

+IS IT WISE TO CHANGE A PROVEN FORMULA OTHER THAN TO IMPROVE AND REFORM BY PROCESS OF EVOLUTION WHILE MAINTAINING THE BASE AND INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WE HAVE SO SUCCESSFULLY BUILT?+ SHE ASKED.

MRS CHOW NOTED THAT THE CHOICE MAY NOT REST TOTALLY WITH US, BUT SHE ADDED: +LET US, THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG, WHO HAVE VALUED AND RESPECTED THE FREEDOM OF CHOICE ABOVE ALL BE CLEAR IN OUR OWN MINDS WHAT WE REGARD AS THE BEST STATE FOR HONG KONG.+

ONE WAY TO ACHIEVE THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO INVEST VIGOROUSLY IN THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG AND ITS PEOPLE IS THROUGH EDUCATION.

AND THE AREA LONG OVERDUE FOR ATTENTION IS THE PRE-PRIMARY SECTION, SHE POINTED OUT.

+IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT EVERY CHILD FROM FOUR TO SIX IS SUPPOSED TO ATTEND KINDERGARTEN, THERE IS AS YET NO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT TO UPGRADE AND REGULATE THE STANDARD OF EDUCATION OF YOUR CHILDREN,+ SHE SAID.

MRS CHOW NOTED THAT THE WHITE PAPER ON PRIMARY AND PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION PROJECTS THE ENROLMENT IN KINDERGARTENS TO BE AT 180 000 IN 1984 AND THE NUMBER OF QUALIFIED KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS FOR THE SAME YEAR IS EXPECTED TO BE 590, WITH 680 QUALIFIED ASSISTANT KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS.

THIS RATIO IS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE AND THE SITUATION DEMANDS URGENT EXAMINATION, SHE STRESSED.

/+I THEREFORE

+I THEREFORE WOULD LIKE TO REITERATE MY EARLIER CALL FOR A SPECIAL WORKING GROUP WITH UNOFFICIAL INPUT AND PARTICIPATION TO ASSESS THE ENTIRE AREA OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION TO BE SET UP AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.+

MRS CHOW ALSO CALLED FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION ASSESSMENT SYSTEM.

APART FROM THE GENERAL OBJECTIONS TO THE FREQUENCY OF PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS, SHE ARGUED, THERE IS ALSO THE UNDESIRABLE TIMING OF THIS PARTICULAR EXAMINATION.

+IT IS TOTALLY UNNECESSARY TO SUBJECT ALL 15-YEAR-OLDS TO THE STRESS AND STRAIN OF THIS SCALING TEST WHEN THE RESULTS COULD BE ACHIEVED BY CHOICE ON THE PART OF THE SCHOOLS, THE PARENTS AND THE STUDENTS,+ SHE SAID.

MRS CHOW SAID THE PRESSURE OF THE JSEA HAD CAUSED MANY TEACHERS TO DISPLACE WORTHWHILE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES WITH DRILLING AND TO REDUCE EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.

MANY TEACHERS ALSO QUERY THE CLAIM THAT JSEA IS THE MOST APPROPRIATE WAY TO STREAM THE STUDENTS AND ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE SERIOUS ADJUSTMENT AND INTEGRATION PROBLEMS THAT MANY FORM III STUDENTS HAVE TO FACE WHEN TRANSFERRED TO A NEW SCHOOL.

+IN VIEW OF THE STRONG FEELINGS EXPRESSED, I WOULD URGE AN IMMEDIATE REASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION WHICH WOULD HOPEFULLY LEAD TO THE EARLY ABOLITION OF THE JSEA,+ SHE SAID.

+INEVITABLY, THIS MUST LEAD TO THE STUDY OF WHETHER THE EXTENSION OF FREE EDUCATION TO INCLUDE FORMS IV AND V COULD BE HASTENED, ALTHOUGH THIS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS AN ISSUE QUITE SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT OF THE JSEA.+

MRS CHOW ALSO SOUGHT TO HIGHLIGHT THE NEED FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.

QUOTING STATISTICS, SHE SAID THE NUMBER OF THOSE WHO LEFT SCHOOL AFTER FORMS V AND VI IN 1981 WAS APPROXIMATELY 72 000 AND THAT OF MATRICULANTS WAS 12 836.

OF THOSE MATRICULANTS, ONLY 2 598 GAINED ADMISSION INTO THE TWO UNIVERSITIES IN HONG KONG.

THERE ARE ALSO A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE UNDER THE AGE OF 30 WHO FINISHED FORM V AND WHO MIGHT WISH TO UNDERTAKE A UNIVERSITY COURSE, SHE REMARKED.

+THE DEMAND FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IS THEREFORE QUITE TREMENDOUS.

+THE FORMULA OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY SO SUCCESSFULLY TRIED IN THE U.K. AND ELSEWHERE SHOULD BE WELL SUITED TO A PLACE LIKE HONG KONG AND SUCH A POSSIBILITY SHOULD BE EXPLORED IN EARNEST,+ MRS CHOW URGED.

