



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1993

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GOVERNOR PRAISES FSD FOR 125 YEARS OF SERVICE
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THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PRAISES THE WORK OF THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT FOR THE PROFESSIONAL, SKILFUL AND COURAGEOUS MANNER IN WHICH ITS OFFICERS PROVIDE FIRE-FIGHTING SERVICE AND MEET VARIOUS CHALLENGES.

TAKING SALUTE AT THE HONG KONG FIRE SERVICES 125TH ANNIVERSARY REVIEW, MR PATTEN SAID IT WAS A SERVICE WITH A WORLDWIDE REPUTATION FOR THE EXCELLENCE OF ITS PERFORMANCE.

HE SAID THE DEPARTMENT HAD MODEST BEGINNINGS AS A FIRE BRIGADE OF 66 OFFICERS AND 100 VOLUNTEERS IN 1868 SERVING A COMMUNITY OF LESS THAN 60,000 PEOPLE.

THE SERVICE IS NOW COMPLETELY LOCALISED AND HAS MORE THAN 8,000 MEN AND WOMEN, OPERATING MORE THAN 95 FIRE STATIONS AND AMBULANCE DEPOTS.

WITH LATEST TECHNIQUES AND EQUIPMENT, THE DEPARTMENT IS PROVIDING PROMPT AND EFFECTIVE FIRE-FIGHTING AND RESCUE SERVICES IN VARIOUS DANGEROUS AND DEMANDING SITUATIONS IN THE TERRITORY, HE SAID.

"TECHNIQUES AND EQUIPMENT ARE CONSTANTLY UPDATED. NEW FIRE STATIONS ARE BUILT TO SERVE NEW COMMUNITIES," HE ADDED.

HE ALSO NOTED THAT STAFF CHANGES HAD BEEN TAKING PLACE, WITH WOMEN BEING RECRUITED AND TRAINED NOW AS FIRE OFFICERS.

CONGRATULATING THE DEPARTMENT ON ITS ANNIVERSARY, THE GOVERNOR SAID: "THE WHOLE COMMUNITY CAN LOOK TO YOU WITH GRATITUDE FOR THE PAST AND WITH CONFIDENCE FOR THE FUTURE."

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GOVT APPOINTMENTS TO STOCK EXCHANGE COUNCIL
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THE SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES, MR MICHAEL CARTLAND, ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE GOVERNOR HAD RE-APPOINTED MR THOMAS CHEN TSENG-TAO TO THE COUNCIL OF THE STOCK EXCHANGE OF HONG KONG LTD (SEHK).

"THE GOVERNOR HAS ALSO APPOINTED MR JOHN CHAN CHO-CHAK," MR CARTLAND SAID. MR CHAN WILL REPLACE MR ALEX WU SHU-CHIH WHO HAS TENDERED HIS RESIGNATION FROM THE COUNCIL.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE STOCK EXCHANGE RULING COUNCIL WAS SUBSTANTIALLY REVAMPED IN LATE 1991 TO PROVIDE A BROADER REPRESENTATION FOR VARIOUS SECTORS OF THE SECURITIES INDUSTRY.

IT NOW INCLUDES, INTER ALIA, 11 INDEPENDENT MEMBERS, TWO OF WHOM ARE APPOINTEES CHOSEN BY THE GOVERNOR WHILE THE REST ARE SELECTED AND APPOINTED BY THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

THE TERMS OF THE TWO EXISTING GOVERNMENT APPOINTEES WILL EXPIRE ON DECEMBER 31, THIS YEAR.

MR ALEX WU HAS RECENTLY GIVEN NOTICE TO RESIGN FROM THE COUNCIL DUE TO PERSONAL REASONS.

THIS WILL TAKE EFFECT AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE FORTHCOMING ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SEHK SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 29, DURING WHICH THE ELECTION OF NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS WILL TAKE PLACE.

"AFTER CONSIDERING HIS EXPERIENCE IN BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS, THE GOVERNOR HAS DECIDED THAT MR JOHN CHAN WILL BE A SUITABLE CANDIDATE TO TAKE UP THE IMPENDING VACANCY," MR CARTLAND ADDED.

MR CHAN HAS BEEN APPOINTED FOR THE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 30, THIS YEAR TO THE CONCLUSION OF THE SEHK ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN 1995, THAT IS ABOUT TWO YEARS.

ON THE OTHER HAND, MR THOMAS CHEN HAS AGREED TO SERVE ANOTHER TERM ON THE COUNCIL AND IS ACCORDINGLY RE-APPOINTED UP TO THE CONCLUSION OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF SEHK NEXT YEAR.

"I WOULD LIKE TO THANK MR ALEX WU FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SEHK AND THE SECURITIES INDUSTRY IN GENERAL IN THE PAST FEW YEARS. THE FACT THAT THE STOCK EXCHANGE IS NOW RUNNING SO WELL OWES MUCH TO HIS EFFORTS," MR CARTLAND SAID.

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LIGHTS, CAMERA, HONG KONG
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FRENCH FILM AFICIONADOS WILL GAIN AN UNUSUAL CHANCE TO APPRECIATE SOME OF THE WIDE OUTPUT FROM HONG KONG - THE WORLD'S THIRD LARGEST MAKER OF MOVIES - WHEN 20 EXAMPLES OF THE TERRITORY'S PROLIFIC PRODUCTION GO ON SHOW FOR THREE WEEKS IN PARIS FROM NOVEMBER 17.

CHOSEN BY HONG KONG'S MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION AND LA CINEMATHEQUE FRANCAISE, THE 20 OFFERINGS INCLUDE SAMPLES OF EVERY STYLE FROM THE SWEATY REALISM OF CAGEMAN TO THE ACTION DRAMA OF POLICE STORY AND THE FRENZIED COMEDY OF ALL'S WELL. ENDS WELL.

THE FESTIVAL IS CO-ORDINATED BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT AS PART OF A MAJOR PROMOTION IN FRANCE, GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS. IT IS SPONSORED BY SIX MAJOR HONG KONG FIRMS: CATHAY PACIFIC, CITIC PACIFIC, HANG SENG BANK, HUTCHISON WHAMPOA, INCHAE PACIFIC AND SINO GROUP.

IT WILL OPEN IN THE SALLE DE LA CINEMATHEQUE, PALAIS DE CHAILLOT, WITH CRIME STORY, THE NEW VEHICLE FOR ACTION MAN MR JACKIE CHAN'S AWESOME ARRAY OF PHYSICAL FEATS.

MR CHAN SAID HE DID HIS OWN STUNTS BECAUSE HE WOULD NOT WANT TO CLAIM THE CREDIT IF SOMEONE ELSE UNDERTOOK THE WORK AND THE DANGER.

IN HIS 1985 POLICE STORY PRECURSOR TO CRIME STORY - ALSO ON THE FESTIVAL PROGRAMME - MR CHAN CLIMAXED A RANGE OF STUNTS WITH A THREE-STORY SLIDE DOWN A HEAVY CABLE AS ELECTRIC LIGHTS BURST ALL AROUND HIM.

THE IMAGE SO CAPTURED THE PUBLIC IMAGINATION THAT IT HAS BEEN USED IN AN EFFECTIVE AIDS EDUCATION CAMPAIGN WITH MR CHAN TELLING HIS YOUNG FANS THAT, IN LIFE AS IN THE MOVIES, THEY SHOULD TAKE ALL THE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS POSSIBLE.

THE NEWLY COMPLETED CRIME STORY WAS HIGHLY RATED BY THE CINEMATHEQUE SELECTION TEAM AND, AS WITH MOST OF THE FESTIVAL FILMS, HAS BEEN SUBTITLED IN FRENCH.

MR CHAN AND HIS FELLOW STARS MISS MAGGIE CHEUNG, MISS JOEY WANG AND MISS ROSAMUND KWAN WILL FLY TO PARIS FOR THE FESTIVAL'S OPENING.

THE ORGANISERS HAVE CHOSEN A PROGRAMME DESIGNED TO APPEAL TO THE LARGE AND KNOWLEDGEABLE FRENCH FILM AUDIENCE. ALL THAT REMAINS IS FOR THEM TO ENJOY IT.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS
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	\$ MILLION

OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	2,980
REVERSAL OF LAF	+20
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	3,000
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	-730
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	2,270
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER	TWI 113.2 *+0.0* 27.10.93

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS		EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS				
TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	3.03 PCT	13 MONTHS	2411	4.625	101.55	3.15
1 MONTH	2.80 PCT	16 MONTHS	2502	4.75	101.82	3.34
3 MONTHS	2.74 PCT	19 MONTHS	2505	3.75	100.32	3.57
6 MONTHS	2.83 PCT	22 MONTHS	2508	4.625	101.71	3.67
12 MONTHS	3.09 PCT	36 MONTHS	3610	4.20	100.18	4.18

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 15,328MN

CLOSED 27 OCTOBER 1993

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CS DISAPPOINTED BY LEGISLATORS' SPEECHES

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DAVID FORD, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT HE WAS DISAPPOINTED AFTER HEARING SPEECHES BY LEGISLATORS ON THE GOVERNOR'S ANNUAL ADDRESS.

"I AM SAD TO SAY THAT THE OVERALL IMPRESSION WE HAVE AFTER LISTENING TO MEMBERS SPEECHES IS ONE OF DISAPPOINTMENT.

"DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE VERY NEGATIVE, DOWN BEAT, TONE OF MANY OF THE SPEECHES.

"DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE LACK OF CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS.

"DISAPPOINTMENT ABOVE ALL WITH THE PESSIMISTIC VIEW OF HONG KONG WHICH MEMBERS SEEMED TO HOLD ON SO MANY ASPECTS OF LIFE HERE," SIR DAVID SAID IN THE DEBATE ON THE MOTION OF THANKS ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS.

HE ADDED THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT, HAVING LISTENED TO THE DEBATE, TO RECOGNISE THE PICTURE OF HONG KONG PAINTED BY MEMBERS.

HE SAID THE VERY NEGATIVE VIEWS PUT FORWARD BY MEMBERS WERE NOT GENERALLY SHARED BY THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG.

"BUT SURELY IN ANY DEBATE SUCH AS THIS WE OWE IT TO THE COMMUNITY TO ASSESS PROGRESS IN THE ROUND, TO RECOGNISE SUCCESSES AS WELL AS SHORTCOMINGS, TO PRESENT A CONSIDERED BALANCED JUDGEMENT ON THE ISSUES OF THE DAY AND NOT JUST INDULGE IN PARTY POLITICAL POINT SCORING.

SIR DAVID SAID THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS LAID OUT IN VERY CLEAR AND PRECISE TERMS PLANS TO BUILD ON HONG KONG'S SUCCESS.

CERTAINLY HE DID NOT DWELL ON THE SUCCESSES OF THE PAST.

"IT WAS A SPEECH WHICH SPELT OUT THE ACTION FOR OUR VISION OF THE FUTURE. A FUTURE WHICH STRETCHES WELL BEYOND 1997," HE SAID.

"SO A VISITOR FROM OUTER SPACE DESCENDING ON CENTRAL LAST THURSDAY MORNING, SCANNING THE MARVEL OF THIS METROPOLIS, AND READING A HEADLINE WHICH ACCUSED THE GOVERNOR OF THROWING 'A HANDFUL OF CRUMBS TO A FLOCK OF PIGEONS' MUST HAVE WONDERED WHAT TO MAKE IT ALL.

"I DARE SAY HE REGARDED IT AS A CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF A CURIOUS KIND," SIR DAVID SAID.

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ECONOMY IS HK'S FIRST PRIORITY: CS

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT HONG KONG MADE NO APOLOGY FOR MAKING THE ECONOMY ITS FIRST PRIORITY.

IN HIS REPOSE TO MEMBERS' QUERIES ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS, SIR DAVID NOTED THAT A STRONG ECONOMY MEANS STRONG GOVERNMENT FINANCES.

/"IT MEANS

"IT MEANS WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO MEET PUBLIC ASPIRATIONS TO CREATE A SOCIETY WITH A HIGH AND IMPROVING LEVEL AND QUALITY OF PUBLIC SERVICES," HE SAID.

ON HONG KONG'S STAND IN THE ECONOMY, SIR DAVID SAID: "WE REMAIN ABSOLUTELY COMMITTED TO FREE TRADE AND FREE MARKET PRINCIPLES THAT SUSTAIN OUR SUCCESS; WE ARE WEDDED TO POLICIES OF LOW TAXATION; OF TYING GROWTH IN PUBLIC EXPENDITURE TO THE GROWTH OF THE ECONOMY; AND ABOVE ALL WE BELIEVE IN LEAVING BUSINESS DECISIONS TO BUSINESSMEN.

"WE STICK WITH THESE PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES NOT ONLY BECAUSE THEY HAVE PROVEN TO BE THE RIGHT ONES, BUT BECAUSE THEY REPRESENT OUR FUTURE AS ENSHRINED IN THE JOINT DECLARATION," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID NOTED THAT SEVERAL MEMBERS SEEMED TO WANT THE GOVERNMENT TO INTERVENE IN THE ECONOMY, TO INTERVENE IN BUSINESS DECISION-MAKING AND INTERVENE IN THE MARKET PLACE.

"WE ARE NOT FRANKLY ATTRACTED BY THE IDEA OF DETAILED MANAGEMENT OF OUR ECONOMY COMPRISING A STRATEGY AND CONCRETE MEASURES.

"CERTAINLY WE WILL NOT BE LURED INTO TRYING TO PLAN OUR ECONOMY, A PATH WHICH HAS LED TO THE DOWNFALL OF OTHER SO-CALLED WESTERN SOCIETIES," HE SAID.

TURNING TO WELFARE, SIR DAVID NOTED THAT HONG KONG IS NOT A WELFARE STATE, BUT IT IS A SOCIETY WHICH WORKS HARD TO ENSURE THE WELFARE OF ITS CITIZENS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG HAD A HEALTH CARE SYSTEM THAT IS VERY CHEAP AT THE POINT OF USE, A COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL SECURITY NET AND A PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME TO HOUSE OVER 46 PER CENT OF ITS PEOPLE.

HONG KONG WAS ABLE TO CONTINUE TO EXPAND SOCIAL SERVICES BECAUSE IT CREATED GROWTH IN THE ECONOMY, IN THE WEALTH OF THE COMMUNITY, IN THE FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IN THE PUBLIC AND VOLUNTARY SECTORS, HE SAID.

"AND BECAUSE OF THIS GROWTH WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PLOUGH BACK THE WEALTH CREATED BY COMMUNITY INTO SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY.

"WE ARE COMMITTED TO GROWTH. THAT IS ANOTHER WINNING FORMULA WE DO NOT INTEND TO CHANGE," HE SAID.

ON SOCIAL SERVICES, SIR DAVID POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S GOAL IN THE PAST WAS SIMPLY TO MEET THE PUBLIC DEMAND FOR SERVICES BUT THE CHALLENGE WAS TWOFOLD TODAY.

"FIRST, TO ENSURE THAT ALL OUR SERVICES MEET MODERN STANDARDS. QUALITY AS WELL AS QUANTITY MUST BE OUR OBJECTIVE.

"SECOND, TO ENSURE THAT SPECIAL GROUPS GET A TARGETED SERVICE. THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF SOME OF OUR SICK AND ELDERLY ARE NOT LUXURIES. THEY ARE BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR A TOLERABLE LIFE. WE HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN THEM AND WE WILL NOT FORGET THEM," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID THE GOVERNOR HAD ANNOUNCED NO LESS THAN 27 NEW INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS OF THE FAMILY, THE ELDERLY AND THE SICK.

THEY DEALT WITH THE NEEDS OF THE SMALL AS WELL AS LARGE CONSTITUENCIES: THE CHRONICALLY AND TERMINALLY ILL, THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED, THE PEOPLE WHO WERE TOO READILY FORGOTTEN.

