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# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Governor's question & answer session in LegCo

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The President: The Governor will answer questions on the ten topics which have been indicated to Members and a Member who has asked a question may, for the purpose of seeking elucidation only, ask a short follow-up question. Can I have a show of hands please.

Mrs Selina Chow: Thank you Mr President. Governor, given the overwhelming vote that was taken yesterday in this Council in favour of the suggestion that the British Government should take the stranded boat people into the UK in 1997, should any of them still remain in Hong Kong, may I ask you Sir, what you are going to do to put this case forward to the British Government on our behalf?

Governor: What I shall do in the next two and a half years or shorter if we succeed in our objective before then, is to work with my colleagues in the Administration to ensure the successful repatriation of all those Vietnamese migrants in detention centres as soon as possible. I read accounts of yesterday's debate, I wholly endorse the arguments adduced by the Secretary for Security and at the end of studying the Honourable lady's speech and other speeches that were made, I wasn't entirely sure what proposals were being put forward to help us expedite the achievement of an objective that we all share.

As for what the Honourable lady has said about the situation in 1997, as I've said before, as others have said, including I note one or two newspapers, I don't myself think it's very sensible to give Vietnamese migrants in the camps the wholly wrong impression that if they only hang on they'll be able to be resettled in another country after 1997. I think that that encourages Vietnamese migrants to stay, and indeed it could encourage some Vietnamese migrants to come to Hong Kong. I don't think it's a very helpful proposal. I don't think it represents any sort of reality that I know and I don't think it would be well received by those who want to see us deal successfully with this problem or by those in the international community who have in their turn helped with the resettlement of genuine refugees.

There is one other point that I'd make to the Honourable lady. I'm sure that if she spoke to her honourable friend who was a member of the Executive Council in 1988, which took the key policy decisions on policy on Vietnamese migrants, he would be able to assure her that the policy was made by the Hong Kong Government and wasn't imposed on the Hong Kong Government by the present sovereign. So, I hope the Honourable lady will find that a helpful and comprehensive reply to her question.

Mrs Selina Chow: Follow-up Mr President, does that mean that the Governor would not put the position forward to the British Government as voiced by this Council yesterday?

Governor: I will report what the Council said, I will certainly report it, but I shall also add in terms what I've just said to the Honourable lady.

Mr Hui Yin-fat: Thank you Sir. Governor, in view of the explicit rejection by the Chinese Government on the proposed old age pension scheme, proposed by the Hong Kong Government, and a recorded statement of our Government officials that the scheme should not start without the agreement of the Chinese Government, how would you, Governor, propose to introduce the proposed scheme and when?

Governor: The aim which I imagine we all share, is to find ways of providing better, more comprehensive assistance to the elderly as soon as possible. Hong Kong has been discussing the possibility of a pension scheme for the best part of three decades. Meantime, the number of those who would be affected by a pension scheme as beneficiaries has increased exponentially, part of Hong Kong's success story, in particular, the number of those who are very old has increased very substantially. But we still don't have any comprehensive way of addressing the financial insecurities which the elderly face, or which those who are soon going to be elderly and retired, face.

The Government, a few months ago, as the Council will know, put forward what in our view was the most sensible, immediate, and cost effective way of dealing with the problem of providing for the elderly and since then we've been involved in a consultation exercise which has drawn six thousand or rather more than six thousand responses which we're at present examining. Some responses, of course, haven't been specifically addressed to us as part of that consultation exercise. For example, one or two Chinese officials, both on and off the record, have suggested that the pension proposals that we put forward aren't in the interests of Hong Kong, represent a point which I would strongly contest, some lurch into socialism which the said officials for present purposes regard apparently as being a bad thing. They've made similar criticisms but most of the criticisms that we've seen have been from political groups in this Council or from organisations representing employers. We have to take very seriously what apparently is the view of the future sovereign, though we haven't had that put on the record in the Joint Liaison Group, and we have to take account of what's said within the community. I think it would be very difficult for us to proceed without a broad consensus which embraced first and most significant, because we will have to legislate, a majority in this Council, second, most business leaders and trade union leaders in the community, and third, those who speak for the future sovereign power. Without such a consensus I think any scheme would have great difficulty moving forward. Indeed I don't think without that consensus that we would be able to get a scheme through this Legislative Council.

So what does that mean? Does it mean that we simply wash our hands of the problems facing the elderly for the next couple of years and hope that the future SAR Government will deal with the problem, facing exactly the same challenges, working within exactly the same parameters, though they might be a little more difficult, that we have to cope with today. I don't think that's a tolerable way of proceeding. We are therefore intent, after considering all the submissions that we've received, on considering first of all in the Executive Council what we will believe is the best way forward and I trust we will be able to do that at the beginning of the New Year and announce our proposals straightaway. I do not intend to preside over Administration which is not capable of dealing with a major social problem as quickly and compassionately as possible. There are elderly in our community in need and we have to address that need as rapidly as we can, while retaining good economic sense and prudent housekeeping.

I'm sorry to respond at length to the Honourable gentleman but I just wanted to make two things clear. First that the exercise we have been engaged in has been a genuine consultation exercise. Secondly, that we don't intend consultation to turn into indecision.

Mr Hui Yin-fat: Mr President, could I ask the Governor whether he could be more explicit in saying that even with the objection or the disagreement of the Chinese Government, we will proceed with an amended, proposed scheme?

Governor: What I can certainly tell the Honourable gentleman is that we will go forward with a policy to help the elderly cope with their financial problems during the course of the coming months. We will put forward proposals to the Executive Council very soon and we will announce the result of our consultations in the Executive Council early in the New Year.

I repeat that it would be unrealistic for us to try to proceed if we (a) thought that we couldn't get our proposals through this Legislative Council, (b) didn't think we could carry the business community and trade union leaders and (c) were receiving a substantial thumbs down from the future sovereign. In those circumstances, if that was the case, a sensible Administration would refuse to find itself tied hand and foot in a cul-de-sac, it would look for other ways of dealing with an urgent social problem.

Mr Marvin Cheung: Governor, will you please advise this Council when will you provide concrete evidence to show what proportion of our old age people now and in the future are in fact in need of financial assistance as envisaged by the arguments in support of the proposal for the Old Age Pension Scheme and other similar schemes? And do you support or deny the statements made by the Financial Secretary in this chamber on previous occasions to the effect that Hong Kong has enjoyed a very healthy state of economy for the last 30 years and that our people have been the world's best savers over this period of time so that there should be very few old people in financial need?