LEGCO SEATS SOUGHT FOR DB MEMBERS

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DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS SHOULD BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE ON ADVISORY BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE HON MARIA TAM SAID AT THE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY.

SHE SAID: +GIVEN TIME A BOND WILL DEVELOP BETWEEN THE DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS AND THEIR CONSTITUENTS AND IN PARTICULAR BETWEEN THE VOTERS AND THE ELECTED MEMBERS TO WHOM THE VOTERS MAY GIVE, AND FROM WHOM THEY MAY WITHDRAW, THE MANDATE OF REPRESENTATION.

+FROM THE GRASS ROOTS, THESE LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES ARE ALSO THE SOURCE OF ACCURATE INFORMATION AND ADVICE TO THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE MORE OPENINGS THERE ARE FOR THEM IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, THE BETTER WE SHALL FIND THE QUALITY OF THE CANDIDATES,+ MISS TAM SAID.

SHE EXPRESSED THE BELIEF THAT DISTRICT BOARDS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND EAST KOWLOON COULD DO MUCH TO HELP ASSIMILATE NEW IMMIGRANTS LIVING IN THEIR DISTRICTS INTO THE HONG KONG COMMUNITY THROUGH VARIOUS RECREATIONAL, FESTIVE AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES.

THESE IMMIGRANTS SHOULD BE OFFERED +A SOCIAL LIFE+ AWAY FROM THE HUTS AND BUNK BEDS IN TRANSIT CENTRES SO THAT THEY CAN CAST OFF THE SENSE OF ISOLATION AND MOVE TOWARDS ACCEPTING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY'S SENSE OF VALUES, SHE SAID.

DISCUSSING THE LOCAL ECONOMY, MISS TAM URGED THAT IN A TIME OF RECESSION HONG KONG MUST FIND A WAY TO NURTURE THE STRENGTH OF ITS INDUSTRY AND AVOID STEPPING INTO THE +VICIOUS CIRCLE+ OF EXCESSIVE WELFARE HANDOUTS AND WAGE DEMAND SEEN IN SOME COUNTRIES.

MISS TAM POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG RELIED VERY MUCH ON SMALLER MANUFACTURING ESTABLISHMENTS, WHICH SHE SAID EMPLOYED 67 PER CENT OF THE INDUSTRIAL LABOUR FORCE AND PRODUCED 72 PER CENT OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS.

+I THINK THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT MUST HELP TO DEVELOP FURTHER OUR SMALLER AND STILL LABOUR-INTENSIVE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY,+ SHE SAID.

THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED BY PROVIDING:

- * INFORMATION ON LOCAL MARKET SITUATIONS, ESPECIALLY WHEN THE MARKET MOVES TOWARDS SATURATION POINT IN CERTAIN PRODUCTS;

/* INFORMATION ON

* INFORMATION ON OVERSEAS MARKET TRENDS OF ANY NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH AMERICA AND ELSEWHERE WHICH WOULD BE WITHIN OUR RESOURCES TO FOLLOW; AND

* INFORMATION ;AND LIAISON SERVICES FOR HONG KONG INVESTORS IN THE SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE.

MISS TAM STRESSED THAT IT WOULD BE A DEPLORABLE WASTE OF RESOURCES IF INVESTMENTS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR SHOULD FAIL FOR WANT OF PROPER MARKET AND TRADE INFORMATION WHICH IS WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT'S MEANS TO GIVE OR RESOURCES TO OBTAIN.

+ALSO IT IS FAR MORE CONSTRUCTIVE TO STRENGTHEN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY AND PRODUCE MORE JOBS THAN TO GIVE WELFARE BENEFITS TO UNEMPLOYED WORKERS.

+AND THEREFORE 'DIVERSIFICATION' AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPARATIVELY LABOUR-INTENSIVE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY MUST GO HAND-IN-HAND,+ SHE SAID.

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PLEA FOR MORE FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN

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A CALL TO GET ON AND IMPROVE FACILITIES FOR OUR CHILDREN WAS MADE BY DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP TODAY.

IN HER MAIDEN SPEECH TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WHICH CENTRED MOSTLY ON CHILDREN -- WHOM SHE CALLED +THE ADORABLE SECTOR OF OUR COMMUNITY+ -- DR IP SAID WE MUST NOT TREAT THEM LIKE MINIATURE ADULTS LEST THEY GROW UP TO BE OVERSIZED CHILDREN.

+IF WE SEE, AND WE SHOULD, THE IMPORTANCE OF NURTURING OUR YOUNG WITH CARE AND COMPASSION AND PROTECTING THEM FROM THE STRESS OF OUR EVERYDAY LIFE UNTIL THEY CAN FEND FOR THEMSELVES, WE MUST NOT ACCEPT FURTHER DELAYS OR EXCUSES FOR INACTION,+ SHE WARNED.

+IN PLANNING FOR HONG KONG, CHILDREN MUST BE OUR PRIORITY. AFTER ALL, HONG KONG IS A CITY OF A MILLION CHILDREN.+

DR IP RAISED A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS ON THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN.