ON HEALTH CARE, SIR DAVID SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS MAKING A DETERMINED EFFORT TO IMPROVE QUALITY AND TO CATER FOR THOSE WHO NEEDED SPECIAL CARE.

ALTHOUGH THERE ARE MORE TO BE DONE AND MANY OBJECTIVES TO BE MET, SIR DAVID SAID THEY WOULD BE MET WITHOUT SACRIFICING THE PRINCIPLES, THAT NOBODY SHOULD BE DENIED ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE FOR LACK OF MEANS AND THAT NOBODY SHOULD HAVE TO WAIT FOR ESSENTIAL TREATMENT.

"WITH SO MANY HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS AROUND THE WORLD UNDER HUGE PRESSURE, IF NOT BREAKING DOWN, WE MUST AND WILL LEARN THE LESSONS OF ELSEWHERE.

"WE WILL KEEP OUR SYSTEM COMPREHENSIVE AND CARING," HE SAID.

DESPITE THE RANGE OF SOCIAL SERVICES, SIR DAVID SAID HONG KONG PEOPLE STILL HAVE A LEGITIMATE ANXIETY ABOUT THE FUNDING OF THEIR OLD AGE.

HE NOTED THAT MANY GROUPS IN THE COMMUNITY SAW THE ONLY WAY TO ADDRESS THESE ANXIETIES WAS THE INTRODUCTION OF A PROVIDENT FUND AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SOON MAKE PROPOSALS FOR THE WAY FORWARD.

"I CAN ASSURE YOU WE ARE CONSCIOUS OF OUR DUTY TO COME FORWARD WITH PROPOSALS THAT ARE CLEAR, THAT PROVIDE REAL, NOT ILLUSORY BENEFITS FOR WORKERS BEYOND WHAT THEY CAN EXPECT TO RECEIVE FROM SOCIAL SECURITY, AND THAT MEET ANXIETIES ABOUT THE SECURITY OF CONTRIBUTIONS," HE SAID.

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GOVT - SMALL BUT DOING BIG THINGS: CS

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT IS A SMALL GOVERNMENT THAT DOES BIG THINGS, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DAVID FORD, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON.

SIR DAVID SAID THE NEXT FEW YEARS WOULD MAKE EVEN GREATER DEMANDS ON THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

THEY HAVE NEW PROGRAMMES TO IMPLEMENT, BIGGER PROBLEMS TO DEAL WITH, HE SAID.

"BUT I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE PUBLIC CAN BE SURE THAT THE MEN AND WOMEN IN THE CIVIL SERVICE AND THE DISCIPLINED SERVICES WILL RISE TO THE CHALLENGE OF THE FUTURE," SIR DAVID SAID.

HE SAID THEY NEEDED THE SUPPORT OF THE LEGCO AND OF THE COMMUNITY.

"FOR OUR PART, WE HAVE MADE ARRANGEMENTS TO TRAIN THEM FOR THE TRANSITION; WE ARE DEVELOPING PLANS FOR A PENSION RESERVE FUND; AND WE HAVE ACCELERATED THE LOCALISATION PROGRAMME," HE SAID.

/OVER THE

OVER THE LAST YEAR, THE CIVIL SERVICE HAD BEEN UNDER GREAT PRESSURE BUT HAD WON THROUGH, HE SAID, ADDING THAT THEY HAD EMBRACED PERFORMANCE PLEDGES ENTHUSIASTICALLY BECAUSE THEY CARED ABOUT THE SERVICE THEY PROVIDED.

SIR DAVID SAID THEY HAD IMPLEMENTED ALMOST ALL THE 103 INITIATIVES IN LAST YEAR'S POLICY ADDRESS QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY.

"AND ALL THIS WHILST KEEPING THE SIZE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR WELL UNDER CONTROL," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID IN HIS TERM AS CHIEF SECRETARY, THE GOVERNMENT BUDGET HAD INCREASED BY 56 PER CENT IN REAL TERMS. THE PUBLIC SERVICE HAS GROWN BY ONLY 6.6 PER CENT IN THE SAME PERIOD.

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FAIR, OPEN AND ACCOUNTABLE LEGISLATURE VITAL TO HK: CS

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HONG KONG NEEDS A LEGISLATURE THAT HAS BEEN FAIRLY AND OPENLY ELECTED AS WELL AS IS CLEARLY ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PEOPLE IT REPRESENTS, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DAVID FORD, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"BECAUSE UNLESS WE HAVE SUCH A LEGISLATURE IT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO CARRY OUT ITS RESPONSIBILITIES WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR, IT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO MONITOR THE GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVELY," SIR DAVID SAID.

HE ALSO REMINDED THOSE IN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY WHO BELIEVE THAT THE COMPOSITION OF THE LEGCO HAS NO SIGNIFICANCE IN GUARANTEEING THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG AS A BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL CENTRE:

"THE VERY FABRIC OF HONG KONG'S BUSINESS SUCCESS DEPENDS UPON THE FAIRNESS AND OPENNESS OF OUR SYSTEMS, AND THE RULE OF LAW AND THOSE IN TURN DEPEND UPON A LEGISLATURE FAIRLY AND OPENLY ELECTED WHICH ENJOYS THE CONFIDENCE AND RESPECT OF OUR COMMUNITY," HE SAID.

HE ALSO SAID ALTHOUGH CONCRETE STEPS WERE DETAILED BY THE GOVERNOR IN HIS ANNUAL ADDRESS THREE WEEKS AGO, THE GAP BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND CHINESE SIDES ON THE FUTURE ELECTION ARRANGEMENTS HAS YET TO CLOSE.

"BUT EVEN AT THIS LATE HOUR, ALL OUR EFFORTS ARE GEARED TO ACHIEVING AGREEMENT," HE SAID.

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INFLATION NOT AFFECTING HK'S COMPETITIVENESS

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HONG KONG'S COMPETITIVENESS HAS SO FAR NOT BEEN AFFECTED BY INFLATION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON HAMISH MACLEOD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

SPEAKING IN THE POLICY DEBATE, MR MACLEOD AGREED WITH MEMBERS THAT THE CURRENT RATE OF INFLATION AT NEARLY EIGHT PER CENT WAS STILL HIGH.

/HE SAID

HE SAID HONG KONG'S INFLATION WAS CAUSED PRIMARILY BY ROBUST ECONOMIC GROWTH OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME, IN AN ECONOMY WITH LIMITED LOCAL RESOURCES.

"WE REMAIN COMPETITIVE PARTLY BECAUSE WE DO NOT IMPORT INFLATION. THE PRICE OF RETAINED IMPORTS HAS SHOWN A DECLINING TREND OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS.

"IN ADDITION, PRODUCTIVITY CONTINUES TO IMPROVE. MOST OF ALL, WE BENEFIT FROM OUR INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATION WITH CHINA," HE SAID.

REPLYING TO SOME MEMBERS' REFERENCE TO THE SINGAPORE EXPERIENCE OF LOWER INFLATION RATE, MR MACLEOD SAID SINGAPORE HAD SUPPORTED A MUCH MORE AMBITIOUS AND FLEXIBLE LABOUR IMPORTATION SCHEME THAN HONG KONG.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER HAD EARLIER EXPLAINED THE DEDICATE BALANCE HONG KONG AIMED FOR IN ITS LABOUR IMPORTATION SCHEMES BETWEEN THE NEEDS OF THE ECONOMY AND THE NEED TO PROTECT WORKERS' INTERESTS.

MR MACLEOD NOTED THAT THE OTHER SIDE OF INFLATION IS RAPID GROWTH WITH FULL EMPLOYMENT, BUT HE BELIEVED THAT HONG KONG WOULD NOT PREFER LOW INFLATION AT THE COST OF ECONOMIC STAGNATION AND HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT ANOTHER ASPECT OF HONG KONG'S RESOURCE PROBLEM WAS LAND.

"PROPERTY PRICES ARE HIGH MAINLY BECAUSE DEMAND IS STRONG WHILE LAND IS SCARCE. THE GOVERNMENT INVESTS HEAVILY IN THE PRODUCTION OF SUFFICIENT NEW LAND.

"THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT TOO HAS BEEN SYMPATHETIC IN AGREEING TO THE SALE OF LAND EXCEEDING THE 50 HECTARE ANNUAL LIMIT.

"THE SUPPLY WOULD BE FURTHER IMPROVED IF ADDITIONAL LAND ASSOCIATED WITH THE NEW AIRPORT AND AIRPORT RAILWAY COULD ALSO BE AGREED AND COME ON STREAM AT ANY EARLY DATE," HE SAID.

ON THE ELECTION ISSUE, MR MACLEOD SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE VERY CLEAR HIS OWN CONVICTION.

"IF WE ARE TO SUCCEED IN PRESERVING HONG KONG'S WAY OF LIFE -- CHARACTERISED AMONG OTHER THINGS BY AN HONEST ADMINISTRATION AND THE RULE OF LAW -- THEN ONE OF THE KEY REQUIREMENTS IS TO HAVE A LEGISLATURE WHICH IS GENUINELY ROOTED IN THE COMMUNITY, ELECTED IN AN HONEST MANNER, AND SO ABLE TO EFFECTIVELY MONITOR AND QUESTION THE EXECUTIVE, WHICH IS AFTER ALL REQUIRED TO BE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE LEGISLATURE.

"AND IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRESERVE OUR WAY OF LIFE, OUR SYSTEM, IF HONG KONG IS TO CONTINUE TO PROSPER.

"THE COMMITMENT TO TWO SYSTEMS REALLY DOES MATTER," HE SAID.

ON MEMBERS' CALL TO INTRODUCE CAPITAL GAINS TAX TO TACKLE PROPERTY SPECULATION, MR MACLEOD SAID HONG KONG HAD TO REMAIN COMMITTED TO A SIMPLE AND LOW TAX SYSTEM WHICH HAD PROVED VERY SUCCESSFUL OVER A VERY LONG PERIOD OF TIME IN CREATING A FAVOURABLE CLIMATE FOR BUSINESS GROWTH.

"IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN THIS WELL-TRIED SYSTEM THAN TO EMBARK ON NEW TAXES WHICH MAY RISK SENDING QUITE THE WRONG MESSAGE TO LOCAL AND OVERSEAS INVESTORS."

ON PRIVATISATION, MR MACLEOD SAID HE TOOK A POSITIVE VIEW OF THE MERITS OF PUTTING APPROPRIATE PARTS OF GOVERNMENT ONTO A MORE COMMERCIAL BASIS.

"THE FACT THAT THE MOST VISIBLE MOVES RECENTLY HAVE BEEN IN THE NEW AREA OF ESTABLISHING TRADING FUNDS DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE HAVE FORGOTTEN THE NEED TO REVIEW FROM TIME TO TIME OTHER POSSIBLE CANDIDATES FOR MORE AMBITIOUS CHANGES.

"BUT WE NEED TO CHOOSE THE TIMING AND THE CANDIDATES CAREFULLY."

AS FOR CALLS TO REDUCE THE GOVERNMENT'S SHARE OF LOTTERY PROCEEDS IN FAVOUR OF THE LOTTERIES FUND, MR MACLEOD SAID THE NEW INITIATIVES IN THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS TO IMPROVE WELFARE SERVICES MIGHT RESULT IN ADDITIONAL DEMANDS ON THE RESOURCES OF THE LOTTERIES FUND MAKING IT A GOOD CASE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION TO REVIEW ITS POSITION ON THE ISSUE.

HE ADDED THAT HE WOULD ANNOUNCE THE REVIEW IN NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET SPEECH.

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AGREEMENT URGENTLY NEEDED IF AIRPORT IS TO STAY ON COURSE

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HONG KONG CANNOT PERFORM MIRACLES AND CONTINUES TO MAKE PROGRESS ON THE AIRPORT IN PARTICULAR IN THE ABSENCE OF AN AGREEMENT WITH THE CHINESE SIDE, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON HAMISH MACLEOD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

IN RESPONSE TO COMMENTS BY MEMBERS ON THE POLICY ADDRESS, MR MACLEOD SAID GOOD PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN THE NEW AIRPORT PROJECT.

BUT HE NOTED THAT THE GOVERNOR MADE THE POINT IN HIS POLICY SPEECH THAT "THE DATE IS NOT FAR OFF WHEN THE START OF SOME KEY AIRPORT CONTRACTS WILL BE HELD UP IF WE CANNOT SECURE THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT'S AGREEMENT ON FINANCING".

MR MACLEOD SAID: "WE SHOULD NOT BE IN ANY DOUBT ABOUT THAT. IT IS NOT A THREAT; IT IS A STATEMENT OF FACT.

"OUR INGENUITY IS NOW BEING TESTED BECAUSE KEY FRANCHISES AND CONTRACTS NEED TO BE LET VERY SOON BY THE PROVISIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY.

"I MUST MAKE IT CLEAR THAT TIME IS NOT ON OUR SIDE IF WE ARE TO STAY ON COURSE."

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ECONOMIC SUCCESS TO BE SHARED BY ALL: FS

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THE ADMINISTRATION HAS CONTINUED TO CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR ECONOMIC SUCCESS, AND TO ENSURE THAT THE BENEFITS ARE PASSED ONTO THE WHOLE COMMUNITY, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON HAMISH MACLEOD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

SPEAKING AT THE POLICY DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS, MR MACLEOD SAID THE ADMINISTRATION HAD ALSO PROVIDED STABILITY AND PREDICABILITY FOR THE CURRENCY THROUGH THE LINK WITH THE U.S. DOLLAR AND FOR INVESTMENT THROUGH A CLEAR COMMITMENT TO A LOW AND SIMPLE TAX SYSTEM.

HE ALSO NOTED THAT HONG KONG HAD INVESTED HEAVILY IN INFRASTRUCTURE; DEVELOPED A CLOSE ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA, THE MOST NOTABLE RECENT DEVELOPMENT BEING THE LISTING OF CHINESE COMPANIES ON THE STOCK MARKET; MADE A MAJOR EFFORT TO PROMOTE FREE, UNMANAGED WORLD TRADE AND A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME TO THE URUGUAY ROUND AND HAVE A PRACTICAL AND SUCCESSFUL INDUSTRIAL POLICY.

"IT IS TO THE CREDIT OF THE BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY THAT THEY HAVE BEEN TAKEN FULL ADVANTAGE OF THIS FAVOURABLE ENVIRONMENT, AND OF THE OPPORTUNITIES POSED BY THE ECONOMIC GROWTH OF CHINA, AND INDEED, OF MOST OF THIS REGION.

"THEIR SUCCESS HAS ENABLED US TO ACHIEVE GOOD ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL EMPLOYMENT AND RISING REAL WAGES," MR MACLEOD SAID.

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ALL HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES UNDER ONE POLICY SECRETARY: SHA

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ALL ISSUES RELATING TO HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA, FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PRESS FREEDOM WILL, FOR THE FIRST TIME, COME UNDER ONE SINGLE POLICY SECRETARY, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON.

THIS DECISION, WHICH WAS ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNOR IN HIS OCTOBER 6 POLICY ADDRESS, WILL MEAN AN IMPORTANT PRACTICAL STEP TO STREAMLINE THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, HE SAID.

AND MR SUEN STRESSED THAT THESE WERE SUBJECTS CONCERNED WITH "THE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES OF OUR COMMUNITY - VALUES THAT UNDERPIN OUR WAY OF LIFE."

"THE MORE ENTRENCHED THESE ARE, THE BETTER THE ASSURANCE THAT OUR WAY OF LIFE WILL BE SUSTAINED FAR INTO THE FUTURE," HE SAID.

ON THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO TACKLE THE VARIOUS IMPORTANT ISSUES, MR SUEN DREW ATTENTION TO THE GREEN PAPER ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN.