Governor: It is true that because of Hong Kong's economic success, because of 34 years of uninterrupted economic growth - not a bad record, I say in passing, for the Administration to allude to - because of those things there are fewer people in general in need and fewer elderly in particular in need than would otherwise be the case. It is also true that for cultural and doubtless economic reasons as well, Hong Kong has been able to point to high savings over the years. but I am sure that the Honourable Member also recognises that those who were building Hong Kong's economic success in the earlier years, by and large don't find themselves today among the largest beneficiaries of that economic success. You don't have to be a sociologist - perish the thought - to recognise that in our community today it is the elderly who by and large are likely to be the neediest group. There are others who are in need. There are those who are suffering from disabilities and handicaps, there are single-parent families and some low-paid families with a large number of children but the biggest category, I think, of identifiable need is among the retired elderly.

The disputed statistic, I suppose, for the number of people in that category would be those who actually claim the benefits which the Government make available to those whose income does not exceed a particular threshold but I guess that a number of social workers would dispute whether that was a wholly accurate assessment of those in need. I don't dispute for one moment that need is not as acute as in some other communities but I do think that it is an identifiable social problem. It is not a social problem which is going to get easier to deal with as more people live for longer and as we have more very elderly in the community and sooner or later we have to address it, and we have to address it in a way, which we believe we have been doing, which doesn't threaten the same sort of welfare spending problems to which the World Bank, in a very good report, recently alluded. It is a social problem which the community and the government have to address.

Mr Marvin Cheung: Mr Governor, do I take it from your reply that the Government are unable or unwilling to provide any concrete evidence of the actual number of old people in financial need and if not, can I have a straight answer as to when will this statistic be provided?

Governor: No, we can give the Honourable Member the statistic of those who are claiming the benefit to which they are entitled because of need extremely easily. If the Honourable Member thinks that is an accurate definition of the problem, then so be it. Others would dispute that proposition. But it is the literal, statutory, precise, targeted, well-delineated answer to the question.

Mr Timothy Ha Wing-ho (through interpreter): Thank you Mr President. Mr Governor, my question is: for pre-school education, now that will be managed by the Social Welfare Department and the Education Department, what sort of work will be done in synchronising or unification of the work and will there be a deadline?

Governor: As the Honourable Member, I think, knows because he takes a particularly close interest in these matters, we have set up a working party to deal with this question. We have broadened the membership of the working party in order to try to ensure that we get as comprehensive and swift a response as possible. Obviously, we don't want to sacrifice quality for speed but we also recognise that this Council feels very strongly on the subject - we noted the debate the other day on this subject - so we will want to give a reply as quickly as we can.

Mr Tik Chi-yuen (through interpreter): Thank you Mr President. I am pleased to learn from the Governor that he is very concerned about pre-primary school education and work will be done very soon. But there are a lot of difficulties in the unification of the problem, especially when this involves two policy branches and two departments. Will there be competition between the two departments? And also, will the problem be complicated? So, will this be done as speedily as possible? And also, on direct subsidy for kindergartens, this has been in discussion for a long time and in the Policy Address there was mention that in 1995 a decision will be taken on how these kindergartens will be subsidised. But Mr Governor, as you know, in the Education sector, and parents, they want this to be done as quickly as possible. Our motion debate also calls for the implementation of direct subsidy in 1995 and the Secretary for Education and Manpower said that the implementation of this programme, the decision will be taken by the end of this year. Mr Governor, can you tell us today the Government is committed in implementing the Direct Subsidy Scheme in 1995 so that kindergarten teachers and parents and also students would be able to receive this Christmas present?

Governor: I think the Honourable Member would be gratified but surprised if I was to say that that was going to be available before this Christmas. On the working party which he mentioned, of course there is no competition or difference between any government departments, this is a seamless row and we are all entirely on the same side working comprehensively together on these problems. I think it made sense to put together professionals from both sectors and administrators from both sectors really in order to avoid the sort of tensions and clashes which might come up later on. We don't believe that having, as it were, a trans-professional membership will delay the work of the working party. We intend that the working party should report during the course of the next calendar year so that we can get on and implement a policy which I think the whole community feel strongly about. And I know that there are anxieties in particular because of things like remuneration levels, which are understandable.

Secondly, on the question of subsidising kindergartens, we hope that we can come to a clear decision on that subject early in '95 and perhaps make a start on implementing that policy later in the year. It does have pretty substantial cost implications but I guess that it is a mark of the success we have achieved in other areas of education that so much pressure and emphasis is now on kindergartens and child-care services.

Mr Tik Chi-yuen (through interpreter): Today, we do not receive the Christmas gift yet. It is hoped that in 1995 there will be a decision and we are waiting for this New Year gift. With regard to unification of the Pre-Primary Service Working Group, there are some experts sitting on the working group. Now, Mr Governor, will you consider having parents sitting on the working group because on the working group we have professionals and government department officials but there should be parents sitting on the working group. Will you consider that?

Governor: Even governors and civil servants can be parents too and I'm sure that there are several parents on the working group. We will consider the proposal put by the Honourable Member but I think that if he believes, as he knows he does, and as I do, that the objective should be to get on with things as rapidly as possible, we perhaps shouldn't continually tinker with the membership of the working party but try to ensure that it can do its job as rapidly as possible.

Mr Alfred Tso (through interpreter): Mr Governor, in the past I have been asking questions on major infrastructure projects and also liaison between China and Hong Kong with regard to these infrastructure projects. We have waited for long periods of time and now the Sino-British Co-ordinating Committee on Cross-border Infrastructure has been established and the Governor says that he welcomes the setting up of the Committee and he says that he supports this Committee. There are several major projects which the Chinese authorities want to launch and that will also benefit Hong Kong.

Now Mr Governor, with regard to this Co-ordinating Committee, what are your aspirations or hopes for this Committee. And secondly, if the progress of work is not satisfactory, you Mr Governor, or the Hong Kong Government, will you take positive actions? Will you be tolerant and will you actively promote this major infrastructure projects in the Committee? And thirdly, will the Hong Kong Government regularly report to this Council on the progress of works, so that the Council and the public will know the progress and up-to-date situation of these major infrastructure works that will help the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong?

Governor: I think it's fair to say and it's commentary above all perhaps on the record of some of my predecessors and of previous civil servants, that this community has a pretty good record at getting on with infrastructure projects. I think it was the Late Lord Kadoorie who said that the day there weren't large numbers of holes all over the landscape of Hong Kong was the day you should start worrying. We actually managed to complete infrastructure projects more rapidly than most other communities and perhaps I could if I was in a less mellow and benign mood, refer to one or two infrastructure projects where delays haven't been the fault of the Hong Kong Government.

But we do think that it's important to discuss Cross-border infrastructure projects with the Chinese authorities. I said that in my speech to the Council at the beginning of October, taking up some suggestions which had been made initially by Chinese officials. We've been very pleased to make as rapid progress as we have in setting up this new Committee. We agreed on all the terms of reference and parameters of the Committee in just a couple of meetings, which I think spoke volumes for the goodwill on both sides. Now I know that those who will represent both the PRC authorities and ourselves want to get down to the real business of the Committee which is not talking about terms of reference but talking about roads and railways and related things. I have to say that I think we will occasionally find that the Chinese authorities themselves want to think through very carefully and co-ordinate even more sharply the infrastructure projects which are taking place in China and I'm sure that they will find that this Committee is a good way of focusing on some of those projects.