THESE INCLUDED: LEGISLATION TO PROTECT CHILDREN AS FRONT SEAT PASSENGERS IN MOTOR VEHICLES, ACTION TO PREVENT ACCIDENTS TO CHILDREN INVOLVING CONCUSSION AND LACERATION OF THE HEAD, ADEQUACY OF STAFFING AND MEDICAL SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTIAL CENTRES, FOR SEVERE GRADE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN, PLACEMENTS FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED SCHOOL LEAVERS, THE NATURE OF THE EDUCATION AND THE STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO IN SCHOOLS FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED, IMPROVEMENT TO OBSTETRICAL NEONATAL SERVICES, AND CHILD ABUSE AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS.

/DR IP

DR IP ALSO NOTED THAT THE DEMANDS FOR BIGGER AND BETTER GOVERNMENT MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES WERE INCREASING.

AS SHE SAW IT, THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES HAD REACHED A CROSSROADS WHERE THERE WERE THREE REALISTIC ROUTES:

- * TO REMAIN AS IT IS BY OFFERING THE BEST SERVICE IT COULD FROM A TIGHT BUDGET
- * FOR THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO RELINQUISH CERTAIN ASPECTS OF ITS SERVICE AND TO CONCENTRATE ITS RESOURCES ON SERVICES WHICH COULD BRING GREATEST SATISFACTION TO THE MOST NEEDED AND
- * FOR THE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO IMPROVEMENTS AND PROVISIONS OF THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES TO BE BORNE BY THE GOVERNMENT, THE EMPLOYERS AND THE EMPLOYEE, IN A REASONABLE PROPORTION THROUGH MEDICAL INSURANCE.

SHARING THE VIEWS OF DR HARRY FANG, SHE URGED THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A POLICY BRANCH FOR THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, AND FOR THE SECRETARY POST SO CREATED TO BE FILLED BY A MEDICALLY QUALIFIED OFFICER.

DR IP ALSO TOUCHED ON THE SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE AND EXPRESSED HOPES THAT ACTION COULD BE TAKEN TO IMPROVE IT AND TO EXTEND IT TO ALL CHILDREN IN HONG KONG.

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DUKE CONFIDENT ABOUT HK - UK TRADE

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HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF KENT TODAY EXPRESSED TOTAL CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE OF TRADE BETWEEN BRITAIN AND HONG KONG.

ADDRESSING A LUNCHEON OF THE HONG KONG GENERAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, THE DUKE SAID HONG KONG AND BRITAIN HAD MUCH TO OFFER ONE ANOTHER.

ALSO PRESENT AT THE LUNCHEON WERE THE DUCHESS, THE GOVERNOR AND LADY YOUDE.

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS NOTED THAT HONG KONG HAD OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS EARNED A REPUTATION FOR ITS BUOYANT ECONOMY WHICH HAD BEEN JUSTIFIED MANY TIMES OVER.

ONE ONLY HAD TO LOOK AROUND TO SEE WHAT HONG KONG'S TRADING FLAIR HAS CREATED TO FIND PROOF, IF ANY WERE NEEDED, THAT FREE TRADE IS A GENERATOR OF PROSPERITY ON A GRAND SCALE, HE SAID.

+AND NOTWITHSTANDING THE TRENDS OF RECENT DAYS AND WEEKS, THIS REMARKABLE ECONOMIC RECORD SHOULD INSPIRE CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG'S LASTING STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE,+ HE ADDED.

THE DUKE NOTED THAT HONG KONG HAD RECENTLY OVERTAKEN JAPAN TO BECOME BRITAIN'S LARGEST FAR EASTERN MARKET. BUT EVEN SO, HE ADDED, BRITAIN AS THE SIXTH LARGEST SUPPLIER STILL ONLY HAS ABOUT FIVE PER CENT OF THE HONG KONG MARKET.

+BUT OUR EXPORTERS ARE NOT GOING TO BE SATISFIED TO REMAIN IN THAT POSITION, AND IF OUR PERFORMANCE IN RECENT YEARS, ESPECIALLY ON THE PROJECT SIDE, IS ANYTHING TO JUDGE BY, WE SHOULD BE WELL PLACED TO MOVE UP THE LADDER,+ HE SAID.

THE DUKE MENTIONED THE CASTLE PEAK A AND B POWER STATION ORDERS, BRITISH PARTICIPATION IN THE MASS TRANSIT AND KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAYS AND OTHER ORDERS LIKE THE STEEL WORK FOR THE NEW HONG KONG AND SHANGHAI BANKING CORPORATION BUILDING, AS +FIRST-CLASS EXAMPLES OF HOW UK INDUSTRY CAN DESIGN AND DELIVER THE BEST IN MODERN TECHNOLOGY.+

BRITAIN WOULD CONTINUE TO COMPETE FOR PROJECT BUSINESS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES ANXIOUS TO WIN THESE LARGE CONTRACTS, HE SAID.

+WHEN WE HAVE WON SUCH CONTRACTS -- AND WE HAVE WON MANY -- WE HAVE DONE SO BECAUSE AFTER INTENSE COMPETITION AND CLOSE SCRUTINY THE TOTAL BRITISH PACKAGE WAS FOUND TO BE THE BEST VALUE,+ HE EXPLAINED.