"JUDGING FROM THE ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE THAT WE ARE RECEIVING FROM THE VARIOUS INTEREST GROUPS, I AM CONFIDENT THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO FIND THE POINT OF BALANCE IN OUR COMMUNITY ON THE IMPORTANT MATTERS COVERED BY THE GREEN PAPER, INCLUDING THE NECESSARY MEASURES TO SAFEGUARD WOMEN'S RIGHTS."

ON THE QUESTION OF HONG KONG ACCEDING TO THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN, MR SUEN SAID THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WOULD CONSIDER IT EARLY NEXT YEAR AFTER THE EXPIRY OF THE CONSULTATION PERIOD.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, HE SAID, WAS THE QUESTION OF COMPATIBILITY OF LOCAL LAWS WITH THE BILL OF RIGHTS ORDINANCE.

IN THIS CONNECTION, HE SAID A REVIEW BY POLICY SECRETARIES OF LEGISLATION UNDER THEIR PURVIEW HAD RESULTED IN THE DRAWING UP OF A PROGRAMME OF LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS TO BRING THE LAWS IN LINE WITH THE ORDINANCE.

THIRTEEN SUCH AMENDMENT BILLS HAVE, SO FAR, BEEN ENACTED AND ANOTHER EIGHT ARE IN THE PIPELINE.

A SEPARATE EXERCISE HAS ALSO BEEN CARRIED OUT TO IDENTIFY LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS WHICH IMPACT ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION.

"AS A RESULT OF THAT EXERCISE, SEVEN LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS WERE IDENTIFIED FOR REPEAL OR AMENDMENT, AS AND WHEN THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME ALLOWS.

"WORK ON THIS HAD BEGUN AND I WILL BE MONITORING PROGRESS CLOSELY," HE POINTED OUT.

MR SUEN ADDED THAT NEW ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES HAD BEEN PUT IN PLACE TO GIVE THE PUBLIC MUCH GREATER ACCESS TO INFORMATION HELD BY THE GOVERNMENT.

PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS, FOR EXAMPLE, CAN NOW CHECK PERSONAL INFORMATION THEY HAVE PROVIDED TO THE GOVERNMENT.

IN ADDITION, ACCESS BY THE PUBLIC UNDER THE 30-YEAR RULE TO GOVERNMENT RECORDS HELD BY THE GOVERNMENT RECORDS OFFICE HAS, SUBJECT TO CERTAIN NECESSARY SAFEGUARDS, BEEN EXTENDED TO COVER CLASSIFIED AS WELL AS UNCLASSIFIED RECORDS.

"I WELL APPRECIATE THE CONCERNS OF MEMBERS AND OTHERS THAT UNDERLIE THE CALLS FOR US TO GO FURTHER WITH RESPECT TO ACCESS TO INFORMATION.

"I WILL SERIOUSLY CONSIDER WHAT ADDITIONAL MEASURES CAN BE TAKEN IN PURSUANCE OF THE GENERAL AIM OF GREATER OPENNESS."

TURNING TO DATA PROTECTION, MR SUEN NOTED THAT THERE WAS GROWING AWARENESS AND CONCERN IN THE COMMUNITY ABOUT THE THREAT POSED TO THE INDIVIDUAL'S RIGHT TO PRIVACY BY THE EVER INCREASING QUANTITIES OF PERSONAL DATA THAT WERE BEING COLLECTED, STORED AND TRANSFERRED BETWEEN DIFFERENT ORGANISATIONS, BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE.

"I AM ALSO MINDFUL OF THE GROWING TREND OF COUNTRIES INTRODUCING RESTRICTIONS ON THE TRANSFER OF DATA TO PLACES THAT ARE CONSIDERED NOT TO HAVE AN ACCEPTABLE REGULATORY REGIME FOR THE PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA.

"THIS REQUIRES SERIOUS TREATMENT BECAUSE OF ITS POTENTIAL TO IMPEDE THE CONDUCT OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS BY ANY COMPANY WITH A BASE IN HONG KONG."

HOWEVER, MR SUEN SAID THE ADMINISTRATION WAS ALREADY RESPONDING TO THESE CONCERNS BY EMBARKING ON PREPARATORY WORK FOR THE DRAFTING OF LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD PROVIDE FOR A STATUTORY SYSTEM OF CONTROL OVER PERSONAL DATA COLLECTION, STORAGE AND TRANSFER.

THIS WORK, HE SAID, WAS TAKING PLACE IN PARALLEL WITH THE LAW REFORM COMMISSION'S OWN EXAMINATION OF THE LAW IN THIS AREA.

THIS IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED BY THE MIDDLE OF NEXT YEAR FOLLOWING WHICH THE GOVERNMENT AIMS TO TABLE A BILL DURING THE 1994/95 LEGISLATIVE SESSION.

RETURNING TO THE REASONS FOR TAKING UP OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS RELATED SUBJECTS, MR SUEN SAID IT WAS NOT AN ISOLATED DEVELOPMENT.

"IT FORMS PART OF AN OVERALL PLAN TO STREAMLINE THE ORGANISATION AND TO RATIONALISE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION (CNTA).

FOR, AS MR SUEN POINTED OUT, VARIOUS DEVELOPMENTS OVER A NUMBER OF YEARS HAD TRANSFORMED CNTA INTO A PART OF THE GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE QUITE UNLIKE ANY OTHER - FUNCTIONING BOTH AS A POLICY BRANCH AND AS A DEPARTMENT.

THIS, HE SAID, HAD RESULTED IN A BLURRING BETWEEN POLICY AND OPERATIONAL FUNCTIONS, A LACK OF CLARITY IN THE LINES OF RESPONSIBILITY AND A DEGREE OF UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION OF FUNCTIONS AND EFFORT.

FOR THESE REASONS, AN INTERNAL ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT REVIEW HAS RECOMMENDED THAT CNTA BE TURNED INTO A CONVENTIONAL POLICY BRANCH, THE HOME AFFAIRS BRANCH, AND AN EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, THE HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT.

THE BRANCH, MR SUEN SAID, HAD ALREADY COME INTO BEING ON OCTOBER 15 USING EXISTING RESOURCES, SO THAT NEW RESPONSIBILITIES WERE TAKEN ON WITHOUT DELAY.

"ALTHOUGH WE ARE TAKING ON ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES, MEMBERS CAN REST ASSURED THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO APPLY OURSELVES DILIGENTLY TO THE SUBJECTS THAT WE HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN HANDLING.

"THE HOME AFFAIRS BRANCH WILL, OF COURSE, CONTINUE TO GIVE HIGH PRIORITY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION.

"OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, WE HAVE SEEN AN EXPANSION IN THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS."

IN THIS CONTEXT, MR SUEN GAVE HIS ASSURANCE THAT THIS EXPANSION WOULD CONTINUE IN STEP WITH THE COMMUNITY'S DESIRE TO HAVE A GREATER SAY IN DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THEIR DAILY LIVES.

WHICH IS WHY, MR SUEN SAID, ONE OF THE KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN DECIDING ON THE APPROPRIATE STRUCTURE FOR THE NEW HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT WAS HOW BEST TO FACILITATE THE DISTRICT BOARDS TO TACKLE DISTRICT PROBLEMS VIGOROUSLY, PROMPTLY AND EFFECTIVELY.

"WE PLAN TO ACHIEVE THIS AIM BY, INTER ALIA, PROVIDING A MORE SENIOR PRESENCE ON THE GROUND," HE SAID.

"WE ARE ALSO CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED FOR GOVERNMENT TO BE PLACED IN THE BEST POSSIBLE POSITION TO GET ITS MESSAGE ACROSS AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL.

"FINALLY, WE WILL BE TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE FACT THAT THERE ARE LOCAL ISSUES THAT CUT ACROSS DISTRICT BOUNDARIES AND REQUIRE A BROADER-BASED RESPONSE AND LIAISON CAPABILITY THAN CAN BE PROVIDED BY INDIVIDUAL DISTRICT OFFICERS.

IN CONCLUSION, MR SUEN STRESSED THAT ONCE THE PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN FINALISED, THE ENTIRE CNTA RE-ORGANISATION PACKAGE WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION.

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NEW PORT PROJECTS FORGING AHEAD: SES
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ALTHOUGH ISSUES CONCERNING THE START OF WORK ON CONTAINER TERMINAL 9 HAVE NOT BEEN RESOLVED, THE GOVERNMENT IS FORGING AHEAD WITH THE PLANNING OF CT10 AND BEYOND ON THE NEW LANTAU PORT PENINSULA, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MR GORDON SIU, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

DETAILED DESIGN AND PLANNING OF THE NECESSARY ROAD LINKS AND BACK-UP AREAS IS ALREADY UNDERWAY AND PRELIMINARY DESIGN WORK ON CT10 AND CT11 IS IN HAND, HE ADDED.

IN RESPONSE TO MEMBERS' QUESTIONS ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS, MR SIU NOTED THAT THE FIRST BERTH OF CT8 WAS IN PLACE EARLIER THIS YEAR, AND THE PROJECT WOULD BE COMPLETED ON SCHEDULE IN 1995 TO MEET GROWING DEMAND FOR PORT FACILITIES IN HONG KONG.

AS FOR THE SUGGESTION OF SOME MEMBERS THAT CT9 SHOULD BE BUILT ON LANTAU INSTEAD OF TSING YI, HE SAID HONG KONG WOULD NEED SUBSTANTIAL CONTAINER CAPACITY OVER AND ABOVE CT1-8 WELL BEFORE THE FIRST OF THE LANTAU TERMINALS COULD BE BROUGHT INTO USE.

"IF WE FAIL TO DO THIS CONGESTION IN THE PORT AND ON THE ROADS LEADING INTO KWAI CHUNG CAN ONLY GET WORSE," HE SAID.

MR SIU POINTED OUT THAT EXTENSIVE BACK-UP AREA WOULD BE PROVIDED ADJACENT TO CT9 TO PROVIDE A RESOURCE FOR THE WHOLE OF THE KWAI CHUNG PORT.

"IT WILL PROVIDE MUCH-NEEDED ADDITIONAL SPACE NOT ONLY FOR CARGO HANDLING, BUT ALSO FOR NEW ROADS, FOR PARKING OF VEHICLES AND FOR STACKING OF CONTAINERS.

"IT WILL HELP ALLEVIATE PRESSURE ELSEWHERE AND SAVE MANY A WASTEFUL JOURNEY BY THOSE CONTAINER VEHICLES NOW OBLIGED TO TRAVEL TO DISTANT SITES MILES AWAY FROM KWAI CHUNG SIMPLY TO PARK OR SHORE CONTAINERS.

"IT WILL PROVIDE FOR BETTER ROAD CIRCULATION; FOR RELOCATION OF THE BUSINEST ROAD LINKS FURTHER AWAY FROM RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, ENABLE US TO GET ON WITH DUPLICATING THE TSING YI SOUTH BRIDGE, THUS IMPROVING ACCESS TO THE ISLAND.

"NONE OF THESE BENEFITS CAN BE REALISED UNLESS CT9 GOES AHEAD, AS PLANNED, ON TSING YI. WE WILL THEREFORE CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARDS GETTING CT9 FROM CONCEPT AND DESIGN THROUGH TO REALITY," MR SIU SAID.

TURNING TO THE NEW AIRPORT, MR SIU SAID CONFIDENTIALITY HAD TO BE PRESERVED FOR THE TALKS WITH THE CHINESE SIDE OF THE AIRPORT COMMITTEE TO PROVIDE THE BEST ENVIRONMENT FOR MAKING PROGRESS, BUT ADDED THAT THERE COULD BE NO SECRET DEAL BECAUSE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HAD TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS ON WHATEVER FINANCIAL PLAN WHICH WAS EVENTUALLY AGREED.

HE ADDED THAT THE AIRPORT BILL WOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS OF THE CHINESE SIDE WHEN IT WAS BEING DRAFTED AS REQUIRED BY THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.

HE ASSURED MEMBERS THAT THEY WOULD HAVE ADEQUATE TIME TO CONSIDER THE BILL WHEN IT WAS INTRODUCED TO THE COUNCIL.

AS FOR THE PROGRESS OF THE NEW AIRPORT, MR SIU SAID SITE PREPARATION WORK AT CHEK LAP KOK WAS PROCEEDING WELL AS 320 HECTARES OR OVER 25 PER CENT OF THE WHOLE SITE HAD ALREADY BEEN FORMED.

THE PROVISIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY WAS ALSO WELL ADVANCED IN ITS DESIGN WORK FOR THE PASSENGER TERMINAL AND IN ITS DISCUSSIONS WITH THOSE INTERESTED IN INVESTING IN KEY FACILITIES TO BE PRIVATELY FUNDED SUCH AS THOSE FOR AIR CARGO AND AVIATION FUEL.

TAKING THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME AS A WHOLE, CONTRACTS WORTH SOME \$45 BILLION HAD BEEN AWARDED -- ALL WITHIN BUDGET ESTIMATES -- OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS BY THE GOVERNMENT, THE PROVISIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WESTERN HARBOUR CROSSING, HE SAID.

MR SIU SAID THE PORT AND AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE THAT HONG KONG WAS PLANNING AND BUILDING WOULD NOT JUST SERVE HONG KONG BUT ALSO SOUTHERN CHINA.

HE ADDED THAT PLANNING FOR MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS WERE NOT CARRIED OUT IN ISOLATION BUT TAKING INTO ACCOUNT NEEDS AND VIEWS FROM THOSE IN SOUTHERN CHINA.

"AS WE TAKE FORWARD OUR PLANS FOR THE PORT, THE NEW AIRPORT AND OTHER KEY ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE, WE KEEP IN THE FOREFRONT OF OUR MINDS THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT THE FUTURE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY ITS PART AS THE GATEWAY TO SOUTHERN CHINA, PROVIDING AN EFFICIENT CONDUIT FOR AN EVER-LASTING FLOW OF GOODS, SERVICES AND PEOPLE BETWEEN CHINA AND THE REST OF THE WORLD," MR SIU SAID.

LEGCO BE CONSULTED ON NEW STANDARDS OF FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

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THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MR GORDON SIU, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ASSURED MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THEY WOULD BE CONSULTED FURTHER ON THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES ON THE NEW STANDARDS OF FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE TO ENSURE TRANSPARENCY AND AN ADEQUATE DEGREE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES AND TRANSPORT COMPANIES.

IN HIS REPLY TO MEMBERS' QUESTIONS ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS, MR SIU SAID IT WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO DISCUSS AND AGREE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS WITH EACH OF THE COMPANIES CONCERNED.

"OUR INTENTIONS ON FULLER DISCLOSURE SHOULD BE SEEN AS PART AND PARCEL OF AN ON-GOING EFFORT BY THE ADMINISTRATION TO STRENGTHEN AND IMPROVE OUR MONITORING OF PUBLIC UTILITIES.

"AS A RESULT OF PREVIOUS INITIATIVES, MOST UTILITIES HAVE NOW MADE PUBLIC PERFORMANCE PLEDGES AND ESTABLISHED CUSTOMER LIAISON GROUPS.

"MY IMPRESSION IS THAT THE GENERAL PUBLIC WELCOME, AND MAKE FULL USE, OF THESE FACILITIES," HE SAID.

MR SIU SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITY OF NEGOTIATIONS LEADING UP TO RENEWAL OF THE SCHEME OF CONTROL AGREEMENTS WITH THE TWO POWER COMPANIES TO WRITE IN MORE STRINGENT REQUIREMENTS IN RESPECT OF TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL AUDITS AND THE MONITORING OF PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES AND AFFILIATED COMPANY TRANSACTIONS.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC DISCLOSURE HAD ALSO BEEN INCORPORATED INTO THE TERMS OF NEW FRANCHISE AGREEMENTS WITH CITYBUS AND THE NEW LANTAO BUS COMPANY, HE ADDED.