We certainly believe that the Committee should help to expedite decisions and implementation on the infrastructure rather than delay decisions and implementation. That was very much one of the things that we pressed for when we were talking about the terms of reference and we received assurances on that point. So we'll go on trying to make the best of this Committee. I hope it will meet, though we haven't yet got an agreement on this, I hope it will meet early in the New Year. I think it would make a lot of sense to start establishing one or two panels on issues like railways and roads which could do more detailed work under the overall umbrella of the Committee. It's an important step forward and we want to make it work as well as possible.

Rev Fung Chi-wood (through interpreter): Mr President, with regard to the Strategic Sewage Disposal Scheme, the Chinese officials and the Hong Kong officials have been arguing over the Scheme and the Governor said that some people are politicising this issue but the Chinese officials denied that.

Now my question to the Governor is, how does the Governor come to the conclusion that some people are politicising the issue? Does the problem arise because the Hong Kong Government does not prepare adequate information and therefore fails to convince the Chinese authorities?

Governor: Perhaps I can politely correct one thing which the Honourable Member said at the outset. We're not arguing over the Scheme; we're implementing it. The Scheme has two distinct parts. There is the high priority part one, which involves the collection of the sewage and polluted waste water. It involves the separation of sewage from ordinary storm water and it involves having collected the sewage and polluted water primary treatment and disposal. Now that programme would be necessary whatever you then went on to do. The decisions you take on the first part of the Scheme don't, in any way, constrain the ways in which you can build for the future by either producing a long-sea outfall or by secondary or tertiary treatment of what's been collected on Stonecutters. What's even more to the point or what is as much to the point is that we complete part one and pay for part one before 30th June, 1997. We're therefore very happy to explain to PRC officials in the greatest detail how part one, how stage one will operate but we're intent on getting on with it and that's what's happening. We've let I think 17 contracts so far, 14 of which, I believe I'm correct in saying, have been won by Hong Kong firms or by local firms and it's important, not least bearing in mind the health problems that we faced last Summer, the cholera problems that we faced, it's important to get on with cleaning up the waters in the harbour as part one of the Scheme will do. We're discharging 1.5 cubic metres of polluted water into the harbour at the moment and we've got to stop doing that.

Stage two is different. Stage two is different for a couple of reasons. First of all because it's going to be implemented after 1997 and it raises issues in which those who are concerned about the responsibilities of the SAR Government and its challenges naturally concern themselves. It's also different because one of the options which has been proposed for stage two involves a long-sea outfall which would discharge primarily treated sewage into Chinese waters. So for both those reasons it's wholly legitimate for Chinese officials to raise questions and for us to try to engage in a dialogue and try to find agreement on how to deal with stage two of the strategy.

We'll be, early in the New Year, publishing a document which will consider the various options for stage two and the community and PRC officials will have to weigh on the one hand environmental benefit and on the other hand cost. They'll have to consider the advice of experts, some of whom think that long-sea outfalls are a perfectly sensible environmental option when you're discharging to deep water.

I guess that it's a fair point to make that if Chinese officials conclude that Hong Kong should bear the costs of more expensive treatment of secondary or tertiary treatment they would also conclude that the same should apply to Shanghai and other coastal cities in the PRC, because if the objection is an environmental one that long-sea outfalls into one's coastal waters don't make good sense then that doesn't just apply in Hong Kong but it applies in other places as well. It has very considerable cost implications, as the United States is finding at the moment, as Europe has found, but nevertheless that's a perfectly valid option for people to consider.

So a simple answer to the Honourable Member's question is we're implementing rather than arguing where we have the direct responsibility to do so but we are also engaged in an open-minded consideration of the best options for stage two which the community and PRC officials and this Council will, I know, take an active part in.

Rev Fung Chi-wood (through interpreter): Mr President, I can't see any explanation by the Governor on the question of politicisation of this issue. Now we are talking about options and whether the plans are feasible. So why is it that you are saying that people have politicised the issue, who has politicised the issue?

Governor: I got the impression with one or two things that were said about stage one that some people believed that holding up stage one would provide leverage more generally in discussions with the Hong Kong Government, but maybe I was wrong to get that impression. It was certainly the impression that one might have got if one had read statements and leading articles and commentaries in some of the, I don't know whether one is still allowed to use this expression, left wing newspapers in Hong Kong.

Mr Simon Ip: Mr Chairman, I would like to ask a question about the Court of Final Appeal. A suggestion has been made that if and when the Court of Final Appeal Bill is presented to this Council one amendment will be moved to delete reference to the 4:1 composition of the Court and substitute a provision following the wording of Article 82 of the Basic Law so that the Court of Final Appeal would have complete flexibility to invite overseas judges as may be required. If such an amendment is passed, what would the Hong Kong Government do and how will it set up the Court of Final Appeal in accordance with the amendment? Thank you.

Governor: I have had reason, perhaps too frequently, in the past to point out in the Council that I find governing Hong Kong quite challenging enough dealing with real questions rather than dealing with hypothetical questions and I think that it is probably the case that my colleagues in the Administration share that view. But let me, without making life more difficult for myself, address some of the issues which the Honourable Member raised and about which he has considerable knowledge.

This Council will, over the course of the next months, have to consider legislation on the Court of Final Appeal. That is necessary if we are to stand any chance at all of establishing a court before the middle of 1996 so that it can take over the role of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. We don't make up the deadlines. We need to legislate during this session. The Council, with the advice of lawyers both inside and outside the Council ringing in its ears, will have quite a simple, in my judgment, decision to make. Either Hong Kong gets a Court of Final Appeal before 1997 - indeed before the middle of 1996 - or it doesn't. I don't think anybody should kid themselves. It is not an argument between principle on the one hand and expediency on the other. This isn't Thomas Moore country. It's quite clearly an argument about whether we have a Court of Final Appeal which is set up in accordance with the JLG Agreement and with the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law or whether we don't have a Court of Final Appeal.

I simply don't understand the arguments of those who seem to suggest that they would get a better Court of Final Appeal if they waited until after 30th June 1997. I can't understand that reasoning at all. Nor do I understand the arguments of those who say: Well it doesn't really matter if we don't get a Court of Final Appeal because the Privy Council only deals with a handful of cases every year. Anybody who says that sort of thing and still argues about principle, really should consider, I think, their position rather carefully.