POINTING OUT ANOTHER AREA -- OFFSHORE OIL DEVELOPMENT -- WHERE BRITAIN HAS A UNIQUE CAPABILITY, THE DUKE SAID BRITISH COMPANIES WOULD BE CONCENTRATING THEIR MARKETING ON CHINA WHOSE OIL IT IS AND WHERE THE MAIN SUPPORT AND SUPPLY INDUSTRY WILL LIE.

+BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT BRITISH FIRMS WILL SEE HONG KONG COMPANIES AS VALUABLE PARTNERS IN CERTAIN AREAS OF EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLY,+ HE ADDED.

/ON EXPORT

ON EXPORT PROMOTION, HE SAID THAT THIS YEAR NO FEWER THAN 15 MISSIONS SUPPORTED BY THE BRITISH OVERSEAS TRADE BOARD (BOTB) WERE SCHEDULED TO COME TO HONG KONG AND, NEXT YEAR, A FURTHER 11 WERE ALREADY BEING PLANNED.

+IN 1981 A TOTAL OF 245 BRITISH FIRMS PARTICIPATED IN BOTB SUPPORTED MISSIONS TO HONG KONG AND THIS YEAR THAT NUMBER IS GETTING ON TO 300,+ HE SAID.

BUSINESS BETWEEN HONG KONG AND BRITAIN HAS CONTINUED TO BOOM, HE SAID. +WHEN I LAST SPOKE TO THIS CHAMBER IN 1978, OUR TWO-WAY TRADE AMOUNTED TO A TOTAL OF SOME 725 MILLION POUND STERLING -- THAT WAS VISIBLE TRADE. BY NOW, THE FIGURE HAS MUCH MORE THAN DOUBLED.+

HE SAID THERE WAS NO DOUBT BRITAIN OFFERS A LARGE AND ATTRACTIVE MARKET FOR HONG KONG'S PRODUCTS -- IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF THIS YEAR BRITAIN IMPORTED GOODS WORTH 425 MILLION POUND STERLING OF WHICH ALMOST EXACTLY HALF WAS FOR TEXTILES AND GARMENTS.

+OUR IMPORTS OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SOUND EQUIPMENT FROM YOU ROSE BY SOME 25 PER CENT BETWEEN 1978 AND 1981. OVER THE SAME THREE-YEAR PERIOD OUR IMPORTS OF WATCHES AND PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT DOUBLED -- TO MORE THAN 45 MILLION POUND STERLING. OUR IMPORTS OF YOUR ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT AND APPLIANCES OVER THE SAME PERIOD ACTUALLY TRIPLED,+ HE SAID.

ALL THESE EXAMPLES SHOWED CLEARLY HOW SUCCESSFUL HONG KONG IS DIVERSIFYING AND EXPANDING ITS TRADE, HE ADDED.

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DUKE SEES LOCAL INDUSTRY AT WORK

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THE DUKE OF KENT THIS MORNING GAINED AN INSIGHT INTO HONG KONG'S EFFORTS TO BROADEN ITS INDUSTRIAL BASE AND SAW AN EXAMPLE OF LOCAL HIGH-TECHNOLOGY AT WORK.

ACCOMPANIED BY THE DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRY, MR PETER TSAO, HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS CALLED AT THE HONG KONG INDUSTRIAL ESTATES CORPORATION AT TAI PO WHERE HE WAS MET BY THE REGIONAL SECRETARY, NEW TERRITORIES, MR IAN MACPHERSON, AND MR VICTOR MILLER, THE CORPORATION'S CHIEF EXECUTIVE.

THE DUKE WAS BRIEFED ON THE MAJOR ACTIVITIES OF THE CORPORATION, SET UP IN 1977 ON THE CONCEPT OF OFFERING LAND SITES ON SPECIAL TERMS TO SELECTED INDUSTRIES TO ENCOURAGE INDUSTRIAL DIVERSIFICATION AND THE USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES.

HE WAS TOLD THAT THE CORPORATION HAD ALREADY DEVELOPED 46 HECTARES OF INDUSTRIAL SITES IN TAI PO, WITH AN ADDITIONAL 20 HECTARES TO BE COMPLETED BETWEEN 1983 AND 1985.

DUCHESS LAYS FOUNDATION STONE FOR ARTS ACADEMY

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS WAS INTERESTED TO LEARN THAT MORE THAN \$1.3 BILLION HAD ALREADY BEEN INVESTED IN THE TAI PO INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, ABOUT 70 PER CENT BY LOCAL INDUSTRIALISTS AND 30 PER CENT BY OVERSEAS FIRMS.

THIRTY-FIVE COMPANIES HAVE TAKEN UP SITES AT THE ESTATE, WITH 20 OF THEM ALREADY IN PRODUCTION. THESE COMPANIES, THE DUKE WAS TOLD, COVER A BROAD RANGE OF PRODUCTS AND EMPLOY MODERN, SOPHISTICATED TECHNOLOGIES.