TURNING TO TELECOMMUNICATIONS, MR SIU SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD BOLSTERED ITS ABILITY TO REGULATE INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE TELECOMMUNICATIONS MARKET BY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OFFICE OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY (OFTA).

AMENDMENTS TO THE TELEPHONE ORDINANCE ENACTED EARLIER THIS YEAR PROVIDED THE OFTA WITH IMPORTANT NEW POWERS TO OVERSEE THE INTER-CONNECTION OF COMPETING NETWORKS AND ADMINISTER HONG KONG'S NEW NUMBERING PLAN.

HIGH ON THE OFTA'S AGENDA WOULD BE THE NEED TO PROTECT CONSUMERS' INTERESTS WHERE NECESSARY THROUGH THE REGULATION OF CHARGES AND SERVICE STANDARDS OF DOMINANT CARRIERS, HE SAID.

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PENSION FUND COST NO EXTRA EXPENDITURE

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THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR STUART HARBINSON, REITERATED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT NO ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE WAS INVOLVED IN THE PROPOSED CIVIL SERVICE PENSION RESERVE FUND.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE MOTION OF THANKS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR HARBINSON SAID CIVIL SERVICE PENSIONS FORMED PART OF THE GOVERNMENT'S RECURRENT OPERATING EXPENDITURE AND WERE PAID OUT OF GENERAL REVENUE.

"THE PENSION RESERVE FUND COULD ONLY BE USED IN THE ALMOST INCONCEIVABLE EVENT THAT THERE WAS AN INSUFFICIENCY OF RECURRENT REVENUE TO MEET THE STATUTORY PENSION CHARGES," HE SAID.

MOREOVER, INDIVIDUAL CIVIL SERVANTS WILL NOT GET A DOLLAR MORE THAN THEY ARE ALREADY ENTITLED TO JUST BECAUSE OF THE EXISTENCE OF A PENSION RESERVE FUND.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE COST OF CIVIL SERVICE PENSIONS AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ANNUAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE WAS FORECAST TO REMAIN AT ITS CURRENT LEVEL OF BETWEEN FOUR AND FIVE PER CENT FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS.

"NOR IS ANY SUDDEN JUMP ANTICIPATED THEREAFTER," HE SAID.

"INDEED IN THE VERY LONG TERM THE PERCENTAGE SHOULD DECLINE SLIGHTLY," HE ADDED.

MR HARBINSON SAID THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSED TO ESTABLISH A \$7 BILLION PENSION RESERVE FUND IN RECOGNITION OF THE FACT THAT THERE WAS A MAJOR PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCERN WITHIN THE CIVIL SERVICE ON THIS ISSUE.

TO BE ESTABLISHED BY RESOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL UNDER THE PUBLIC FINANCE ORDINANCE, IT WOULD BE A STATUTORY FUND SET UP UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE COUNCIL WHICH COULD ONLY BE CHANGED BY A FURTHER RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL.

MR HARBINSON ADDED THAT THE CENTRAL STAFF CONSULTATIVE COUNCILS AND THE CHINESE SIDE IN THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP WOULD BE CONSULTED ON THE ISSUE.

ON THE QUESTION OF LOCALISATION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR HARBINSON SAID OF THE SOME 22 SENIOR POSTS, 11 WERE, OR WOULD BE SHORTLY, FILLED BY LOCAL OFFICERS WHO WERE POTENTIALLY QUALIFIED IN TERMS OF THE QUALIFICATIONS SET OUT IN THE BASIC LAW.

HE ADDED THAT IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE THERE WERE ALREADY A LARGE NUMBER OF HIGHLY COMPETENT AND EXPERIENCED LOCAL OFFICERS AT THE LEVELS IMMEDIATELY BELOW THE FUTURE PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS LEVEL, WHO WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO MOVE UP IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS.

"THE GOVERNMENT ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO CONTINUITY AND SUCCESSION AT THESE SENIOR LEVELS OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND WILL HAVE SUITABLE CANDIDATES IN PLACE IN GOOD TIME BEFORE THE TRANSFER IN SOVEREIGNTY."

MR HARBINSON REASSURED THE COUNCIL THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE TO THE LONG ESTABLISHED LOCALISATION POLICY IN WHICH LOCAL CANDIDATES WERE GIVEN PREFERENCE FOR CIVIL SERVICE APPOINTMENTS.

"THE ONLY CHANGE HAS BEEN THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT ALL CANDIDATES WHO CAN ESTABLISH PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS ARE TREATED EQUALLY INsofar AS ELIGIBILITY FOR EMPLOYMENT IN THE CIVIL SERVICE IS CONCERNED, AS REQUIRED BY THE BILL OF RIGHTS."

"THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT DISTINCTION," HE SAID.

ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON CIVIL SERVICE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE, MR HARBINSON SAID THERE HAD BEEN NO DEFINITION OF THE TERM "LOCAL" SO FAR.

HE POINTED OUT THAT REACHING AGREEMENT ON WHO WAS "LOCAL" WAS IMPORTANT AS IT WOULD PROVIDE A FIRM FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE.

HE ADDED THAT THERE WOULD ALSO HAVE TO BE APPROPRIATE CONSULTATION WITH THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT.

TURNING TO THE PERFORMANCE PLEDGES PROGRAMME, THE ACTING SECRETARY SAID IT WAS ENCOURAGING TO NOTE THAT SOME FAVOURABLE COMMENT HAD BEEN PASSED ON IT.

"WE ARE ALSO NOW ENCOURAGING DEPARTMENTS TO UNDERTAKE CRITICAL REVIEWS OF THEIR SERVICES AND STRUCTURES," HE SAID.

IN THIS CONNECTION, CIVIL SERVICE BRANCH IS ALSO EXAMINING HOW HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS CAN BE BOTH IMPROVED AND DELEGATED TO DEPARTMENTS SO AS TO BRING SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SPEED AT WHICH HEADS OF DEPARTMENT, AS LINE MANAGERS, ARE ABLE TO RECRUIT, MANAGE, INCENTIVISE AND TRAIN STAFF.

REBUTTING MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE PROVISIONS OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT AGREED POLICY PROPOSALS, MR HARBINSON SAID THERE WAS NO ZERO GROWTH POLICY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE.

"ADDITIONAL STAFF HAVE BEEN AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE PROVIDED TO MEET COMMITMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH AGREED PRIORITIES."

ON POST-RETIREMENT EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR HARBINSON SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS WELL AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING THE TRADITIONS OF CIVIL SERVICE NEUTRALITY AND INTEGRITY.

HE ASSURED THE COUNCIL THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE ALL POSSIBLE CARE TO SEE THAT NO UNFAIR ADVANTAGE WAS GAINED, OR IMPROPRIETY AROSE, AS A RESULT OF POST-RETIREMENT EMPLOYMENT.

HK IS A SAFE CITY TO LIVE IN: S FOR S

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HONG KONG REMAINS A VERY SAFE CITY, IN COMPARISON NOT ONLY WITH CITIES IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA, BUT ALSO WITH ITS NEIGHBOURS IN THE REGION, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR ASPREY SAID THE CURRENT CRIME RATE WAS NOT ONLY WELL BELOW THE LEVEL OF CRIME BETWEEN 1989 AND 1991, IT WAS MORE THAN 10 PER CENT LOWER THAN IT WAS 10 YEARS AGO.

THE RATE OF VIOLENT CRIME IS SIMILARLY WELL BELOW WHAT IT WAS 10 YEARS AGO, HE SAID, AT THE MOTION OF THANKS DEBATE.

IN PARTICULAR, THE POLICE HAVE ACHIEVED A SHARP REDUCTION IN RECENT YEARS IN THE NUMBER OF ARMED ROBBERIES AND THE NUMBER OF CAR THEFTS.

"THESE ARE REAL IMPROVEMENTS," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY SAID THEY WERE A RESULT OF AN INCREASED POLICE PRESENCE ON THE STREETS AND BETTER CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION ON CRIME.

"BOTH HAVE PRODUCED ENCOURAGING RESULTS," HE SAID.

THE SECRETARY SAID THE POLICE WAS AT PRESENT UP TO ITS FULL ESTABLISHMENT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 10 YEARS.

IN THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, THE POLICE RECRUITED SOME 1,100 JUNIOR POLICE OFFICERS, AS AGAINST 700 WHO LEFT THE FORCE; WASTAGE IS ABOUT 30 PER CENT LOWER THAN IN LAST YEAR.

BUT THERE REMAIN AREAS OF CONCERN. ONE OF THESE IS JUVENILE CRIME.

THE JUVENILE OFFENDER RATE INCREASED SLIGHTLY IN THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF THIS YEAR.

MR ASPREY SAID A WORKING GROUP UNDER THE FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE HAD PROPOSED MEASURES TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF TRIAD INFLUENCE IN SCHOOLS. .

THESE MEASURES INCLUDE INCREASING THE POLICE PRESENCE NEAR SCHOOLS BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL HOURS AND IMPROVING LIAISON BETWEEN THE POLICE, TEACHERS, PARENTS AND SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS.

THE WORKING GROUP HAS JUST SUBMITTED ITS FINAL REPORT TO THE FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE, HE SAID.

ANOTHER AREA OF CONCERN IS SUBSTANCE ABUSE BY YOUNGSTERS.

IN THE FIRST HALF OF LAST YEAR, THE CENTRAL REGISTRY OF DRUG ABUSE RECEIVED REPORTS ON 923 DRUG ABUSERS AGED UNDER 21.

IN THE FIRST HALF OF THIS YEAR, A TOTAL OF 1,614 YOUNG DRUG ABUSERS WERE REPORTED.

HOWEVER, HE NOTED THAT THE NUMBER OF YOUNG DRUG ABUSERS REPORTED IN THE FIRST HALF OF THIS YEAR REPRESENTED JUST 0.2 PER CENT OF THE HONG KONG POPULATION AGED BETWEEN 11 AND 20.

"ONLY A VERY SMALL MINORITY OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE INVOLVED WITH DRUGS," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY SAID ENFORCEMENT ACTION HAD BEEN STEPPED UP. THERE WERE 5,631 ARRESTS FOR NARCOTICS OFFENCES IN THE FIRST HALF OF THIS YEAR, COMPARED TO 3,995 IN THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD LAST YEAR, AN INCREASE OF 42 PER CENT.

PREVENTIVE EDUCATION HAS ALSO BEEN BOOSTED.

ON COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE POLICE, THE SECRETARY SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN DEVELOPING PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE THE EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING INVESTIGATIONS INTO COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE POLICE.

"WE INTEND TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO MAKE THE POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE A STATUTORY BODY, WITH A CLEARLY DEFINED ROLE AND DUTIES."

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS ALSO CONSIDERING THE APPOINTMENT OF LAY OBSERVERS, DRAWN FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, TO SIT IN ON ANY PART OF THE COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION PROCESS, AND REPORT THEIR OBSERVATIONS TO THE POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE.

"WE ARE ALSO PROPOSING TO ENABLE THE POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE TO INTERVIEW WITNESSES IN COMPLAINT CASES," HE SAID.

HE ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT WANTED TO SIMPLIFY FOR THE PUBLIC THE REPORTING OF CRIME.

THE POLICE ARE TAKING STEPS TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT IN REPORT ROOMS, BY PROVIDING INTERVIEW ROOMS FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO REPORT CRIME.

THEY ARE ALSO DEVELOPING A NEW COMPUTER SYSTEM, WHICH WILL BE INSTALLED IN ALL POLICE STATIONS, SO THAT, IN FUTURE, CRIME REPORTING PROCEDURES WILL BE FURTHER SIMPLIFIED AND REPORTING TIME FURTHER REDUCED.

THE SECRETARY SAID THEY HAD EXAMINED THE RECOMMENDATIONS ON WITNESS PROTECTION MADE BY THE FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE AND BY MR JUSTICE KEMPSTER'S COMMISSION OF INQUIRY.

"WE INTEND TO SEEK THE VIEWS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR, AND TO INTRODUCE IMPROVEMENTS EARLY NEXT YEAR," HE SAID.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION REMAINS A MAJOR PROBLEM.

HE SAID NEW DETERRENTS AGAINST THE EMPLOYMENT OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS HAD BEEN INTRODUCED IN THE PAST YEAR.

BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE HOUSING AUTHORITY PENALISE CONTRACTORS CONVICTED OF EMPLOYING ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS, BY SUSPENDING THEM FROM TENDERING; AND SENTENCES OF IMPRISONMENT HAVE BEEN IMPOSED ON EMPLOYERS OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

THERE IS SOME INDICATION THAT THESE MEASURES ARE BEGINNING TO STEM THE FLOW OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

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"BUT IT IS EARLY DAYS, AND THE LEVEL OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION IS STILL WORRYINGLY HIGH," HE SAID.

ON IMMIGRATION, HE SAID 70 MORE IMMIGRATION STAFF WOULD BE ADDED AT LOWU IN THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR.

THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO INTENDING TO CREATE A TASK FORCE, WHICH WILL BE A MOBILE TEAM TO BE DEPLOYED TO CONTROL POINTS DURING PERIODS OF PEAK DEMAND, AS WELL AS DOING INVESTIGATION WORK ON NORMAL DAYS.

FOR THE MEDIUM TO LONG TERM, THE GOVERNMENT IS INVESTING IN MODERN TECHNOLOGY TO ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR AN EVER INCREASING NUMBER OF IMMIGRATION STAFF AT CONTROL POINTS.

TOWARDS THE END OF NEXT YEAR, THE GOVERNMENT WILL INTRODUCE OPTICAL CHARACTER READERS WHICH WILL ENABLE HONG KONG IDENTITY CARD HOLDERS AND, ALL MACHINE READABLE TRAVEL DOCUMENT HOLDERS, TO PASS THROUGH THE CONTROL POINTS IN MUCH LESS TIME THAN AT PRESENT.

THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO STUDYING THE POSSIBILITY OF INTRODUCING SMART CARDS, WHICH COULD REMOVE THE NEED FOR ALL COUNTERS TO BE MANNED BY IMMIGRATION OFFICERS.

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STI: INDUSTRIAL POLICY TO GIVE HELP, NOT DIRECTIONS

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THE GOVERNMENT DO NOT SET SPECIFIC GOALS OR DIRECTIONS IN ITS INDUSTRIAL POLICY, THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR T H CHAU SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

RESPONDING TO THE CALL FOR A COMPREHENSIVE INDUSTRIAL POLICY BY SOME LEGCO MEMBERS AT THE DEBATE ON THE MOTION OF THANKS TO THE GOVERNOR'S ANNUAL ADDRESS, MR CHAU SAID: "OUR INDUSTRIAL POLICY PLACES EMPHASIS ON FACILITATING AND SUPPORTING INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, NOT CHOOSING ITS DIRECTION.

"IT COULD ALSO BE DESCRIBED AS HELPING INDUSTRIALISTS TO HELP THEMSELVES."

HE ADDED THAT INDUSTRIALISTS IN HONG KONG WERE IN FACT PROVIDED WITH MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP THEMSELVES, SUCH AS THE APPLIED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SCHEME.

A PROPOSAL IS ALSO BEING MADE TO PROVIDE THE INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL WITH A BUDGET OF MORE THAN \$900 MILLION OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS TO SUPPORT FURTHER INDUSTRIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT.

MR CHAU SAID THE GOVERNMENT ADOPTED THE SAME APPROACH OF HELPING INDUSTRY TO HELP ITSELF REGARDING POLLUTION CONTROL MEASURES.