The proposals which the Government will translate into legislative form will be wholly in line with the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law and the JLG Agreement. They will be wholly acceptable in principle and they will make great sense in practice as well. We've looked at all the legal arguments. We've considered the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties and we believe our position is absolutely sound. And I repeat, the question is whether this community gets a Court of Final Appeal before 1997 or not. That is the simple issue and nobody should kid themselves that it is something else. There are consequences of individual actions and I hope that the legal profession in Hong Kong will recognise that.

Mr Simon Ip: Thank you Mr Chairman. The Governor has side-stepped my question on the ground that it was hypothetical. It wasn't hypothetical, it raises a very real issue in that we know already - unless Martin Lee tells me otherwise - that there will be an amendment moved to the Bill which will track the wording of Article 82 of the Basic Law. The question which I wish to put is: Could we have a Court of Appeal before 1997 along the lines of Article 82 of the Basic Law and not along the lines of the JLG Agreement? Because that would be the effect of the amendment, if passed, and there must be a realistic possibility of the amendment being passed.

Governor: I agree that it may not be hypothetical, that an amendment to a Bill that isn't yet published in its final form will be tabled. On the other hand, it is certainly hypothetical to consider what we would do if such an amendment was passed. But I just put this point to the Honourable Member. This happened in good faith before I became Governor of Hong Kong. In 1991, in good faith, in line with the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law, totally in line with the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law, an agreement was made on the Court of Final Appeal. Is the Government of Hong Kong to conclude that the PRC who were party to that agreement would be happy with some differently composed court? I don't think that is likely for one moment and I think you have to be particularly naive to think that they would be happy with some other sort of court, particularly when they have suggested otherwise.

Let me just deal with one other linguistic issue because it seems to me that the main argument of the critics of our proposals, insofar as it has any merit, depends on whether the use of judges - in the plural - in the sacred texts means judges in the plural at the same time or judges in the plural sequentially. The plural, in English, can of course - and in other languages I imagine - refer to both. The Legislative Council could conclude that the Governor could take lunches in the Legislative Council Canteen whenever he wanted. That would not mean more than one lunch at the same time, that would mean lunches every other Friday. So the proposition on which some lawyers seem to base what I think is a wholly invalid and damaging stack of arguments, represents a curiously narrow minded view of the English language.

Mr Szeto Wah (through interpreter): Mr Governor, just now you talked about semantics. Recently you have invented a new term, you talk about "sick parrots". This term has given rise to a lot of repercussions in the community. Now when we talk of parrots they are birds, and sick parrots we are talking about sick birds. And in Chinese the word "bird" has another meaning. So Mr Governor, are you aware that there is another meaning to the word "bird" and when you invented this term have you included that other meaning in your "sick parrots", in your term? Do you know the Chinese meaning of the word "bird"?

Governor: There are many alternative meanings of the word "bird" in the English language, one of which I will not refer to but one can also accuse somebody of "giving one the bird" which doesn't mean handing over a parrot, whether healthy or unhealthy. It isn't as laudatory a salutation as one would like. I'd be interested to compare ornithological metaphors with the Honourable Member. My ornithological metaphor was drawn from one of the most popular western, and indeed eastern cultures, and that is football. As for definitions of "sick parrots", I am reminded of someone who once, when asked to define or describe an elephant said that they were very difficult to describe but you knew them when you saw them. And I think the same is true of sick parrots.

Mr Martin Lee: Governor, are you aware that in early 1988, the then Chairman of the Bar, had a meeting with the then Attorney General, Mr Michael Thomas, followed by subsequent correspondence, in which the then Attorney General confirmed that the Government's understanding of the Basic Law and the Joint Declaration provision as to the Court of Final Appeal in fact accords that with the Bar namely that the Court of Final Appeal shall have complete and unfettered discretion in deciding on how many judges they should invite to sit in a particular case, not just one, but two or more as required, and when I put this at a recent Bar seminar, the then Attorney General Michael Thomas, confirmed at the seminar that that was the Government's view and that he also confirmed that in his view that the present Bill which is based on the 1991 secret deal, does not accord with the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. Would you please care to explain?

Governor: Well, I must allow the distinguished fellow silk to whom the Honourable Member refers to reply for himself. But I'm not sure that the former attorney would entirely share the Honourable Member's description of that correspondence or of that recent exchange. I think, if I may say so, that there is the world of difference and I don't accept the Honourable Member's description of the position, but there is the world of difference between the objectives that you set yourself when you go in for a negotiation and what you conclude at the end of the negotiation is an acceptable deal, albeit conceivably not as splendid a deal as you would have liked at the outset. Conceivably it's the case for example that Chinese officials going into those negotiations would have liked a Court of Final Appeal sitting as the judicial committee of the Privy Council does in the capital of the sovereign. That is doubtless the sort of issue which they argued about or may have argued about during those discussions, during those negotiations. I don't know. What I do know is that the negotiations concluded with an agreement which in my judgement, in the judgement of the Hong Kong Government, in the judgement of the British Government, is wholly in line with the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. What is more, it's an agreement which provides in our view the only basis for the establishment of a Court of Final Appeal before 30th June, 1997. I repeat what I said earlier, I think the alternative is that we either have such a Court before '97 or we don't have such a Court with all the implications. I don't think the Honourable Member is going to get a Court in which he has greater confidence if it's not set up until after 30th June, 1997.

Mr Martin Lee: Supplementary, Mr President. Mr Governor, are you prepared to have a debate with me on this issue at a date and at a time and in a place and in a forum or your choice?

Governor: I've been happy to debate with many Members of this Council, though not in a head to head way but as the legislation goes through, I would be perfectly happy to argue my case and the Administration's case, in public, with the Honourable Member or other Honourable Members, anywhere. I feel very strongly about this though I had no direct part in negotiating the agreement. I think that it is incumbent upon me to do everything I possibly can to ensure that the rule of law and the institutions of the rule of law survive and prosper beyond 1997. I think the argument about the Court of Final Appeal is highly germane to this. I find it difficult to understand why some lawyers having taken the position they did in 1991, have so much difficulty in looking again at the arguments and the facts and coming to a different set of conclusions in the interests of Hong Kong. I think that some of the arguments that are put forward against going ahead with the Court of Final Appeal are very bad arguments indeed and having said that, in due course, I will be happy to debate with the Honourable Member. I'd be happy to debate with the head of his professional body or with any other lawyers or non-lawyers in Hong Kong. I happen to take the view that the law is so important that sometimes non-lawyers like me should be able to have a word about it.

Mr Albert Chan (through interpreter): Mr President, now Mr Governor, there are ten items for discussion for this session including slope safety, airport, Court of Final Appeal and so on. Now many items are awaiting solutions. Now Mr Governor, you have been in Hong Kong for quite a number of years and you have reported to your seniors in the UK and you've gone on overseas trips and you have been described as an "off-shore" Governor. Now many problems in Hong Kong are still outstanding; solutions to them are still awaited. So will you reduce your overseas trips so that you can spend more time to deal with Hong Kong issues? For example of the ten items for this session, one says slope safety. The rainy season is coming again, so what measures will be taken by the Administration to reduce the possibility of slope collapse so that Hong Kong people will have their lives and properties safeguarded?