MR MILLER INFORMED HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THAT FOLLOWING THE COMPLETION OF THE FIRST STANDARD FACTORY BLOCK IN TAI PO LAST YEAR, TWO ADDITIONAL BLOCKS WERE NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND SHOULD BE READY NEXT YEAR.

THESE STANDARDISED BLOCKS, EACH WITH A TOTAL FLOOR AREA OF 8 758 SQUARE METRES, HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO SUPPORT HEAVY MACHINERY. EACH BLOCK HAS ITS OWN LOADING AND UNLOADING AREA, A UNIQUE FEATURE FOR FACTORY BUILDINGS IN HONG KONG.

THE DUKE WAS ALSO TOLD THAT THE ESTATE'S CENTRE BUILDING, A COMMERCIAL COMPLEX COMPLETED RECENTLY, WOULD BE IN OPERATION SHORTLY TO SERVE THE INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITY AT THE ESTATE.

FOLLOWING THE BRIEFING, THE DUKE VISITED RCL SEMICONDUCTORS LTD, A HIGH-TECHNOLOGY FACTORY AT THE ESTATE PRODUCING A WIDE RANGE OF INTEGRATED CIRCUITS AND OTHER RELATED COMPONENTS FOR THE LOCAL ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY.

DRESSED IN SPECIAL LINT-FREE OVERALLS AND PROTECTIVE SHOE COVERS, HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS WAS SHOWN AROUND THE FACTORY BY THE COMPANY'S CHAIRMAN, MR R.C. LEE.

HE VISITED THE FACTORY'S +WAFER-FABRICATION+ AREA WHERE HE SAW MICROCHIPS BEING FABRICATED AND TOURED THE COMPUTER AIDED DESIGN ROOM WHERE HE WAS SHOWN HOW CIRCUITS ARE DESIGNED.

AFTER THE CEREMONY, HER ROYAL HIGHNESS, ACCOMPANIED BY THE GOVERNOR AND LADY YOUNG, MET INFORMALLY SOME OF THE PEOPLE CONNECTED WITH THE PROJECT, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE PROJECT BOARD.

DUCHESS LAYS FOUNDATION STONE FOR ARTS ACADEMY
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HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF KENT TODAY (THURSDAY) LAID THE FOUNDATION STONE FOR THE HONG KONG ACADEMY FOR PERFORMING ARTS WHICH IS BEING BUILT ON A 23 000-SQUARE METRE SITE ADJACENT TO THE HONG KONG ARTS CENTRE IN HARBOUR ROAD, WAN CHAI.

THE ACADEMY IS THE FIRST CENTRE TO BE BUILT IN HONG KONG FOR THE SPECIFIC PURPOSE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN THE PERFORMING ARTS. IT WILL BE OPERATIONAL DURING THE 1985 SCHOLASTIC YEAR AND WILL HOUSE FOUR MAJOR SCHOOLS: MUSIC, DANCE, ACTING AND TECHNICAL SERVICES, TOGETHER WITH THEATRES AND STUDIOS.

IN A SPEECH AT THE FOUNDATION STONE-LAYING CEREMONY, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ACADEMY'S PROJECT BOARD, MR LI FOOK-WO SAID: +WE ARE MOST HONOURED BY YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS'S PRESENCE TODAY, NOT LEAST BECAUSE WE KNOW YOUR PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE PERFORMING ARTS.+

MR LI SAID THE ACADEMY WOULD MAKE A VITAL CONTRIBUTION TO HONG KONG'S CULTURAL LIFE BY PROVIDING VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN THE PERFORMING ARTS -- PRODUCING PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS AND TEACHERS IN MUSIC, DANCE AND DRAMA AND EXPERTS IN THE AREA OF TECHNICAL SERVICES.

+BY RAISING HONG KONG'S OWN PERFORMERS AND TEACHERS, THE ACADEMY WILL ENSURE AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF ARTISTIC TALENT AND COMPLEMENT THE PROGRAMME OF CULTURAL COMPLEXES BEING BUILT AROUND THE TERRITORY.+

HE ADDED THAT THE SPEED WITH WHICH THE PROJECT HAD BEEN REALISED REFLECTED THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS IN HONG KONG AND THE IMPORTANCE PLACED TODAY ON THE NEED TO NURTURE AND TRAIN YOUNG PERFORMERS OF TOMORROW.

MR LI SAID THE ACADEMY WOULD BE BUILT BY THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB AS A PROJECT TO MARK ITS CENTENARY IN 1984 AND THE GOVERNMENT HAD AGREED TO MEET ITS RUNNING COSTS.

AFTER THE CEREMONY, HER ROYAL HIGHNESS, ACCOMPANIED BY THE GOVERNOR AND LADY YOUDE, AND MR LI, MET INFORMALLY SOME OF THE PEOPLE CONNECTED WITH THE PROJECT, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE PROJECT BOARD.

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CONTAINER PROJECT POINTS TO FAITH IN FUTURE: MACPHERSON

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CONSTRUCTION OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST FREIGHT CONTAINER STATION AT KWAI CHUNG WAS AN INDICATION OF CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG'S FUTURE, THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR IAN MACPHERSON, SAID TODAY (THURSDAY).