THE HONG KONG PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL AND THE CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY HAVE ALREADY OFFERED ACCESS TO POLLUTION CONTROL TECHNOLOGY AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

NOTING THE GROWING ROLE OF THE SERVICE SECTOR IN THE ECONOMY, MR CHAU SAID THE SECTOR HAD REACHED ITS PRESENT HEALTHY STATE BY RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF ITS CUSTOMERS, NOT BY FOLLOWING A GOVERNMENT BLUEPRINT.

ON LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS TO ENHANCE CONSUMER GOODS SAFETY AND CONSUMERS' RIGHTS, HE SAID: "A BILL THAT SEEKS TO ENHANCE CONSUMER GOODS SAFETY IS BEING FINALISED FOR INTRODUCTION INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BY THE END OF THIS YEAR."

AS PROPOSED IN THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT, HE SAID THAT THE COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS AND EXCISE WAS TO ENFORCE THE LEGISLATION BY CONDUCTING SPOT CHECKS IN ADDITION TO ACTING ON COMPLAINTS.

THREE BILLS ON THE SUPPLY OF GOODS AND SERVICES SEEKING TO PROTECT CONSUMERS' RIGHTS HAVE ALSO BEEN RELEASED FOR CONSULTATION.

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ALL POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR RETIREMENT PROTECTION UNDER CONSIDERATION

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THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, REASSURED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSIDERING ALL POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR RETIREMENT PROTECTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS DECLARED TIME-TABLE.

HE REFUTED ACCUSATIONS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS STALLING ON THIS SUBJECT, POINTING OUT THAT THE ISSUES INVOLVED WERE HIGHLY COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT.

SPEAKING DURING THE DEBATE ON THE MOTION OF THANKS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR LEUNG NOTED THAT THE PUBLIC MIGHT NOT BE ENTIRELY CLEAR ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND (CPF).

FIRST, HE SAID, A CPF WAS NOT SOME KIND OF GOLDMINE FOR WORKERS AS HAD BEEN PRESENTED. IT IS A SYSTEM OF DEDUCTIONS FROM SALARY THROUGHOUT A WORKING LIFE PLUS A CONTRIBUTION FROM EMPLOYERS IN ORDER TO FUND OLD AGE.

"SCHEMES ELSEWHERE TEND TO HAVE CERTAIN FEATURES THAT OUR WORKERS MIGHT NOT REGARD AS DESIRABLE.

"DEDUCTIONS ARE ENFORCED MONTH IN, MONTH OUT. RATES OF RETURN ARE FAR FROM SPECTACULAR BECAUSE THE FUND MUST BE INVESTED WITH THE GREATEST PRUDENCE."

FURTHERMORE, EMPLOYERS ALSO APPEAR TO SEE ADVANTAGES FOR THEMSELVES, WITH SOME SUGGESTING THAT WORKERS WILL BE MORE CLOSELY BOUND TO THEIR COMPANIES.

"THEY CAN THINK AGAIN. WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF INTRODUCING ANY SCHEME THAT WOULD PENALISE A WORKER FOR CHANGING JOBS," MR LEUNG STATED.

ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY, MR LEUNG SHARED MEMBERS' CONCERN THAT MORE MUST BE DONE TO TACKLE THE POOR RECORD IN THIS AREA.

APART FROM A SERIES OF LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS IN THE COMING MONTHS AIMED AT RAISING SAFETY STANDARDS IN CONSTRUCTION SITES, THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT WILL UNDERTAKE A SPECIAL REVIEW ON THE OPERATION OF THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN ITS EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS.

"MORE POSTS WILL BE CREATED AND ADDITIONAL OFFICERS DEPLOYED TO TACKLE PRIORITY AREAS," HE STRESSED.

AS REGARDS IMPORTATION OF LABOUR, THE SECRETARY NOTED THAT THE GENERAL LABOUR IMPORTATION SCHEME WHICH HAD BEEN IN OPERATION FOR SEVERAL YEARS, HAD HELPED TO ALLEVIATE THE ACUTE LABOUR SHORTAGE IN HONG KONG.

CONTRARY TO SOME CRITICISM, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO SHOW THAT LOCAL WORKERS' INTERESTS HAVE BEEN AFFECTED AS A RESULT.

ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN SO FAR ONLY A FEW ALLEGATIONS, OF DISPLACEMENT BY IMPORTED WORKERS, MR LEUNG SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO BE VIGILANT IN MONITORING THE SCHEME AND SAFEGUARDING WORKERS' INTERESTS.

TURNING TO EDUCATION, MR LEUNG SAID THAT FOLLOWING THE SUCCESS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE AND COHERENT PLAN TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL EDUCATION SINCE 1990, THE GOVERNMENT WAS INJECTING ADDITIONAL FUNDS AND PROPOSING ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO SUPPLEMENT THAT PLAN.

HE ALSO REFUTED ALLEGATIONS THAT EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION, AS A PERCENTAGE OF GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP) WAS TOO LOW.

"FIRST, AT THREE PER CENT OF GDP, HONG KONG COMPARES FAVOURABLY WITH SINGAPORE AND SOUTH KOREA.

"SECONDLY, AT 20.8 PER CENT, SPENDING ON EDUCATION CONSTITUTES THE SINGLE LARGEST ITEM OF GOVERNMENT RECURRENT EXPENDITURE.

"SUCH AN OBSERVATION THEREFORE REFLECTS MORE ON THE SIZE OF OUR PUBLIC SECTOR THAN ON THE PRIORITY WE GIVE TO EDUCATION."

ON IMPROVEMENT TO KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION, MR LEUNG SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD ALREADY CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS TO INCREASE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO PARENTS.

THE EARLY IMPROVEMENT TO THE FEE REMISSION SCHEME IN 1994 AS PROPOSED IN THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS WILL MEAN A 12-FOLD INCREASE IN GOVERNMENT'S FUNDING SINCE THE SCHEME WAS FIRST IMPLEMENTED IN 1990.

MR LEUNG SAID: "IN PRACTICAL TERMS, A TYPICAL FAMILY OF FOUR WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR FEE REMISSION IN 1994 IF THEIR FAMILY INCOME DOES NOT EXCEED \$12,000 PER MONTH, COMPARED TO \$4,300 IN 1990.

"SUCH INCREASED ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES TO AFFORD REASONABLE FEES WILL IN TURN HELP IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION."

PARALLELED WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF FEE REMISSION, MANY MORE TRAINED TEACHERS HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED, TEACHERS' PAY HAS BEEN IMPROVED, AND WASTAGE OF TRAINED TEACHERS HAS DECLINED.

MR LEUNG STRESSED THAT A WORKING PARTY WAS NOW EXAMINING THE ISSUES IN DETAIL TO SEE WHAT MORE SHOULD AND COULD BE DONE.

CAREFUL ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENT OPTIONS WILL BE NEEDED BEFORE A DECISION IS MADE, HE ADDED.

REPLYING TO SPECIFIC POINTS RAISED BY SOME MEMBERS ON TERTIARY EDUCATION, THE SECRETARY STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS WELL ON TRACK IN ACHIEVING ITS TARGETS OF PROVIDING, BY 1994/95, ENOUGH FIRST-YEAR-FIRST-DEGREE PLACES FOR 18 PER CENT OF STUDENTS IN THE RELEVANT AGE GROUP, PLUS SUB-DEGREE PLACES FOR ANOTHER SIX PER CENT.

HE ASSURED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD INVESTED AND WERE INVESTING HEAVILY IN TERTIARY EDUCATION.

MR LEUNG ALSO ELABORATED ON THE PROPOSALS IN THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS WHICH INVOLVED SUBSTITUTING NON-GRADUATE TEACHERS IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS BY DEGREE HOLDERS.

"IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS, THE GRADUATE TEACHERS WILL COME MAINLY FROM THE EXISTING STOCK OF TEACHERS WHO HAVE ACQUIRED OR WILL BE ACQUIRING GRADUATE QUALIFICATIONS IN EDUCATION.

"FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS, GRADUATE TEACHERS WILL REPLACE NON-GRADUATE TEACHERS THROUGH NATURAL WASTAGE.

"WHILE NOT ALL NEW GRADUATE TEACHERS MAY BE TRAINED IN TEACHING, SALARY INDUCEMENTS AND AVAILABILITY OF TRAINING CAPACITY SHOULD ENABLE THEM TO UNDERGO SUCH TRAINING IN TIME."

MR LEUNG WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE REFORMS IN THE EDUCATION COMMISSION REPORT NO. 5, TOGETHER WITH THE EXPANDED OUTPUT FROM THE TERTIARY SECTOR, WOULD RESULT IN MORE GRADUATES TAKING UP TEACHING AS A PROFESSION.

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AGC SETS NEW TARGETS FOR LOCALISATION

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THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR JEREMY MATHEWS, TOLD LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT HE EXPECTED THE PERCENTAGE OF LOCAL DIRECTORATE OFFICERS IN THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT COULD RISE FROM 20 PERCENT TO ABOUT 50 PERCENT BY THE END OF 1995.

IN RESPONSE TO THE HON SIMON IP'S CALL FOR NEW TARGETS TO BE ESTABLISHED IN RESPECT OF THE LOCALISATION OF THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT, MR MATHEWS SAID IN THE MOTION OF THANKS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT HE HOPED THE OVERALL PERCENTAGE OF LOCAL CROWN COUNSEL IN HIS DEPARTMENT WOULD BE ABOUT 60 PERCENT IN TWO YEARS.

HE EXPLAINED TO COUNCILLORS THE DIFFICULTIES THE DEPARTMENT ENCOUNTERED IN SETTING LOCALISATION TARGETS.

"THESE INCLUDE THE DIFFICULTY IN ASSESSING WASTAGE RATES AMONG EXPATRIATE AND LOCAL COUNSEL, THE PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED CHANGES IN THE GOVERNMENT'S LOCALISATION POLICY, AND THE FACT THAT ALL PROMOTIONS ARE DETERMINED ON THE BASIS OF MERIT AND ABILITY.

"FACED WITH THESE UNCERTAINTIES, ANY FORECAST FIGURE MUST BE HEAVILY QUALIFIED," HE SAID.

/MR MATHEWS

MR MATHEWS ALSO EMPHASISED THAT THE PROJECTIONS HE MADE ALSO ASSUMED THAT IN THE RELATIVELY SHORT SPACE OF THE NEXT TWO YEARS, AT LEAST 50 SUITABLY QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED LOCAL OFFICERS WOULD JOIN THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT.

"IN THE LIGHT OF OUR CURRENT AND PAST EXPERIENCE, THAT WILL PRESENT A MAJOR CHALLENGE," HE SAID.

HE ASKED COUNCILLORS NOT TO DOUBT HIS COMMITMENT TO THE LOCALISATION OF THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT.

HE BELIEVED THE MEASURES THAT HAD BEEN TAKEN, AND THAT WERE PROPOSED, WOULD BE EFFECTIVE.

THIS IS EVIDENT FROM THE EVER INCREASING NUMBER OF LOCAL COUNSEL AT MORE SENIOR LEVELS, FROM THE DROP IN THE WASTE RATE OF LOCAL COUNSEL, AND FROM THE LARGE RESPONSE TO OUR RECENT LOCAL RECRUITMENT EXERCISES, HE SAID.

TALKING ABOUT FURTHER MEASURES TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT TO ACHIEVE THE LOCALISATION TARGETS, MR MATHEWS SAID HE PROPOSED THAT THE DEVELOPMENT POSTS SCHEME, DESIGNED FOR SENIOR CROWN COUNSEL TO IMPROVE THEIR PROSPECTS OF PROMOTION TO THE DIRECTORATE, SHOULD CONTINUE IN BEING, BUT WITH 20 RATHER THAN 18 POSTS.

EACH OF WHICH SHOULD BE CAPABLE OF BEING REFILLED WHEN IT WAS VACATED BY A PARTICULAR DEVELOPEE.

HE FURTHER PROPOSED THAT A NEW SCHEME SHOULD BE INTRODUCED TO ENABLE SELECTED LOCAL COUNSEL AT THE DIRECTORATE RANK OF DEPUTY PRINCIPAL CROWN COUNSEL TO ACT AS DEPUTY LAW OFFICER TO GIVE THEM EARLY EXPOSURE TO THE WORK AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THESE VERY SENIOR POSTS.

AS FOR THE LEGAL TRAINEE SCHEME, WHICH WAS INTRODUCED LAST YEAR AND ENABLED LOCAL MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAD COMPLETED THEIR LEGAL STUDIES IN THE TERRITORY'S EXCELLENT TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS TO RECEIVE THEIR PRACTICAL LEGAL TRAINING IN LEGAL DEPARTMENT, AND THEREAFTER TO MAKE THEIR CAREERS WITH THE DEPARTMENT, MR MATHEWS PROPOSED TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF RECRUITS FROM 10 TO 15.

"THE COMBINED EFFECT OF THESE SPECIAL MEASURES WILL PROVIDE LOCAL COUNSEL AT ALL LEVELS, FROM LEGAL TRAINEE TO DIRECTORATE OFFICER, WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPECIAL TRAINING AND PROMOTION THAT ARE TO BE ENVIED.

"I AM CONFIDENT THAT THESE MEASURES WILL ENSURE THAT, IN FUTURE, VACANCIES IN MY DEPARTMENT CAN BE FILLED BY SUITABLY QUALIFIED LOCAL LAWYERS, EITHER FROM WITHIN OR OUTSIDE THE DEPARTMENT.

"THIS CONFIDENCE IS REINFORCED BY THE RESPONSE TO A LOCAL RECRUITMENT EXERCISE CONDUCTED IN JANUARY THIS YEAR AND ANOTHER CURRENTLY IN PROGRESS, WHICH IS FAR IN EXCESS OF ANY RESPONSE THAT WE HAVE HAD TO SIMILAR EXERCISES IN THE PAST," MR MATHEWS SAID.

TURNING TO THE TOPIC OF JUDICIAL EFFICIENCY, MR MATHEWS REASSURED COUNCILLORS THAT THE GOVERNMENT ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE EFFICIENT OPERATION OF THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM.

THE CHIEF JUSTICE IS COMMITTED TO FOSTERING A MODERN MANAGEMENT APPROACH AND A SERVICE-ORIENTED CULTURE.

"WE EXPECT THE JUDICIARY ADMINISTRATOR, ONCE IN POST BY THE END OF THIS YEAR, WILL PLAY A KEY ROLE IN ASSISTING THE CHIEF JUSTICE TO MODERNISE THE MANAGEMENT OF THE JUDICIARY," HE SAID.

ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COURT OF FINAL APPEAL, MR MATHEWS SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS DRAFTING THE LEGISLATION ON THE BASIS OF THE AGREEMENT REACHED AT THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP IN 1991 TO ENSURE THAT THE COURT OF FINAL APPEAL WOULD HAVE THE FIRM GUARANTEE OF A LIFE BEYOND 1997.

"THE PREPARATION OF THE LEGISLATION IS A COMPLICATED TASK AND WILL TAKE TIME. HOWEVER, IT REMAINS OUR AIM TO ESTABLISH THE COURT OF FINAL APPEAL AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

"WE FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF HONG KONG TO HAVE THE COURT FIRMLY ESTABLISHED WELL BEFORE 1997, IN ORDER FOR IT TO PROVIDE CONTINUITY BEYOND THAT YEAR," SAID.

IN REACTION TO COUNCILLORS' CONCERN ABOUT CORRUPTION, MR MATHEWS GAVE AN ASSURANCE THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD CONTINUE ITS WAR AGAINST CORRUPTION AND WOULD PLEDGE WHATEVER RESOURCES WERE NECESSARY TO ENSURE AN UNREMITTING ATTACK ON THIS EVIL.

HE TOLD MEMBERS THAT A START HAD BEEN MADE AND MORE WOULD FOLLOW.

THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS DEPARTMENT OF THE ICAC HAD RECENTLY PRODUCED A PREVENTIVE EDUCATION PACKAGE ENTITLED "CHINA TRADE AND PREVENTION OF BRIBERY ORDINANCE" TO PROVIDE ADVICE TO HONG KONG BUSINESSMEN ON HOW TO COPE WITH THE PROBLEMS OF CORRUPTION THAT COULD ARISE IN THE COURSE OF CHINA TRADE; IN PARTICULAR WHAT CONSTITUTED AN OFFENCE UNDER THE ANTI-CORRUPTION LEGISLATION OF HONG KONG.

THE PACKAGE WAS LAUNCHED IN LATE SEPTEMBER, WAS BEING DISTRIBUTED AND HAD BEEN FAVOURABLY RECEIVED.

"WE SHALL NOT SLACKEN IN OUR EFFORTS TO STAMP OUT CORRUPTION WHEREEVER IT IS FOUND AND NO MATTER WHO IS INVOLVED. AS THE GOVERNOR SAID WE WILL GIVE NO QUARTER TO CORRUPTION," HE SAID.

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SUPPLY OF FLATS TO INCREASE

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SUPPLY OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL FLATS IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE FURTHER TO AN ANNUAL AVERAGE OF 35,000 FLATS IN THE COMING YEARS, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON SAID.

SPEAKING AT THE DEBATE ON THE MOTION OF THANKS TO THE GOVERNOR'S ANNUAL ADDRESS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR EASON SAID THERE HAD BEEN A STEADY INCREASE IN THE SUPPLY OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL FLATS OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS.

IT INCREASED FROM AN ANNUAL AVERAGE OF 28,000 FLATS DURING THE FIRST FIVE-YEAR PERIOD TO 32,000 IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

ON THE PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME, MR EASON SAID THE GOVERNMENT ALLOCATED ALMOST 50 HECTARES OF ADDITIONAL LAND IN JUNE THIS YEAR TO MEET A SHORTFALL OF THAT ORDER IDENTIFIED BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY.

"AS A NEW PRIORITY, THE GOVERNMENT WILL IDENTIFY SUITABLE SITES IN THE URBAN AREA TO HELP THE HOUSING AUTHORITY TACKLE THE HOUSING PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY.

"THE GOVERNMENT'S AIM IS TO ENSURE THAT LAND SUPPLY IN BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS IS MAINTAINED AT A HIGH LEVEL," MR EASON SAID.

IT IS EXPECTED THAT ABOUT 236 HECTARES OF LAND WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR PRIVATE AND PUBLIC RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

MR EASON DISPELLED A MISCONCEPTION BY A LEGCO MEMBER THAT THE 50-HECTARE ANNUAL LAND GRANT LIMIT IN THE JOINT DECLARATION HAS CONSTRAINED THE SUPPLY OF LAND FOR HOUSING.

HE SAID THE LAND COMMISSION HAD GENERALLY BEEN SENSITIVE TO THE NEED FOR LAND TO MEET DEMAND IN THE VARIOUS SECTORS AND THE LAND DISPOSAL PROGRAMME AGREED EACH YEAR HAD SO FAR EXCEEDED THE 50 HECTARE LIMIT.

IT RANGED FROM 58.4 HECTARES IN 1985/86 TO 164.3 HECTARES LAST YEAR, AND 127.8 HECTARES THIS YEAR.

ON FLOOD CONTROL MR EASON SAID APART FROM A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMME TO REDUCE FLOOD RISKS IN LOW-LYING AREAS, THE GOVERNMENT IS LOOKING INTO WAYS AND MEANS OF IMPROVING FLOOD FORECASTING AND WARNING CAPABILITIES.

PREPARATORY WORK IS WELL IN HAND FOR THE SHENZHEN RIVER REGULATION PROJECT TO BE UNDERTAKEN JOINTLY WITH THE SHENZHEN AUTHORITIES. THIS INCLUDES LAND SURVEY, SITE INVESTIGATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT.

SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS, CONSTRUCTION WORK ON THE PROJECT IS LIKELY TO BEGIN IN EARLY 1995.

ON AIR POLLUTION CAUSED BY CAR EMISSION, MR EASON SAID THE EMISSION STANDARDS FOR PETROL VEHICLES IN HK WERE AMONG THE HIGHEST IN THE WORLD.

THE GOVERNMENT IS EXAMINING SEVERAL OPTIONS TO ABATE AIR POLLUTION FROM DIESEL VEHICLES.

THESE INCLUDE ENCOURAGING A SWITCH FROM DIESEL ENGINES TO PETROL ENGINES FOR SMALLER VEHICLES; ADOPTING MORE STRINGENT EMISSION STANDARDS FOR LARGER DIESEL VEHICLES; USING LESS POLLUTING DIESEL FUELS, INTRODUCING ELECTRIC VEHICLES AND ENCOURAGING GREATER USE OF OFF-ROAD TRANSPORTATION.

WORK ON TING KAU BRIDGE TO BEGIN NEXT YEAR
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THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE \$3.5 BILLION TING KAU BRIDGE TO BE TOTALLY FUNDED BY THE GOVERNMENT IS EXPECTED TO START BY NEXT SEPTEMBER WITH COMPLETION IN MID 1997.

THIS WAS STATED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR HAIDER BARMA IN THE DEBATE ON THE MOTION OF THANKS TO THE GOVERNOR'S ANNUAL ADDRESS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR BARMA SAID BIDS WOULD BE INVITED FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR BY THE END OF THIS YEAR FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE REMAINING SECTION OF ROUTE 3 COUNTRY PARK SECTION, FROM AU TAU TO TING KAU, UNDER A FRANCHISE ARRANGEMENT.

IT WAS HOPED THAT THE FRANCHISE WOULD BE AWARDED BY THE END OF NEXT YEAR.

"GIVEN THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROJECT AND ITS COMPLEXITY, THERE SEEMS LITTLE PROSPECT OF IT BEING COMPLETED BEFORE 1998 EVEN IF THE GOVERNMENT WERE TO BUILD THE ROAD ITSELF," HE ADDED.

IN REPLY TO A CALL BY SOME LEGCO MEMBERS FOR GREATER USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT, MR BARMA SAID THE GOVERNMENT WORKED VERY CLOSELY WITH THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPERATORS TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL.

HE NOTED THAT IN 1994/95 THE FRANCHISED BUS COMPANIES WILL SPEND NO LESS THAN \$430 MILLION TO UPGRADE AND EXPAND BUS SERVICES.

ACTION IS ALSO IN HAND TO PROVIDE BETTER FERRY SERVICES IN THE WESTERN PART OF HONG KONG.

THIS INCLUDES THE RECENT INTRODUCTION OF NEW HIGH-SPEED CATAMARANS ON THE TUEN MUN - CENTRAL ROUTE AND OF TWO NEW ROUTES FROM TUEN MUN TO WAN CHAI AND TSIM SHA TSUI RESPECTIVELY.

"WE ARE ALSO EXAMINING THE POSSIBLE INTRODUCTION OF ADDITIONAL FERRY SERVICES BETWEEN TUEN MUN/TSUEN WAN/Tsing Yi AND THE URBAN CENTRES," MR BARMA ADDED.

ON THE GROWTH OF CAR OWNERSHIP, MR BARMA NOTED HONG KONG NOW HAS ABOUT 495,000 VEHICLES.

"THE CURRENT RATE OF GROWTH CANNOT BE SUSTAINED INDEFINITELY WITHOUT THERE BEING A MAJOR ADVERSE IMPACT ON BOTH ROAD CONDITIONS AND ON THE ENVIRONMENT."

HE UNDERTOOK TO CONSIDER AFRESH THE OPTIONS FOR REDUCING THE RATE OF GROWTH TO A LEVEL THE ROAD SYSTEM CAN ACCOMMODATE.

MR BARMA SAID: "WHILE THERE HAS BEEN SUCCESS IN MAINTAINING AVERAGE TRAFFIC SPEEDS IN HONG KONG THROUGH A VIGOROUS ROAD BUILDING PROGRAMME AND GOOD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT OVER THE YEARS, IF WE ARE TO KEEP HONG KONG MOVING INTO THE 21ST CENTURY, THE COMMUNITY MAY WELL HAVE TO FACE HARD, UNPOPULAR CHOICES."

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1993

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GOVT DETERMINED TO MAKE ARTS A WAY OF LIFE
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THE GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED TO MAKE ARTS NOT ONLY THE PRESERVE OF THE ARTS PRACTITIONERS AND THE WELL-TO-DO BUT ALSO INCREASINGLY TO HAVE IT ACCEPTED AS A WAY OF LIFE FOR THE PUBLIC AT LARGE, THE SECRETARY FOR RECREATION AND CULTURE, MR JAMES SO, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE MOTION OF THANKS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR SO SAID HE BELIEVED THIS WAS WHAT THE COMMUNITY WANTED.

HE TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD WASTED NO TIME IN GETTING TO WORK ON THE SETTING UP OF THE PROVISIONAL ARTS DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ANNOUNCED IN THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS.

A WORKING GROUP WAS APPOINTED ON OCTOBER 8 UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF SIR JOSEPH HOTUNG TO PREPARE FOR THE FORMATION OF THE PROVISIONAL COUNCIL.

"SO FAR, THE WORKING GROUP HAS HELD TWO MEETINGS AND HAS SET UP FIVE SPECIALIST COMMITTEES ON POLICY, LEGISLATION, MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE, TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, AND COMMUNITY LIAISON TO GET ON WITH THE TASK," HE SAID.

"THE WORKING GROUP HAS ALSO TAKEN STEPS TO SET UP ITS OWN SECRETARIAT BY ADVERTISING TO RECRUIT AN EXECUTIVE SECRETARY AND SUPPORTING STAFF," HE ADDED.

THE SECRETARY NOTED THAT DURING THE DEBATE, A FEW MEMBERS HAD PROPOSED FOR THE FUTURE ARTS DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (ADC) TO HAVE A BROAD BASE REPRESENTATION, MADE UP PRIMARILY OF PROFESSIONAL ARTS PRACTITIONERS, WITH INDEPENDENT POLICY MAKING POWER.

HE SAID HE GENERALLY SHARES THESE VIEWS AND IS SURE THAT THE WORKING GROUP WILL TAKE THEM ON BOARD WHEN DRAWING UP RECOMMENDATIONS ON MEMBERSHIP GUIDELINES FOR THE FUTURE ADC AND ITS TERMS OF REFERENCE.

REFERRING TO CRITICISM THAT THE VISUAL ART IS NOT DIRECTLY REPRESENTED IN THE WORKING GROUP, MR SO SAID A PRACTISING VISUAL ARTIST WOULD SOON JOIN THE GROUP.

ON THE QUESTION OF FUNDING, THE SECRETARY NOTED ONE MEMBER'S REQUEST FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE REMIT OF THE \$100 MILLION GRANT PROPOSED BY THE GOVERNOR.

MORE INFORMATION ON THE REMIT OF THIS GRANT WILL BE SPELT OUT WHEN THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THIS COUNCIL IS APPROACHED TO APPROVE THE ALLOCATION OF THIS MONEY, MR SO SAID.

"IN THE MEANTIME, I SHALL HAVE TO CONSULT THE WORKING GROUP FOR ITS VIEWS ON HOW THIS GRANT SHOULD BEST BE USED TO PROMOTE AND DEVELOP THE ARTS IN THE YEARS AHEAD," HE ADDED.

MR SO ALSO SAID HE CONSIDERED IT ESSENTIAL FOR THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE TO CONTINUE TO FINANCIALLY SUPPORT THE ARTS.

/TURNING TO

TURNING TO THE ISSUE OF BROADCASTING, MR SO SAID WITH THE LAUNCH OF THE FIRST SUBSCRIPTION TV SERVICE ON OCTOBER 31, THE GOVERNMENT'S OVERALL POLICY OBJECTIVE OF ENABLING HONG KONG PEOPLE TO HAVE THE WIDEST POSSIBLE CHOICE OF QUALITY TELEVISION SERVICES AT AN AFFORDABLE COST IS BEING REALISED.

"BY THE END OF THIS DECADE, UPON FULL EXPANSION OF THE WHARF CABLE TV SYSTEM, VIEWERS WILL HAVE SOME 40 TO 50 CHANNELS TO CHOOSE FROM," MR SO SAID.

HE TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS CURRENTLY REVIEWING ITS LICENSING POLICY ON SATELLITE TV SERVICE WITH A VIEW TO RELAXING THE EXISTING FRAMEWORK TO ENABLE MORE OVERSEAS, INTERNATIONAL SATELLITE TV OPERATORS TO ORIGINATE THEIR SERVICES FROM HONG KONG.

"I HOPE TO PUT PROPOSALS TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND TO THIS COUNCIL EARLY NEXT YEAR," MR SO SAID.

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BILL TO EXTEND SUBMISSION DATE
FOR BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION
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THE GOVERNMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) INTRODUCED A BILL INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO EXTEND THE LATEST DATE BY WHICH THE BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION IS TO SUBMIT TO THE GOVERNOR RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES FOR THE 1995 MUNICIPAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR C M LEUNG, SAID CLAUSE 2 OF THE BILL SHOULD BE AMENDED TO EXTEND THE SUBMISSION DATE FROM DECEMBER 31, 1993 TO APRIL 30, NEXT YEAR.

UNDER THE EXISTING LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS, THE BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION IS REQUIRED TO SUBMIT TO THE GOVERNOR RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE 1995 MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES BY DECEMBER 31, THIS YEAR.

BEFORE DOING SO THE COMMISSION IS ALSO REQUIRED BY LAW TO PRODUCE PROVISIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION FOR 30 DAYS.

/THE COMMISSION

THE COMMISSION MUST, AS REQUIRED BY LAW, WORK ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF ELECTED MUNICIPAL COUNCIL SEATS AS CURRENTLY PROVIDED FOR IN THE URBAN COUNCIL ORDINANCE AND THE REGIONAL COUNCIL ORDINANCE, IN DRAWING UP ITS RECOMMENDATIONS.

BUT THE COMPOSITION OF THE TWO MUNICIPAL COUNCILS IS AMONG THE ISSUES RELATING TO THE 1994/95 ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS WHICH ARE NOW BEING DISCUSSED BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND THE CHINESE GOVERNMENTS.

"CLEARLY, THEREFORE, IF THE COMMISSION IS TO PREPARE RECOMMENDATIONS AND TO PROCEED WITH PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE BASIS OF THE EXISTING NUMBER OF ELECTED MUNICIPAL COUNCIL SEATS, IT COULD WELL BE WASTING TIME AND RESOURCES NOT ONLY OF THE COMMISSION BUT ALSO THE PUBLIC ON ABSORTIVE WORK IF A DECISION IS LATER MADE TO CHANGE THE NUMBER OF SUCH SEATS," HE SAID.

THAT WAS THE REASON WHY THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSED TO EXTEND THE LATEST DATE TO APRIL 30, NEXT YEAR BY WHICH THE COMMISSION IS TO SUBMIT ITS RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR.

"WITH THIS NEW DATE, THE COMMISSION WILL BE ABLE TO AWAIT DECISIONS AND, IF NECESSARY, NEW LEGISLATION ON THE NUMBER OF ELECTED MUNICIPAL COUNCIL SEATS AS FROM 1995 BEFORE STARTING WORK ON ITS RECOMMENDATIONS ON CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES," HE SAID.

"IN PROPOSING APRIL 30, 1994 AS THE LATEST SUBMISSION DATE, WE HAVE HAD REGARD TO THE PRACTICAL NEED TO COMPLETE, BEFORE THIS COUNCIL GOES INTO RECESS IN JULY 1994, ALL THE STATUTORY AND ADMINISTRATIVE STEPS FOR SETTING THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES SO THAT THE FINAL VOTER REGISTER COULD BE PUBLISHED BEFORE EARLY AUGUST 1994 AS REQUIRED BY LAW," HE SAID.