Governor: The answer to the first question is a resounding no. I think it's an absolutely ridiculous question. I've actually travelled in two and a half years slightly less than my distinguished predecessor. Like my distinguished predecessor, the trips that I have made have been in the interests of Hong Kong. If when last year the Cabinet was discussing the negotiations with China about, for example, our electoral proposals, I hadn't gone back to join those Cabinet Committee Meetings, the Honourable Member and others would have been vociferous in their criticism of the fact. So I and the Chief Secretary and the Financial Secretary and other Hong Kong Government officials will continue to travel abroad when necessary. This is an international community and not to put the case about Hong Kong's future internationally would be a dereliction of duty and that's not something that I intend to be guilty of.

Secondly, and I recognise that there are a number of problems in Hong Kong, happily not as many as there would be had we not run the economy in Hong Kong conspicuously successfully and had we not been able to use some of the proceeds of that economic growth for developing our educational, health and social problems as well as we have.

On the specific issue which the Honourable Member raised, we are at present considering the outstandingly good Morgenstern Report. We're also considering the Coroner's jury recommendations yesterday. We have in addition a report which is being prepared by the Secretary for Works which is going to be considered by the Executive Council early in the New Year. It must be our priority to do everything we can to stop further tragedies like the one to which the Honourable Member quite properly drew attention and we will be looking at engineering issues, we will be looking at questions of resource allocation and in due course we will have to look at questions of liability and responsibility as well.

Mr Albert Chan (through interpreter): Mr President, just now the Governor said that the first question was a ridiculous one but would you feel that your performance in the past would give people an impression that your focus of attention, you have neglected Hong Kong's affairs. So in future will you attach more time to Hong Kong affairs so that people will not call you an "off-shore" Governor?

Governor: I think the Honourable Member should learn the difference between being rhetorical and being offensive.

Mr Zachary Wong Wai-yin (through interpreter): Thank you Mr President. My original question involves a health care issue. Actually, just now Mr Szeto Wah talked about sick parrots and the germs and bacteria, what sort of problems will they bring about to Hong Kong and whether such bacteria, if the germs are spread, are there any ways to prevent or curb the spread of the germs and are we able to be vaccinated or will there be immunity from these germs?

Governor: Any germs that are the result of pollution in Hong Kong's waters, I hope that we will eliminate when we remove 70 per cent of the pollution from Hong Kong's waters with the Stage One of our Sewage Strategy. Political germs are not, I think, for me.

Mr Zachary Wong Wai-yin: Mr President, does the Governor say that these sick parrot germs, they come from the sewage?

Governor: I think that all of us at this point in the saga of sick parrots should remember the advice of Lord Palmerston: never to abuse metaphors.

Mr Jimmy McGregor: Sir, I would like to ask you, if I may, about the present situation of CT9. I think it fits in one or two of these headings. I didn't mean, Sir, as a sick parrot.

Governor: I don't have anything to add to what I have said in this Council and outside before. We put forward proposals for constructing and running CT9 which in our view, and I think when we put them forward in the view of many Members of this Council and many members of the community outside, represented the best balance available between on the one hand increasing competition in the port, while on the other hand being able to move ahead with the development as rapidly as possible. We handled that issue as we have handled other infrastructural developments - it was handled exactly the same way as several other container terminals had been handled - and we don't intend to politicise the handling of these matters in Hong Kong which would, we think, have appalling implications for investors' confidence and for our future prosperity. So we have nothing to add at present to what I've set out as our position in the past.

But obviously we keep a concerned eye on growing congestion in the port. We recognise that we not only have to get on with CT9 but also with CT10 and CT11 and we will do everything we can in the interests of the long term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong to continue to develop our port on which so many jobs as well as so much of our prosperity depend.

Mrs Elsie Tu: Thank you Mr President. My question is actually a follow-up and it is so simple it won't take more than a one word answer. Would the Governor be surprised if I told him that for once I totally agree with his interpretation of the CFA in the Basic Law and that I have not changed my stance since 1991?

Governor: I'm delighted to find myself in complete agreement with the Honourable lady. I hope this will be a harbinger of better and happier times. I shall certainly keep my fingers crossed that that is the position.

End/Thursday, December 8, 1994

### Appointment of Management Committee of Consumer Legal Action Fund

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The Government announced today (Thursday) that the Secretary for Trade and Industry had appointed a Management Committee of 10 members to assist the Consumer Council in the management of the Consumer Legal Action Fund.

The 10 members are appointed for a period of two years with effect from December 6, 1994. They are Mr George Chan Wing-yau, Mrs Pamela Chan Wong Shui, JP, Miss Audrey Eu Yuet-mee, QC, JP, Dr John Ho Dit-sang, Mr Steven Ho Shut-kan, Mr Lee Man-ban, MBE, JP, Mr Geoffrey Ma Tao-li, QC, Mr Ng Shui-lai, JP, Miss Anna Wu Hung-yuk, and Mr Edmund Young Kak-sun.

Mr George Chan is the Executive Director of the HSBC Asset Management Ltd and a member of the Ocean Park Corporation Board.

Mrs Pamela Chan is the Chief Executive of the Consumer Council.

Miss Audrey Eu is a barrister and a member of the Consumer Council.

Dr John Ho is a lecturer with the Department of Law, City University of Hong Kong. He is also a member of the Consumer Council. Mr Steven Ho is the Group General Manager of the Century City Holdings Ltd.

Mr Lee Man-ban is a Certified Public Accountant and a member of the Council of the Queen Elizabeth Foundation for the Mentally Handicapped. Mr Geoffrey Ma is a barrister and a member of the Criminal and Law Enforcement Injuries Compensation Board.

Mr Ng Shui-lai is the Director of the Hong Kong Christian Service and a member of the Hospital Authority.

Miss Anna Wu is a solicitor and the Vice-Chairman of the Consumer Council.

Mr Edmund Young is the Vice-president of the Perfekta Enterprises Ltd and the Vice-Chairman of the Hong Kong Toys Council.

"With a broadly based membership drawing experts from various fields, the Management Committee will be in a position to assist the Consumer Council in determining the eligibility of applicants for assistance from the Fund and managing the Fund effectively," the Government spokesman said.

"The Committee will also conduct regular reviews of the operation of the Fund and recommend improvements."

End/Thursday, December 8, 1994

## The HK Community Charter on AIDS

\* \* \* \* \*

The Government and six committed companies and community organisations today (Thursday) signed the Hong Kong Community Charter on AIDS as Founder Signatories.

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Michael Sze, signed the Charter on behalf of the Government at a launching ceremony.