HE SAID THIS WHEN OFFICIATING TODAY AT THE GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY OF THE \$1.5 BILLION COMPLEX OF ASIA TERMINALS AT THE KWAI CHUNG CONTAINER TERMINAL.

+THE ACTUAL COMMENCEMENT OF WORK ON THIS HUGE COMPLEX, INVOLVING AS IT DOES A VERY SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL COMMITMENT, IS A CLEAR DEMONSTRATION OF CONFIDENCE IN THE CONTINUED LONG TERM STABILITY AND PROSPERITY OF HONG KONG AND ITS PEOPLE,+ MR MACPHERSON SAID.

HE REMARKED THAT TODAY'S OCCASION MARKED ANOTHER STEP FORWARD IN THIS +IMAGINATIVE AND EXCITING PROJECT+.

THE COMPLEX, WHEN COMPLETED, WOULD ENABLE MAXIMUM USE TO BE MADE OF PRECIOUS LAND RESOURCES IN THE CONTAINER PORT AREA, THUS ENABLING STORAGE TO BE INCREASED AND THROUGHPUT SPEEDED UP, HE ADDED.

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CAMPAIGN TO ENCOURAGE TUEN MUN RESIDENTS TO WORK LOCALLY

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THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT OFFICER, MR BILLY LAM, TODAY (THURSDAY) PRESIDED OVER THE OPENING OF A CAREER EXHIBITION TO ENCOURAGE MORE LOCAL WORKERS TO TAKE UP JOBS IN THE NEW TOWN.

THE AIM IS TO REVERSE THE CURRENT TREND WHERE MOST LOCAL RESIDENTS STILL WORK OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT WHILE THE MAJORITY OF LOCAL JOBS ARE BEING FILLED BY RESIDENTS FROM ELSEWHERE.

THE EXHIBITION, WHICH OUTLINES JOB PROSPECTS, SALARIES AND CAREERS OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE IN TUEN MUN, IS SPONSORED BY THE DISTRICT BOARD IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT AND LOCAL MANUFACTURERS.

MR LAM SAID THAT AN EARLIER SURVEY INDICATED THAT A SUBSTANTIAL PERCENTAGE OF THE WORKING POPULATION OF THE TOWN WAS STILL WORKING OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT WHILE THE MAJORITY OF WORKERS IN LOCAL FACTORIES CAME FROM OTHER PLACES.

+THIS HAS RESULTED IN EXTRA TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC PROBLEMS, WITH RESIDENTS HAVING TO SPEND HOURS DAILY ON TIRING JOURNEYS TO THEIR PLACES OF WORK,+ HE SAID.

+IT WILL ALSO ADVERSELY AFFECT THE LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE OF A SELF-CONTAINED TOWNSHIP IN THIS MORE DISTANT CORNER OF THE NORTH-WESTERN NEW TERRITORIES,+ HE ADDED.

MR LAM DESCRIBED THE EXHIBITION AS THE FIRST MAJOR ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION BY INFORMING RESIDENTS OF AVAILABLE LOCAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES.

PARTICIPATING IN THE EXHIBITION ARE 12 LOCAL INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS, EACH PROVIDING INFORMATION ON JOBS AVAILABLE, SALARIES, CAREER PROSPECTS, AND REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS, USING PHOTOGRAPHS, CHARTS AND DIAGRAMS.

THE EXHIBITION IS BEING STAGED FOR SEVEN DAYS ON THE PODIUM OF THE YAU OI ESTATE COMMERCIAL COMPLEX, AFTER WHICH IT WILL MOVE TO THE TUEN MUN RURAL COMMITTEE BUILDING, TAI HING ESTATE COMMUNITY HALL AND BUDDHIST WONG SEWAI MEMORIAL SCHOOL OF WU KING ESTATE FOR OTHER RESIDENTS IN THE DISTRICT. THE WHOLE EXHIBITION WILL LAST UNTIL NOVEMBER 15.

JOINING MR LAM AT THE OPENING CEREMONY WERE MR LAU WONG-FAT, CHAIRMAN OF THE TUEN MUN RURAL COMMITTEE, MR LEUNG LIT-CHEONG, SENIOR LABOUR OFFICER, AND UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE DISTRICT BOARD.

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DB TO DISCUSS NEW TRAFFIC MEASURES
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MEASURES TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC IN EAST TSIM SHA TSUI WILL BE CONSIDERED AT THE FIRST MEETING OF THE YAU MA TEI DISTRICT BOARD TOMORROW (FRIDAY).

THE MEETING IS TO BE HELD AT 3 PM IN THE ASSEMBLY HALL OF THE LUTHERAN MIDDLE SCHOOL. IT WILL BE PRECEDED BY A DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION EXHIBITION AT 2.30 PM.

THE BOARD WILL ALSO EXAMINE A PLAN TO BUILD A \$13-MILLION FOOTBRIDGE AT THE JUNCTION OF CHATHAM AND GRANVILLE ROADS.

A TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT REPORT WILL DRAW MEMBERS' ATTENTION TO THE ACCESS REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DISABLED IN THE PLANNING OF DISTRICT FACILITIES.

OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION INCLUDE THE USE OF DISTRICT BOARD FUNDS, CLEARANCE OF SQUATTERS, INTRODUCTION OF +MEET THE PUBLIC+ SESSIONS, THE BOARD'S STANDING ORDERS, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEES.

THE YAU MA TEI DISTRICT BOARD CONSISTS OF EIGHT OFFICIAL MEMBERS, EIGHT UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS AND TWO URBAN COUNCILLORS.

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1982

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BUSY AGENDA FOR TUEN MUN DISTRICT BOARD
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THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT BOARD WILL DISCUSS TOMORROW (FRIDAY) A WIDE RANGE OF PROPOSALS AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS FOR THE NEW TOWN.

THESE INCLUDE THE PROPOSED FARE INCREASE OF THE TUEN MUN TO CENTRAL HOVERFERRY SERVICE FROM \$6 TO \$7 AND A PLAN TO DEVELOP A 35-HECTARE RECLAIMED SITE IN CASTLE PEAK BAY INTO A RESIDENTIAL AND INDUSTRIAL AREA.

MEMBERS WILL ALSO BE BRIEFED ON MAJOR PROJECTS SCHEDULED TO COMMENCE BETWEEN FEBRUARY AND APRIL NEXT YEAR.

AMONG THEM ARE A FOOTBRIDGE ACROSS THE TUEN MUN NULLAH AND CASTLE PEAK ROAD, ROAD WIDENING PROJECTS, AND THE ADDITION OF THREE PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICES IN THE TOWN CENTRE.

MR R.C. SMALLSHAW AND MR D.G. WILLDAY OF THE STANDING CONFERENCE ON ROAD SAFETY AND MRS LEE LO YUK-SIM OF THE CONSUMER COUNCIL WILL ALSO ATTEND THE MEETING TO EXPLAIN THEIR WORK.

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ELECTION OF EMPLOYEES' REPRESENTATIVES TO THE
LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD
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THE ANNUAL ELECTION OF EMPLOYEES' REPRESENTATIVES TO THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD WILL TAKE PLACE BY SECRET BALLOT TOMORROW (FRIDAY) (OCTOBER 29) AT 10.30 AM AT THE SCHOOL HALL OF QUEEN ELIZABETH SCHOOL, KOWLOON.

THE BOARD IS A NON-STATUTORY BODY WHICH ADVISES THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR ON MATTERS REFERRED TO IT BY HIM, INCLUDING LEGISLATION AND INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONVENTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS. IT COMPRISES SIX EMPLOYERS' REPRESENTATIVES AND SIX EMPLOYEES' REPRESENTATIVES, WITH THE COMMISSIONER AS CHAIRMAN.

THREE OF THE EMPLOYEES' REPRESENTATIVES ARE ELECTED BY REGISTERED EMPLOYEES' UNIONS AND THE OTHER THREE ARE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY (THURSDAY) THAT NINE CANDIDATES HAD BEEN NOMINATED FOR ELECTION AND THEIR NAMES HAD BEEN SENT TO ALL REGISTERED EMPLOYEES' UNIONS FOR CONSIDERATION.

+A REGISTERED EMPLOYEES' TRADE UNION WISHING TO VOTE SHOULD SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ELECTION. THE REPRESENTATIVE MUST BRING WITH HIM A LETTER OF AUTHORISATION FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF HIS UNION AND A COPY OF THE CIRCULAR LETTER DATED OCTOBER 8, 1982 FROM THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT ON THE SUBJECT,+ HE ADDED.

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1982

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CONTRACT FOR PO LAM ROAD CONSTRUCTION AWARDED
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THE NEW TERRITORIES DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AWARDED A \$29.6 MILLION CONTRACT TODAY (THURSDAY) TO CHINA CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING CORPORATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SECTION OF THE NEW PO LAM ROAD TO PROVIDE ACCESS FROM KOWLOON TO JUNK BAY.

THE CONTRACT WAS SIGNED BY MR I.M. MILLER, CHIEF ENGINEER OF THE JUNK BAY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE, AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CORPORATION.

MR MILLER SAID THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST STEP IN A PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW TOWN IN JUNK BAY UNDERTAKEN BY THE JUNK BAY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF THE NEW TERRITORIES DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT.

HE SAID THAT THE CONTRACT INCLUDED THE CONSTRUCTION OF ABOUT 1.2 KM OF SINGLE TWO-LANE CARRIAGEWAY FROM NEAR THE EASTERN END OF SAU MAU PING ROAD TO CONNECT WITH THE EXISTING ANDERSON ROAD NEAR MA YAU TONG.

+CLIMBING LANES AND A FOOTPATH ON ONE SIDE WILL ALSO BE PROVIDED,+ HE ADDED.

WORK ON THE CONTRACT WILL START NEXT MONTH AND IS EXPECTED TO TAKE ABOUT 16 MONTHS TO COMPLETE.