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BETTER CONTROL OVER LIVESTOCK WASTE

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THE AMENDMENTS TO THE WASTE DISPOSAL ORDINANCE AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH (ANIMALS & BIRDS) ORDINANCE WILL ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO HAVE BETTER CONTROL OVER ANIMAL WASTE FROM LIVESTOCK FARMS, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE BILLS FOR THEIR SECOND READINGS, MR EASON SAID THE AMENDMENTS WERE ALL IMPORTANT COMPONENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REVISED SCHEME ON LIVESTOCK WASTE CONTROL.

THE WASTE DISPOSAL (AMENDMENT) BILL PROVIDES THE POWER FOR THE DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN SETTING UP LIVESTOCK RESTRICTION AREAS AND GIVING DIRECTIONS TO PREVENT POLLUTION ARISING FROM LIVESTOCK WASTE.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH (ANIMALS AND BIRDS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993 WILL PROVIDE FOR THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES WITH THE POWER TO LICENSE LIVESTOCK KEEPING.

MR EASON SAID THE REVISED LIVESTOCK WASTE CONTROL SCHEME HAD BEEN DEVISED AFTER CAREFUL DELIBERATION AND EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION, IN PARTICULAR, WITH LIVESTOCK FARMERS.

/"CONSULTATIONS HAVE

"CONSULTATIONS HAVE BEEN HELD WITH FARMERS REPRESENTATIVES ON THE LIVESTOCK WASTE DISPOSAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE, THE LIVESTOCK SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, AND VARIOUS LIVESTOCK TRADE ASSOCIATIONS.

"THEIR VIEWS HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY CONSIDERED AND THE REVISED SCHEME HAS BEEN ADJUSTED TO REFLECT THESE VIEWS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, HAVING REGARD TO THE NEED TO STRIKE A BALANCE WITH THE WIDER INTEREST OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE URGENT NEED TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT."

FOR EXAMPLE, MR EASON SAID, FARMERS WOULD BE GIVEN THREE YEARS AFTER LICENSING TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED STANDARD.

IN ADDITION, HE SAID, IT IS PROPOSED THAT THE RATE OF CAPITAL GRANT WILL BE INCREASED TO COVER UP TO HALF THE MARKET COST OF INSTALLING WASTE TREATMENT SYSTEM.

MR EASON SAID MOST FARMER REPRESENTATIVES HAD ACCEPTED THE PRINCIPLES OF THE LICENSING SYSTEM AND WERE GENERALLY RECEPTIVE TO THE REVISIONS MADE TO THE SCHEME.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE HAS BEEN CONSULTED AND HAS GIVEN ITS SUPPORT TO THE PROPOSALS AND THE RELATED LEGISLATION, HE SAID.

MR EASON SAID THE OPPORTUNITY WAS ALSO BEING TAKEN TO AMEND THE WASTE DISPOSAL ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR INCREASED PENALTY ON ILLEGAL DISPOSAL OF LARGE QUANTITIES OF WASTE COMMONLY KNOWN AS "FLY-TIPPING".

THE BILL WILL MAKE FLY-TIPPING AN OFFENCE UNDER THE ORDINANCE AND WILL CARRY A MAXIMUM FINE OF \$200,000 AND SIX MONTHS IMPRISONMENT FOR THE FIRST OFFENCE, \$500,000 AND SIX MONTHS IMPRISONMENT FOR SUBSEQUENT OFFENCES, AND A DAILY FINE OF UP TO \$10,000 FOR CONTINUING OFFENCES, HE SAID.

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OTB BACK TO PRIVATE SECTOR

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THE GOVERNMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) INTRODUCED A BILL INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO AMEND THE OVERSEAS TRUST BANK (ACQUISITION) ORDINANCE SO AS TO PUT THE BANK ON THE SAME FOOTING AS OTHER BANKS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE OVERSEAS TRUST BANK (ACQUISITION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993, THE SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES, MR MICHAEL CARTLAND, SAID THE BILL WOULD REPEAL A NUMBER OF PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF THE OVERSEAS TRUST BANK WHICH ARE NO LONGER APPROPRIATE.

BUT SOME EXISTING PROVISIONS OF THE ORDINANCE ARE NECESSARY TO BE LEFT INTACT, SUCH AS THOSE PROVISIONS THAT ALLOW COMPENSATION TO BE MADE. THESE PROVISIONS ARE NOT TIME-BARRED AND IT IS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST TO DO SO, MR CARTLAND SAID.

UNDER CERTAIN PROVISIONS, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY CAN DIRECT THE DISCLAIMER OF CERTAIN TRANSACTIONS BY THE BANK BECAUSE THE PURCHASER OF THE BANK WAS GIVEN A LIMITED NUMBER OF WARRANTIES BY THE GOVERNMENT WHICH MIGHT BE RELATED TO LIABILITIES INCURRED BY THE BANK BEFORE ITS ACQUISITION BY THE GOVERNMENT.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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MORE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS FROM CHINA RECORDED

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THE PROBLEM OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION FROM CHINA IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALASTAIR ASPREY, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1993, MR ASPREY SAID THE OVERALL FIGURE FOR THIS YEAR WERE STILL OVER 10% UP ON THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR.

"ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION FROM CHINA REMAINS A SERIOUS PROBLEM," HE SAID.

IT IS THEREFORE NECESSARY TO RETAIN PART VIIA AS A STRONG SANCTION AGAINST THE "SNAKEHEADS" WHO ENGAGE IN THIS ILLICIT TRADE, HE ADDED.

"WE PROPOSE, HOWEVER, TO MODERATE THE HEAVY PENALTIES WHICH WERE FELT NECESSARY FOR THE EMERGENCY SITUATION WHICH WE FACED AT THE TIME OF ENACTMENT IN 1979."

THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSES TO REDUCE THE MAXIMUM TERM OF IMPRISONMENT FROM LIFE TO 14 YEARS. BUT THE MAXIMUM FINE REMAINS AT \$5 MILLION.

A NUMBER OF OTHER AMENDMENTS ARE ALSO MADE IN THE BILL:

* AMENDMENT OF SECTION 19, TO CLARIFY THAT UNDESIRABLE ALIEN VISITORS AND TRANSITEES ARE REMOVABLE FROM HONG KONG;

* AMENDMENT OF SECTIONS 20, 54, 55, TO TRANSFER AUTHORITY TO MAKE AND RESCIND DEPORTATION ORDERS FROM THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL TO THE GOVERNOR;

* AMENDMENT OF SECTION 40, TO INCREASE THE MAXIMUM FINE, FROM \$1,000 TO \$10,000, FOR AIRLINES CARRYING PASSENGERS WITHOUT PROPER DOCUMENTATION TO HONG KONG;

* AMENDMENT OF SECTION 53C, TO EMPOWER THE IMMIGRATION TRIBUNAL TO DISMISS REPEATED APPEALS AGAINST REMOVAL ORDERS WITHOUT A HEARING; AND

* AMENDMENT OF SECTION 63A, TO EXTEND THE USE OF EVIDENCE BY CERTIFICATE IN CASES OF PROSECUTION OF SITE CONTROLLERS.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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TAX EXEMPTION FOR OCCUPATIONAL RETIREMENT SCHEMES

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AS A MATTER OF POLICY, AN APPROVED RETIREMENT SCHEME IS NOT SUBJECT TO TAX ON PROFITS FROM THE INVESTMENT OF ITS ASSETS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR DONALD TSANG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MARVIN CHEUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE ADDED THAT THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT)(NO. 4) BILL 1993, WHICH HAD RECENTLY BEEN INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGCO, SOUGHT TO PROVIDE THAT A RECOGNISED OCCUPATIONAL RETIREMENT SCHEME WOULD BE REGARDED AS AN APPROVED RETIREMENT SCHEME FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING ITS TAX LIABILITY.

"WITH THIS PROPOSED AMENDMENT, IT WOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY CLEAR IN LAW THAT RECOGNISED OCCUPATIONAL RETIREMENT SCHEMES WHICH ARE ESTABLISHED UNDER STATUTORY CONTROL TO RECEIVE, HOLD AND MANAGE FUNDS EARMARKED FOR THE PROVISION OF EMPLOYEES' BENEFITS ARE NOT LIABLE TO PROFITS TAX."

IT IS THUS NOT NECESSARY TO PROVIDE FOR THIS SEPARATELY AND SPECIFICALLY IN THE INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE, MR TSANG SAID.

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HA TO APPOINT ASBESTOS ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

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THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY IS EMPOWERED UNDER THE AIR POLLUTION CONTROL (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE 1993, WHICH CAME INTO OPERATION ON AUGUST 6 THIS YEAR, TO APPOINT AN ASBESTOS ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

AND ALSO TO IDENTIFY SUITABLE COMMITTEE MEMBERS, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MAN SAI-CHEONG, MR EASON SAID APPOINTMENT FORMALITIES WERE BEING FINALISED AND THE DRAFTING INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE ASSOCIATED ASBESTOS ADMINISTRATION REGULATIONS WERE BEING PREPARED.

THE AMENDED ORDINANCE DOES NOT CALL FOR THE REMOVAL OF ASBESTOS FROM PUBLIC HOSPITALS BUT REQUIRES AN INVESTIGATION FOR ASBESTOS TO BE CONDUCTED FOR SPECIFIED PREMISES AND A MANAGEMENT PLAN TO BE PREPARED, MR EASON SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS STARTED A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF ASBESTOS IN ALL PUBLIC HOSPITALS TO RECORD THE PRESENCE OF ANY ASBESTOS AND ASSESS THE POSSIBLE HAZARD, AND PRIORITIES FOR THE NECESSARY ABATEMENT WORK WOULD BE ESTABLISHED.

"MANY GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE ASBESTOS REMOVAL PROJECTS HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE AND THIS INDICATES THAT THE POOL OF TECHNICAL EXPERTISE AVAILABLE IS SUFFICIENT," MR EASON SAID.

/HE SAID

HE SAID THE HONG KONG OCCUPATION SAFETY AND HEALTH COUNCIL AND THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC, WITH ASSISTANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT, WERE RUNNING TRAINING COURSES FOR ASBESTOS ABATEMENT WORK STAFF AND ASBESTOS CONSULTANTS.

IN ADDITION, DRAFT CODES OF PRACTICE FOR PROFESSIONALS AND WORKERS CONCERNED WITH ASBESTOS REMOVAL AND SAFETY ARE BEING PREPARED AND WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE SHORTLY, HE SAID.

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BUDGET FOR VII'S STATUS CLAIMS

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FIVE SOLICITOR FIRMS AND 17 PRIVATE BARRISTERS HAVE BEEN ENGAGED ON CLAIMS FOR REFUGEE STATUS BY ILLEGAL VIETNAMESE IMMIGRANTS SINCE 1990/91.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DAVID FORD, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MRS ELSIE TU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

AS THE LEGAL AID DEPARTMENT DOES NOT MAKE ANY DISTINCTION BETWEEN "RESIDENT" AND "NON-RESIDENT" PRACTITIONERS, NO RECORDS ARE KEPT FOR SUCH CATEGORISATION AND THEIR RELATIVE COSTS TO THE PUBLIC PURSE, SIR DAVID SAID.

ON THE PROPORTION OF THE DEPARTMENT'S BUDGET USED TO PAY PRIVATE LAWYERS AND THE AMOUNT SPENT ON SUCH CLAIMS, HE GAVE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

	APPROVED PROVISION FOR THE LEGAL AID DEPARTMENT	PAYMENT TO PRIVATE LAWYERS FOR LITIGATION/LEGAL REPRESENTATION	EXPENSES ON CLAIMS FOR REFUGEE STATUS BY ILLEGAL VIETNAMESE IMMIGRANTS	PERCENTAGE OF DEPARTMENT'S PROVISION FOR PAYMENT TO PRIVATE LAWYERS	PERCENTAGE OF PAYMENT TO PRIVATE LAWYERS ON REFUGEE STATUS CLAIMS
	(\$M)	(\$M)	(\$M)		
1990/91	190.49	98.37	2.16	51.64%	2.20%
1991/92	225.20	113.32	4.93	50.32%	4.35%
1992/93	256.77	131.14	11.35	51.07%	8.65%
1993/94	259.50 (129.75)*	77.11*	1.14*	59.43%*	1.48%*

* PART-YEAR FIGURE FROM 1.4.93 TO 30.9.93

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NO SURVEY AMONG CIVIL SERVANTS OF INFORMATION LEGISLATION

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT CONDUCTED ANY SURVEY AMONG CIVIL SERVANTS TO ASCERTAIN THEIR VIEWS ON THE INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHRISTINE LOH KUNG-WAI, MR SUEN SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT HAVE ANY PLANS TO CONDUCT A SURVEY ON THE TOPIC.

"HOWEVER, WERE WE TO DO SO, WE WOULD NOT SINGLE OUT CIVIL SERVANTS FOR PARTICULAR CONSIDERATION, AS THIS ISSUE IS ONE OF COMMUNITY-WIDE INTEREST AND CONCERN," MR SUEN SAID.

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AVERAGE UNIT COST FOR EDUCATING HK STUDENTS

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DIRECT COMPARISON OF THE AVERAGE COST FOR PROVIDING EDUCATION FOR EACH STUDENT AMONG THE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS FUNDED BY THE UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNIC GRANTS COMMITTEE (UPGC) IS PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THIS IS BECAUSE THE INSTITUTIONS ARE DIFFERENT IN THE RANGE OF FACULTIES/DEPARTMENTS/SUBJECTS; MIX OF LEVELS OF STUDIES INCLUDING SUB-DEGREE, UNDERGRADUATE, TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE AND RESEARCH POSTGRADUATE; STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT; STAFFING COSTS AND STAFFING STRUCTURE.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HENRY TANG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR LEUNG GAVE THE AVERAGE UNIT COSTS FOR PROVIDING EDUCATION FOR EACH STUDENT AT THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY (HKU), CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG (CUHK), HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC (HKP), CITY POLYTECHNIC OF HONG KONG (CPHK), HONG KONG BAPTIST COLLEGE (HKBC), HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (HKUST) AND LINGNAN COLLEGE IN 1991/92 WERE \$168,397, \$128,051, \$83,966, \$115,139, \$94,520, \$442,855 AND \$74,076 RESPECTIVELY.

HE EXPLAINED THAT HKUST'S UNIT COST WAS CONSIDERABLY HIGHER THAN THE OTHER INSTITUTIONS BECAUSE OF THE SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF FRONT-END LOADING REQUIRED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY VIS-A-VIS THE STUDENT INTAKE WHICH WAS BELOW THE PLANNED CAPABILITY.

"THE UNIT COST PER STUDENT WILL GRADUALLY DECREASE AS THE UNIVERSITY BUILDS UP ITS STUDENT POPULATION," HE ADDED.

AS THE HKUST AND LINGNAN COLLEGE ONLY BECAME UPGC-FUNDED INSTITUTIONS IN 1991/92, THE AVERAGE UNIT COSTS BEFORE THIS ACADEMIC YEAR WERE NOT AVAILABLE.

AS FOR THE OTHER INSTITUTIONS, THE FIGURES FOR HKU, CUHK, HKP, CPHK AND HKBC IN 1990/91 WERE \$130,562, \$104,319, \$67,958, \$83,880 AND \$76,111 RESPECTIVELY WHILE THOSE FOR 1989/90 WERE \$119,954, \$95,955, \$64,420, \$84,809 AND \$70,170 RESPECTIVELY.

FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS, THE AVERAGE UNIT COSTS IN 1992/93 FOR GOVERNMENT, AIDED AND ENGLISH SCHOOLS FOUNDATION (ESF) SCHOOLS WERE \$24,338, \$15,521 AND \$19,791 RESPECTIVELY.

THE FIGURES FOR THESE SCHOOLS IN 1991/92 AND 1990/91 (IN BRACKETS) WERE \$22,207 (\$19,654), \$13,964 (\$12,396) AND \$18,445 (\$16,590) RESPECTIVELY.

AS REGARDS DIRECT SUBSIDY TO INTERNATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS, MR LEUNG SAID IT WAS BASED ON THE AVERAGE UNIT COST OF AN AIDED SCHOOL PLACE AND WAS ADJUSTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ACTUAL FEES CHARGED, I.E. THE HIGHER THE FEE THE LOWER THE SUBSIDY.

THE AVERAGE UNIT COSTS FOR THESE SCHOOLS IN 1992/93 AND 1991/92 WERE \$3,813 AND \$3,424 RESPECTIVELY.

THE AVERAGE UNIT COSTS FOR PROVIDING EDUCATION FOR EACH PRIMARY STUDENT IN 1992/93 WERE \$13,613, \$10,229 AND \$12,367 RESPECTIVELY FOR GOVERNMENT, AIDED AND ESF SCHOOLS.

THE FIGURES FOR 1991/92 AND 1990/91 (IN BRACKETS) WERE \$12,399 (\$10,902), \$9,084 (\$8,034) AND \$11,125 (\$9,844) RESPECTIVELY.

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\$4 MILLION CASH RELIEF FOR FLOOD VICTIMS

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THE GOVERNMENT HAVE SO FAR THIS YEAR OFFERED \$4.16 MILLION CASH RELIEF TO FLOOD VICTIMS, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TIK CHI-YUEN, MR EASON SAID THERE WERE 899 FLOODING CASES ON RECORD SO FAR THIS YEAR AND THE GOVERNMENT WAS SPENDING \$68 MILLION FOR CLEARANCE AND MAINTENANCE OF DRAINS IN THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR.

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RETRAINING FUND FOR ACCIDENT VICTIMS, ELDERLY AND DISABLED

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THE EMPLOYEES RETRAINING BOARD HAS DECIDED TO EARMARK \$10 MILLION INITIALLY FOR THE RETRAINING OF INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS VICTIMS, ELDERLY AND DISABLED WORKERS, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HENRY TANG, MR LEUNG SAID THE BOARD WOULD LIAISE WITH RELEVANT GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, RELATED ORGANISATIONS AND EMPLOYER ASSOCIATIONS TO ENSURE THAT THE TRAINING PROVIDED WOULD MEET THE ASPIRATIONS AND SPECIAL NEEDS OF THESE GROUPS, TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES OPEN TO THEM.

"THE PROPOSAL WILL HAVE NO IMPACT ON THE TRAINING OF THE UNEMPLOYED AND UNDEREMPLOYED," HE ADDED.

/MR LEUNG

MR LEUNG ALSO NOTED THAT THE EMPLOYEES RETRAINING FUND HAD A BALANCE OF ABOUT \$433 MILLION AS AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR.

GIVEN THE HEALTHY BALANCE OF THE FUND, HE SAID, NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS WILL BE REQUIRED.

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SERVICES AVAILABLE TO BATTERED SPOUSES

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A RANGE OF SERVICES, INCLUDING MEDICAL, COUNSELLING, FINANCIAL AND HOUSING ASSISTANCE, OFFERED TO VICTIMS OF SPOUSE BATTERING ARE AVAILABLE TO BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LAU WONG-FAT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MRS WONG SAID THESE SERVICES WERE OFFERED AT THE FAMILY SERVICES CENTRES OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT (SWD) AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (NGOS).

ACCORDING TO POLICE STATISTICS, THERE WERE 178, 181 AND 173 SPOUSE BATTERING CASES IN 1991, LAST YEAR AND THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF THIS YEAR RESPECTIVELY.

OF THESE, 30 CASES IN 1991, 31 CASES LAST YEAR AND 28 CASES THIS YEAR WERE CASES IN WHICH MEN WERE THE VICTIMS.

THE SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT 609 CASES OF SPOUSE BATTERING WERE HANDLED BY THE SWD IN THE PAST THREE YEARS, OF WHICH ONLY 18 CASES WERE CASES IN WHICH THE VICTIMS WERE MEN.

"THE PERCENTAGE IS MUCH SMALLER THAN THAT REPORTED TO THE POLICE, INDICATING THAT BATTERED MEN ARE LESS READY TO BRING OUT THE PROBLEM AND SEEK ASSISTANCE," MRS WONG SAID.

ON ASSISTANCE OFFERED TO BATTERED SPOUSES, THERE ARE AT PRESENT 30 FAMILY SERVICES CENTRES RUN BY THE SWD AND 23 RUN BY NGOS.

COUNSELLING AND ADVICE ARE RENDERED TO HELP THEM COPE WITH STRESS AND EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS.

THESE CENTRES ALSO OFFER HELP IN ARRANGING TEMPORARY SHELTER, FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, LEGAL ADVICE AND CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS.

A HOTLINE SERVICE IS AVAILABLE FOR PERSONS WHO REQUIRE IMMEDIATE COUNSELLING AND ADVICE ON FAMILY PROBLEMS.

FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN NEED OF SHELTER, THERE ARE NINE TEMPORARY SHELTERS AND HOSTELS FOR SINGLE PERSONS RUN BY NGOS WITH A TOTAL CAPACITY OF 296 PLACES.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE UNDER THE COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE SCHEME OR FROM ONE OF THE CHARITABLE FUNDS MAY BE ARRANGED FOR BATTERED SPOUSES WHO ARE IN FINANCIAL NEED.

CONDITIONAL TENANCY IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES CAN ALSO BE ARRANGED UNDER THE COMPASSIONATE REHOUSING CATEGORY FOR BATTERED SPOUSES WHO MEET THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1993

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HK GOVT OFFICE IN LONDON SETS FOR RESTRUCTURING
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THE SIZE OF THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT OFFICE IN LONDON WILL BE REDUCED, ACCORDING TO THE COMMISSIONER, LONDON'S PROPOSAL.

IT WILL BE RE-ORGANISED INTO AN ECONOMIC AND TRADE OFFICE AFTER 1997.

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

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON EMILY LAU WAI-HING, MR CHAU SAID THE PROPOSED RESTRUCTURING OF THE LONDON OFFICE WOULD CONSIST OF THREE STAGES.

IN THE FIRST STAGE (1994/95), THERE ARE PLANS TO MOVE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR APPOINTMENTS FROM THE LONDON OFFICE TO THE CIVIL SERVICE BRANCH AND DELETE EIGHT POSTS IN LONDON OFFICE.

THE HONG KONG-BASED OFFICERS CONCERNED WOULD RETURN TO HONG KONG AT THE END OF THEIR CURRENT POSTINGS. THE LOCALLY-EMPLOYED STAFF WOULD BE EITHER REDEPLOYED WITHIN THE OFFICE OR BE INVITED TO APPLY FOR VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY.

IN THE SECOND STAGE (1995/96), THE COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION AND THE STUDENT AFFAIRS DIVISION WOULD BE RESTRUCTURED AND STREAMLINED.

IN THE THIRD STAGE (1996/97), THE PARLIAMENTARY LIAISON DIVISION WOULD BE RESTRUCTURED AND STREAMLINED.

MR CHAU SAID THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD REVIEW THE COMMISSIONER'S PROPOSALS FOR 1995/96 AND 1996/97 NEARER THE RESPECTIVE TIME-FRAMES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ANNUAL DRAFT ESTIMATES.

THE COMMISSIONER, LONDON HAD NOT SUBMITTED ANY SPECIFIC PROPOSALS REGARDING THE FUTURE OF THE GRAFTON STREET OFFICE OR THE COMMISSIONER'S RESIDENCE AT COWLEY STREET.

THE ADMINISTRATION IS COMMITTED TO A LEASE FOR THE GRAFTON STREET OFFICE UP TO JUNE 2004. THE COMMISSIONER IS CURRENTLY LOOKING INTO THE FEASIBILITY OF SHARING THE OFFICE WITH OTHER HONG KONG-BASED ORGANISATIONS WITH OFFICES IN LONDON, HE SAID.

THE LEASEHOLD ON THE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICIAL RESIDENCE AT COWLEY STREET WAS BOUGHT IN 1978 FOR 75 YEARS, AND IS OWNED BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT UNTIL 2053. MR CHAU EXPLAINED.

NO PARTICULAR PROBLEMS HAVE ARISEN IN IMPLEMENTING THE COMMISSIONER'S PROPOSALS, HE ADDED.

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DISQUALIFICATION OF INTELLECTUALLY IMPAIRED COMPANY DIRECTORS

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CONSIDERATION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO WHETHER ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS MAY BE INSERTED INTO THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) (NO.3) BILL, CONCERNING THE DISQUALIFICATION OF COMPANY DIRECTORS.

THE BILL IS NOW BEING EXAMINED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND ADVICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS HAS ALSO BEEN SOUGHT.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES, MR M D CARTLAND, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HUANG CHEN-YA IN THE LEGCO TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"THERE WOULD BE DIFFICULTIES INHERENT IN FORMULATING GOOD WORKABLE STATUTORY PROVISIONS FOR THE DISQUALIFICATION OF DIRECTORS ON THE GROUNDS OF INTELLECTUAL IMPAIRMENT," MR CARTLAND SAID.

THE EXISTING PROVISIONS RELATING TO DISQUALIFICATION AND THE NEW PROVISIONS PROPOSED IN THE BILL PROVIDE FOR DISQUALIFICATION FROM HOLDING DIRECTORSHIPS OF ALL COMPANIES ON SPECIFIC GROUNDS SUCH AS MISCONDUCT AND INVOLVEMENT IN FRAUD.

INTRODUCING DISQUALIFICATION ON THE GROUNDS OF INTELLECTUAL IMPAIRMENT WOULD CHANGE THIS CONCEPT.

"OUTRIGHT DISQUALIFICATION IN THIS CASE MIGHT NOT BE APPROPRIATE AS THE PERSON AFFECTED MIGHT BE CAPABLE OF UNDERTAKING A DIRECTORSHIP OF A COMPANY WHICH CONDUCTS VERY SIMPLE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD BUSINESS, ALTHOUGH PROBABLY NOT A COMPANY WHICH ENGAGES IN DIVERSE AND COMPLEX BUSINESS.

"THIS IS COMPLICATED BY THE FACT THAT THERE IS NO OBJECTIVE COMMON MINIMUM STANDARD OF PERFORMANCE WHICH MUST BE ATTAINED BY ALL DIRECTORS."

DIFFERENT STANDARDS MAY BE ACCEPTABLE FROM DIFFERENT DIRECTORS, DEPENDING ON THE INDIVIDUAL'S KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE, HE EXPLAINED.

HE ADDED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY COMPANIES-RELATED LEGISLATION IN OTHER COUNTRIES THAT ATTEMPTS TO DEAL SPECIFICALLY WITH THE ISSUE OF MENTAL INCAPACITY IN DIRECTORS.

ACCORDING TO MR CARTLAND, ONE POSSIBLE APPROACH WOULD BE TO EXAMINE WHAT COULD BE DONE THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF COMPANIES' ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION.

THE STANDARD ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION CONTAINED IN TABLE A IN PART 1 OF THE FIRST SCHEDULE OF THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE (CAP. 32) ALREADY PROVIDES, UNDER ARTICLE 90(D), THAT THE OFFICE OF A DIRECTOR SHALL BE VACATED IF THE DIRECTOR, INTER ALIA, "BECOMES OF UNSOUND MIND".

ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT A MANDATORY REQUIREMENT UPON COMPANIES TO ADOPT THE STANDARD SET OF ARTICLES, MANY HONG KONG COMPANIES DO EITHER ADOPT THESE IN THEIR ENTIRETY OR FOLLOW THEM VERY CLOSELY.

MR CARTLAND SAID THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE COMPANY LAW REFORM (SCCLR) CAME TO THE VIEW THAT TABLE A, GENERALLY, WAS IN NEED OF REVIEW AND DECIDED TO ESTABLISH A WORKING GROUP TO UNDERTAKE THE TASK.

IN THE CONTEXT OF A REVIEW OF TABLE A, THE SCCLR WILL BE ASKED TO CONSIDER WHETHER ARTICLE 90(D) COULD BE STRENGTHENED TO SPELL OUT MORE PRECISELY PROCEDURES TO DETERMINE WHETHER A DIRECTOR HAS BECOME MENTALLY UNFIT TO CONTINUE IN OFFICE, AND ALSO TO CONSIDER WHETHER CERTAIN OF THE STANDARD ARTICLES COULD BE MADE MANDATORY FOR ALL COMPANIES.

THE ADMINISTRATION WILL ASK THE SCCLR TO EXAMINE WHETHER THE EXISTING PROVISIONS IN THE PRIMARY LEGISLATION FOR THE REMOVAL OF A DIRECTOR ARE ADEQUATE OR NEED TO BE STRENGTHENED.

"THE ADMINISTRATION DOES NOT CONSIDER THAT THERE IS AN IMMEDIATE NEED TO INTRODUCE MEASURES OF A TEMPORARY OR STOPGAP NATURE TO DEAL SPECIFICALLY WITH POSSIBLE INSTANCES OF DIRECTORS WHOSE MENTAL STATE MAY BE IN QUESTION," HE ADDED.

"IT IS OF COURSE ALWAYS OPEN TO SHAREHOLDERS TO SEEK INDEPENDENT LEGAL ADVICE ON THEIR POSITION. DIRECTORS OWE FIDUCIARY AND COMMON LAW DUTIES OF CARE TO THE COMPANY AND MUST AT ALL TIMES ACT IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE COMPANY.

"IF ANY SHAREHOLDER FEELS THAT DIRECTORS ARE ACTING IN BREACH OF THOSE DUTIES, HE CAN ULTIMATELY TAKE LEGAL ACTION TO PROTECT HIS INTERESTS," HE CONTINUED.

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PUBLICITY STRENGTHENED TO DISCOURAGE MONKEY FEEDING

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TO RESTRAIN THE GROWTH OF MONKEYS IN THE VICINITY OF KOWLOON AND SHING MUN RESERVOIRS, THE GOVERNMENT HAS LAUNCHED VARIOUS PUBLICITY PROGRAMMES TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC, ESPECIALLY VISITORS AND MORNING WALKERS, NOT TO FEED THEM.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LEE WING-TAT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON SAID THE PUBLICITY PROGRAMMES INCLUDED LEAFLETS, NOTICES, EDUCATION DISPLAYS AND MEDIA ADVERTISEMENTS.

AT PRESENT, MR EASON SAID, THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF MONKEYS IN THE VICINITY WAS ABOUT 750 AND THE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE WAS ABOUT 10 PER CENT.

HE SAID THERE WERE THREE REPORTS OF PEOPLE BEING SCRATCHED BY MONKEYS LAST YEAR.

MR EASON SAID PROHIBITION OF MONKEY FEEDING COULD BE INTRODUCED THROUGH AMENDMENTS TO THE WILD ANIMALS PROTECTION ORDINANCE, BUT NO DECISION HAD BEEN REACHED TO PURSUE THIS COURSE OF ACTION.

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1993

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13 SECRETARIES SPOKE IN POLICY ADDRESS DEBATE
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A TOTAL OF 13 SECRETARIES SPOKE AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE
MOTION OF THANKS TO THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHICH LASTED FOR ALMOST THREE HOURS.

THE MOTION WAS MOVED BY THE HON ELSIE TU.

THE COUNCIL ALSO PASSED THE FOREIGN CORPORATIONS BILL WITHOUT

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