The other six Founder Signatories include: Caritas - Hong Kong, The Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, Hong Kong Catholic Board of Education, Hong Kong Commercial Broadcasting Company Limited, Mass Transit Railway Corporation, and Aetna International Incorporation.

The key principles of the Charter are non-discrimination in dealing with employees or potential employees and adherence to confidentiality regarding a person's HIV status.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mrs Katherine Fok, said she was delighted to witness the beginning of a new phase in the development of Hong Kong's AIDS education programme.

Mrs Fok said: "We now learn from hindsight that AIDS carries a hidden, yet significant, economic dimension.

"The direct costs are minimal when compared with foregone earnings - the loss of output arising from morbidity and mortality of the disease," she said.

Mrs Fok pointed out that a study estimated that AIDS would cost the Asian economy between \$38 and \$52 billion US dollars by the year 2000.

On the other hand, the World Health Organisation has predicted that good prevention programmes can reduce the number of new HIV infections in the year 2000 from 20 million to 10 million in the developing world.

Mrs Fok stressed: "By implementing AIDS education programmes, we hope to prevent infections from occurring, thereby saving our society from future economic loss."

She said: "By discriminating people with HIV/AIDS, we are not only being short-sighted but are placing additional economic burdens on society.

"Instead of allowing them to continue to contribute and to help generate profit for their companies, additional costs will be needed to support the unemployed persons and their families," Mrs Fok added.

Mrs Fok said both employers and employees should be concerned about AIDS because it affected the workforce both directly and indirectly by leading to unnecessary fear and anxiety.

Noting that HIV infection could not normally occur in a work place setting, Mrs Fok said the work place provided an ideal forum for conducting meaningful AIDS education to allay fear and arouse awareness.

The Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, is the patron of the Charter and Professor Jonathan Mann of Harvard AIDS Institute is the honorary adviser to the Charter.

The Charter is a new initiative launched by the Department of Health and the Lions Clubs International, District 303 - Hong Kong and Macau. The main objectives are to enhance AIDS awareness and to encourage adoption of non-discriminatory policy in the workplace.

The organising committee of the Charter has sent out invitation letters to 2,000 companies and organisations in the territory after the launching.

Any companies or organisations interested in the Charter programme are welcome to enquire on tel 780 8622.

End/Thursday, December 8, 1994

#### SCA speaks on functional constituency elections

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The Secretary for Constitutional Affairs, Mr Nicholas Ng, this (Thursday) evening explained next year's Legco functional constituency elections and the registration of voters for the nine new functional constituencies.

In a speech to the Association of Restaurant Managers' annual dinner, Mr Ng said of the 30 Legco seats to be elected from the functional constituencies, 21 would be returned by the existing functional constituencies, while nine seats would be returned through nine new functional constituencies representing all those eligible among the estimated 2.7 million workforce, who were not already in the old functional constituencies.

"Delineation of the nine new functional constituencies will be based on the broad industrial sectors under the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification," he said.

"Our workforce will be grouped according to the major activities of the establishments in which they work. The choice of a particular functional constituency for an employee is dependent on the main line of business of his employer.

"For example, a driver who works for a manufacturing factory should register in the Manufacturing Functional Constituency. Similarly, a driver who works in an import/export firm should register with the Import and Export Functional Constituency.

"The drivers will not be registered under the Transport and Communication Functional Constituency in these two examples," he explained.

Citing another new functional constituency, the Hotels and Catering Functional Constituency, as example, Mr Ng said it would cover the 220,000 employees in the hotel and catering sector, be they managers, waiters, chefs or cleaning staff who are working in hotels, restaurants, fast-food outlets or pubs.

Mr Ng said the Boundary and Election Commission would launch a large-scale voter registration exercise in January. Eligible voters will have until June 1 next year to sign up. The Commission has also come up with a method that will make registration easy for the 2.5 million people already on the General Electoral Roll.

"To begin with, the Commission will ask all employers to provide the name and identity card numbers of their employees, as well as confirmation about their main line of business for the purpose of classifying their employees," he said.

"After receiving the information the Registration and Electoral Office will check whether the employees are on the General Electoral Roll and if so, allocate a functional constituency to them according to the employer's main line of business.

"A notification with the functional constituency identified will be sent to the employees informing them that they will be so registered if they have no objection," he said.

Mr Ng gave an assurance that an employee who received a notification would be given the opportunity to declare any change in his circumstances, for example change of employer, or to make a choice of his functional constituency by completing a new application form should he be eligible for registration in more than one functional constituency.

"He can, of course, choose not to register as a functional constituency elector," he added.

As for people who are eligible to register in a new functional constituency but have not yet registered in the General Electoral Roll, they could apply to the Registration Officer for registration at the same time in both the General Electoral Roll and a new functional constituency.

"Self-employed, free-lancers and other eligible persons could become electors in an appropriate new functional constituency by making an application to the Registration and Electoral Office," he said.

End/Thursday, December 8, 1994

#### Govt response to report on Kwun Lung Lau landslide

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A Works Branch spokesman said today (Thursday) that an article in today's Eastern Express on the Kwun Lung Lau landslide which quoted a Civil Engineering Department officer as saying that the Government was responsible and that his Department should bear much of the blame, seriously misrepresented an earlier telephone enquiry to the officer. The article also contained untruths.

The spokesman pointed out that the Chief Geotechnical Engineer, Mr Chan Kin-sek, did not speak to any staff member of the Eastern Express yesterday (Wednesday) as reported in the article.

"Mr Chan has never said that his Department had been negligent," he added.

The spokesman also confirmed that the Secretary for Works, Mr James Blake, had not been approached by any Eastern Express reporter for comment in relation to the article. Therefore, there was no question of Mr Blake having refused to comment.

He said Mr Chan had given a telephone interview to the writer of the article on the work of the Geotechnical Engineering Office on December 1. The remarks attributed to Mr Chan in today's article were presented in an incorrect manner and were irresponsibly out of context.

The spokesman emphasised that the Government was considering very carefully the question of responsibility and liability for the accident, particularly in the light of the verdict of the Coroner's Court yesterday (Wednesday).

He said the international slope expert, Professor Norbert Morgenstern, who had produced a comprehensive report on this issue, did not share the view that the Government was to blame for the disaster.

"Nor is it the view of the Government," he added.

The spokesman said Professor Morgenstern was generally satisfied with the approach to slope safety in Hong Kong and had made a number of important recommendations.

"We have undertaken to implement all the recommendations and are committed to pursuing it," he stressed.

End/Thursday, December 8, 1994

#### Volume and price movements of external trade in September 1994

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In the first nine months of 1994, the volume of re-exports recorded an increase of 14% over the same period last year, while the volume of domestic exports decreased by 3.7%, the statistics released today (Thursday) by the Census and Statistics Department showed.

Taking re-exports and domestic exports together, the volume of total exports increased by 10%. Meanwhile, imports increased by 13% in volume.