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WALLA-WALLA FARE INCREASES
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THE MAXIMUM HIRE CHARGES FOR WALLA-WALLAS WILL BE INCREASED FROM MONDAY (NOVEMBER 1).

THE INCREASES WILL BE 50 PER CENT FOR MOST OF THE HIRINGS ON TIME OR JOURNEY BASIS.

THE FARE FOR THE LATE NIGHT WALLA-WALLA SERVICE FROM KOWLOON PUBLIC PIER TO QUEEN'S PIER AND BLAKE PIER WILL ALSO BE INCREASED FROM \$3 TO \$4.50.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT POINTED OUT THAT THE LAST INCREASE FOR WALLA-WALLA CHARGES WAS IN DECEMBER 1979.

HE ADDED THAT THE NEW RATES WERE INTRODUCED FOLLOWING LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE HONG KONG AND KOWLOON MOTOR BOATS ASSOCIATION AND A DETAILED EXAMINATION OF THE FUTURE VIABILITY OF THE OPERATION OF WALLA-WALLA SERVICES AGAINST THE RISING OPERATION COSTS, PARTICULARLY FOR FUEL, WAGES, REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE.

DETAILS OF THE NEW CHARGES WILL BE DISPLAYED IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE IN EVERY LAUNCH AND AT THE WALLA-WALLA BOOKING OFFICES.

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PROMOTING MUSIC AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

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THE SECOND YOUNG MUSIC-MAKERS' TALENT QUEST TO PROMOTE INTEREST AND RAISE THE STANDARD OF MUSICAL COMPOSITION AND VOCAL PERFORMANCE AMONG HONG KONG YOUTHS WILL BE HELD FROM DECEMBER 1982 TO JANUARY 1983.

ORGANISED JOINTLY BY THE MUSIC OFFICE OF THE RECREATION AND CULTURE DEPARTMENT, RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG AND THE COMPOSERS AND AUTHORS SOCIETY OF HONG KONG, THE TALENT QUEST IS OPEN TO ALL AMATEUR COMPOSERS AND SINGERS UNDER THE AGE OF 30 AND 25 RESPECTIVELY.

THE BEST COMPOSITIONS WILL BE PERFORMED BY THE HONG KONG PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA AND THE HONG KONG CHINESE ORCHESTRA, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE MUSIC OFFICE SAID.

THE FINAL CONTEST WILL BE HELD ON JANUARY 22 NEXT YEAR AT TSUEN WAN TOWN HALL.

APPLICATION FORMS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM ALL MUSIC CENTRES OF THE MUSIC OFFICE.

FOR ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CALL 5-282290, 5-283257.

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SEMINARS AND DEMONSTRATIONS ON PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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ALL TEACHERS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THREE SEMINARS AND DEMONSTRATION LESSONS ORGANISED BY THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION SECTION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER.

+THE FIRST SEMINAR WILL INTRODUCE CURRICULUM PLANNING IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH EMPHASIS ON THE TEACHING OF GAMES, WHILE THE OTHER TWO SEMINARS WILL FOCUS ON THE NEW SYLLABUSES ON PHYSICAL FITNESS AND CHINESE DANCE FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS,+ AN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE THREE SEMINARS WILL BE CONDUCTED IN CANTONESE BY PHYSICAL EDUCATION INSPECTORS AND TEACHERS ON THREE CONSECUTIVE SATURDAY MORNINGS STARTING FROM NOVEMBER 20.

THE FIRST AND THIRD SEMINARS WILL BE HELD AT METHODIST COLLEGE, GASCOIGNE ROAD, KOWLOON, AND THE SECOND ONE AT QUEEN'S COLLEGE, CAUSEWAY ROAD, HONG KONG.

THOSE TEACHERS INTERESTED SHOULD SEND THEIR APPLICATIONS VIA THEIR SCHOOL HEADS TO THE PRINCIPAL INSPECTOR (PHYSICAL EDUCATION), EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, KOWLOON GOVERNMENT OFFICES, 7TH FLOOR, 405 NATHAN ROAD, KOWLOON NOT LATER THAN NOVEMBER 15.

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1982

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PARTIAL CLOSURE OF PRINCE EDWARD ROAD FLYOVER
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THE WESTBOUND TRAFFIC LANE ON PRINCE EDWARD ROAD FLYOVER LEADING FROM KOWLOON CITY INTERCHANGE TO PRINCE EDWARD ROAD WEST WILL BE TEMPORARILY CLOSED TO TRAFFIC BETWEEN 9 PM TOMORROW (FRIDAY) AND 7 AM ON SATURDAY FOR ROAD WORK.

HOWEVER, NORMAL TRAFFIC WILL BE MAINTAINED ON GROUND LEVEL ROADS.

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TRAFFIC RE-ROUTING IN TO KWA WAN
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MEI KING STREET BETWEEN KWEI CHOW STREET AND MEI KWONG STREET WILL BE RE-ROUTED ONE WAY SOUTHBOUND FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (OCTOBER 30) TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC FLOW IN THE AREA.

MEI KWONG STREET WILL ALSO BE RE-ROUTED ONE WAY FROM MEI KING STREET TO KWEI CHOW STREET.

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