The growth in the volume of trade is derived from the growth in trade values with the effect of price changes being discounted.

As regards price changes over the same period of comparison, the prices of re-exports and domestic exports increased by 0.9% and 1.4% respectively. Import prices increased by 2.0%.

Price changes are reflected by changes in unit value indices, which are compiled based on average unit values or, for certain commodities, based on specific price data.

The terms of trade index, defined as the ratio of total export price index to import price index, decreased by 0.9% in the first nine months of 1994 over the same period last year.

Comparing September 1994 with September 1993, the volume of re-exports continued to increase markedly, by 15% while that of domestic exports remained virtually unchanged. Taken together, the volume of total exports increased by 12%. Meanwhile, the volume of imports grew by 20%.

Over the same period of comparison, the prices of re-exports and domestic exports increased by 1.9% and 1.4% respectively. Import prices increased by 2.8%.

The changes in the value, unit value and volume of re-exports by end-use category are shown in Table 1.

Comparing September 1994 with September 1993, the volume of re-exports of most end-use categories recorded increases of various magnitudes: raw materials and semi-manufactures (+27%), capital goods (+26%), foodstuffs (+22%) and consumer goods (+6.7%). The volume of re-exports of fuels, however, decreased by 16%.

Over the same period of comparison, the prices of re-exports of all end-use categories increased: capital goods (+2.9%), foodstuffs (+2.3%), raw materials and semi-manufactures (+2.2%), consumer goods (+1.5%) and fuels (+1.4%).

The changes in the value, unit value and volume of domestic exports by principal commodity group are shown in Table 2.

Comparing September 1994 with September 1993, commodity groups which recorded increases in volume of domestic exports included textile made-ups and related articles (+42%); footwear (+27%); metal ores and scrap (+26%); and textile yarn and thread (+22%).

On the other hand, the volume of domestic exports of radios of all kinds decreased markedly by 57%.

Commodity groups which recorded increases in domestic export prices included textile made-ups and related articles (+12%); and electronic components (+3.5%).

Decreases in domestic export prices were however recorded for footwear (-5.4%) and radios of all kinds (-1.9%).

The changes in the value, unit value and volume of imports by end-use category are shown in Table 3.

The import volume of foodstuffs increased by 19% in September 1994 compared with September 1993.

Significant increases were recorded in the import volume of soya bean oil, peanut oil, vegetable oil and lard; and tea and coffee. However, decreases were recorded in the import volume of rice and animals of the bovine species.

Over the same period of comparison, the import volume of consumer goods increased by 16%.

Commodity items with considerable increases in import volume included radios, television sets, gramophones, records, tape recorders and amplifiers; and tobacco manufactures. On the other hand, there was a decrease in the import volume of footwear.

The import volume of raw materials and semi-manufactures increased by 23% in September 1994 compared with September 1993.

Significant increases in import volume were noted of raw cotton and man-made fibres.

Imports of fuels increased markedly by 47% in volume in September 1994 compared with September 1993.

As regards capital goods, the import volume increased by 24% in September 1994 over September 1993.

Notable increases were recorded in the import volume of transport equipment and office machines. However, the import volume of textile machinery and construction machinery declined.

Comparing September 1994 with September 1993, the import prices of most end-use categories increased: raw materials and semi-manufactures (+4.1%), consumer goods (+2.7%), foodstuffs (+2.4%) and capital goods (+1.9%). The import prices of fuels, however, decreased by 9.8%.

Details of the above statistics are published in the September 1994 issue of the "Hong Kong Trade Index Numbers".

The report will be available on sale from next Monday (December 12) at \$9 per copy at either the Government Publications Centre on the Ground Floor, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway; or the Publications Section of the Census and Statistics Department on the 19th Floor, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai.

Enquiries regarding regular subscription to this report may be directed to the Information Services Department at French Mission Building, 1 Battery Path, Hong Kong on tel 842 8802 and enquiries on trade indices to the Census and Statistics Department on tel 582 4918.

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Table 1 : Changes in re-exports by end-use category

End-use category	Comparing SEP 1994 with SEP 1993			Comparing JAN-SEP 1994 with JAN-SEP 1993		
	% changes			% changes		
	Unit Value	Unit Value	Unit Volume	Unit Value	Unit Value	Unit Volume
Foodstuffs	24.6	2.3	21.7	19.7	1.9	17.9
Consumer goods	8.7	1.5	6.7	11.7	1.1	10.4
Raw materials and semi-manufactures	29.2	2.2	26.6	21.4	-0.1	21.2
Fuels	-14.3	1.4	-16.0	6.1	-11.3	16.8
Capital goods	31.7	2.9	26.5	13.4	2.0	11.9
ALL COMMODITIES	17.2	1.9	14.8	14.5	0.9	13.8

Table 2 : Changes in domestic exports by principal commodity group

Commodity group	Comparing SEP 1994 with SEP 1993			Comparing JAN-SEP 1994 with JAN-SEP 1993		
	% changes			% changes		
	Value	Unit Value	Volume	Value	Unit Value	Volume
Clothing	6.7	2.6	4.1	1.1	1.7	-0.2
Textile fabrics	-0.2	1.1	-1.7	-9.6	-2.4	-7.6
Textile yarn and thread	25.2	2.3	22.3	-2.4	0.5	-1.9
Textile made-ups and related articles	63.6	12.4	41.7	13.4	3.1	8.0
Radios of all kinds	-60.9	-1.9	-57.0	-58.9	0.9	-58.2
Electronic components	13.3	3.5	8.1	3.8	3.6	-0.2
Footwear	29.1	-5.4	26.7	-19.3	-3.7	-19.9
Metal manufactures	4.2	2.1	3.4	0.3	2.1	0.5
Metal ores and scrap	32.4	2.3	25.6	-5.3	-0.3	-7.1
Watches and clocks	-5.7	1.9	-7.6	-7.8	1.8	-8.5
Travel goods, handbags and similar articles	-1.4	*	-0.3	-2.3	3.5	-5.3
Domestic electrical appliances	-10.2	0.7	-12.5	-15.3	1.6	-19.4
ALL COMMODITIES	2.2	1.4	0.2	-2.2	1.4	-3.7

\* less than 0.05%

Table 3 : Changes in imports by end-use category

End-use category	Comparing SEP 1994 with SEP 1993			Comparing JAN-SEP 1994 with JAN-SEP 1993		
	% changes			% changes		
	Value	Unit Value	Volume	Value	Unit Value	Volume
Foodstuffs	22.0	2.4	19.1	16.7	0.7	16.3
Consumer goods	17.7	2.7	15.6	11.7	2.4	10.4
Raw materials and semi-manufactures	29.1	4.1	23.2	19.0	2.6	15.5
Fuels	30.0	-9.8	46.6	23.7	-14.9	42.6
Capital goods	26.9	1.9	23.9	12.0	1.9	9.8
ALL COMMODITIES	23.4	2.8	20.4	14.6	2.0	13.0

End/Thursday, December 8, 1994

Government closely monitoring Aberdeen Tunnel traffic

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In response to press enquiries, a spokesman for the Transport Department said today (Thursday) that the Government had been closely monitoring the impact on traffic of the industrial dispute between the staff and the Cross Harbour Tunnel Company Limited, Government's contractor for the operation and management of the Aberdeen Tunnel.

While the Labour Department will continue to mediate in the industrial dispute, the Transport Department's primary concern is the maintenance of smooth and safe traffic circulation within the tunnel area.

The tunnel contractor has submitted a preliminary report on the incident at the Aberdeen Tunnel yesterday evening, which resulted in a 30- minute disruption to traffic. The Department is studying the report and has also asked for additional information from the contractor.

The opportunity was also taken to review the contractor's contingency plan in order to ensure that traffic through the tunnel is not disrupted.

Members of the Transport Department Tunnel Monitoring Team will continuously be deployed to the Aberdeen Tunnel to provide a continuous liaison at the operational level in the next few days, until the labour dispute is satisfactorily resolved.

End/Thursday, December 8, 1994

#### Thirteen rescuers awarded for bravery

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The Director of Marine, Mr Allan Pyrke, today (Thursday) presented his Commendation for Bravery to 13 people who acted above the normal call of duty to rescue others from the sea.

The recipients involving in 10 rescues in this year were seven officers of the Royal Hong Kong Police Force, five crew members of local ferries and a citizen.

Speaking at the presentation ceremony at the Mariners' Club, Mr Pyrke said it was sometimes said Hong Kong was a city of selfish people, only interested in themselves and their immediate families.

"The presence of these brave people here today is a heartening reminder that this is untrue. Each one has risked his own life to save a complete stranger from the sea," he said.

Mr Pyrke added that some of these incidents occurred in cold weather and treacherous sea conditions but he felt sure that on each of these occasions the rescuer had to make that gut-wrenching decision to jump and did so unflinchingly.

Among the recipients are Police Station Sergeant Tsang Fung-tai, and Police Constables So Ming-tak, Mok Siu-bun, Lo Ping-kwan, Wong Chi-wai, Cheung Wai-shing and Chu Chi-ming.

Five recipients from the Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited are Mr Chan Chan-ming, Mr Yeung Man-lung, Mr Kwok Sai-ming, Mr Cheung Koon-yung and Mr Chau Wah-chai.

Mr Chu Wai-kee is the citizen who received the Commendation.

End/Thursday, December 8, 1994

#### Additional teachers for aided secondary schools

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The Education Department will provide an additional non-graduate teacher to each aided secondary school with more than 30 classes from September 1995 to further upgrade teaching standards and provide more services, an Education Department spokesman said today (Thursday).

The spokesman explained that as these schools already received one additional non-graduate teacher from September this year as part of the improvement measures announced in the Governor's Policy Address in 1992, the above move will mean that these schools with more than 30 classes will get a total of two extra non-graduate teachers from September 1995.

The spokesman said the additional services provided by the extra teacher will include the whole school approach to guidance, school-based induction programmes and the introduction of the Target Oriented Curriculum in the future.

End/Thursday, December 8, 1994

#### Music Office to present carol concert

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The Music Office of the Recreation and Culture Branch will present a carol concert by its children's and youth choirs later this month to celebrate the Christmas festival.

Entitled "Music Office Carol Concert", the concert, with Mr Kenneth Yip and Mrs Gladys Pun as Conductors and Mr Peter Yue and Miss Elizabeth Tse as Accompanists, will be staged at the Sheung Wan Civic Centre Theatre at 8 pm on December 21 (Wednesday).

Programme of the concert will include many Hong Kong premiere of Christmas carols such as "Light a Candle", "In Babylon Town", "Twentieth Century Carol", "Who is this Child?", "The Christmas Story", "Bethlehem's Gift", "Infant Jesus, Holy One", "Hodie! Alleluia!" and "A Christmas Connection".

The Music Office Children's Choir, formerly known as the Music Office Chinese Folk Singing Children's Ensemble, was inaugurated in July 1981 with the aim to preserve the brilliance of the Chinese folk music and to encourage its performance by children.

This children's choir has at present about 70 members aged from eight to 15. Its repertoire includes both western and Chinese choral works.

The choir has premiered some choral compositions and performed some unique Chinese folk songs.

Since its establishment, the Choir has participated in a number of concerts organised by the Music Office and has also been invited by outside organisations to perform on various occasions.

It is currently trained by Miss Elizabeth Tse and Mrs Gladys Pun with Mr Kenneth Yip as Choir Master.

The Music Office Youth Choir was established in February 1980 and its repertoire has included sacred and secular music by western composers of different periods and also choral works by Chinese composers.

Since then, the Choir has performed regularly.

From 1984 to 1993, the Choir had sung in a number of choral concerts under renowned conductors such as Messrs Thomas Wang, Christopher Martin and Angus Watson.

There are currently about 50 members in the Choir aged from 15 to 25. It is trained by the Choir Master, Mr Kenneth Yip and the Assistant Choir Master, Mr Peter Yue.

Tickets for the concert, priced at \$40 each, are now available at all URBTIX outlets.

Half-price tickets are also offered to full-time students and senior citizens.

Enquiries can be made at 802 0657. For telephone reservations, please call 734 9009.

End/Thursday, December 8, 1994

IEC pilot test to be postponed

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The Transport Department announces today (Thursday) that because of inclement weather, the pilot test to ease traffic congestion on the eastbound carriageway of the Island Eastern Corridor near the Eastern Harbour Crossing approach scheduled for today has been cancelled at the advice of the Police.

The pilot test will now be conducted between 3 pm and 10 pm on December 12 (Monday), December 13 (Tuesday) and December 15 (Thursday). The traffic diversion arrangements for the pilot test will remain unchanged.

End/Thursday, December 8, 1994

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	1,569	0930	-34
Closing balance in the account	1,782	1000	-34
Change attributable to :		1100	-144
Money market activity	-147	1200	-144
LAF today	+360	1500	-144
		1600	-147

LAF rate 3.75% bid/5.75% offer TWI 121.9 \*+0.1\* 8.12.94

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes/Hong Kong Government bonds				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.74	18 months	2605	6.35	99.28	7.00
1 month	5.08	24 months	2611	6.90	99.46	7.33
3 months	5.53	29 months	3704	6.15	97.28	7.55
6 months	5.99	35 months	3710	7.25	99.13	7.73
12 months	6.61	58 months	5909	7.45	97.53	8.24

Total turnover of bills and bonds - 24,192 million

Closed December 8, 1994

End/Thursday, December 8, 1994