



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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SPEECH BY THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN
AT THE P & O DINNER AT THE H.K.C.E.C. ON NOVEMBER 10, 1992

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THE REPULSE BAY IS A TRULY MAGNIFICENT SHIP. I SAW HER BRIEFLY IN THE GAPS THAT WE CAN SEE FROM GOVERNMENT HOUSE THROUGH THE BUILDINGS, BETWEEN AS IT WERE NORMAN FOSTER AND I.M. PEI, AND SINCE PRINCE CHARLES ISN'T HERE I WON'T SAY ANY MORE ABOUT THAT; BUT I SAW HER STEAMING GRACEFULLY INTO THE HARBOUR THIS MORNING, HER RED ENSIGN FLYING PROUDLY AT THE STERN, A SYMBOL OF P & O'S ENDURING CLOSE LINKS WITH HONG KONG. AND I MUST SAY I AM DELIGHTED TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH HER FORMAL NAMING HERE BY MY WIFE IN HONG KONG.

LIKE HONG KONG, SHE IS ALREADY A RECORD BREAKER. THE LARGEST CONTAINER SHIP FLYING THE RED ENSIGN AND IT'S THEREFORE FITTING THAT SHE SHOULD BE NAMED IN THE BUSIEST CONTAINER PORT ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.

THE REPULSE BAY WILL CARRY WITH HER THE NAME AND SPIRIT OF HONG KONG WHEREVER SHE GOES. THE SHIP COULD HARDLY BE BEGINNING HER WORKING LIFE AT A BETTER TIME. HERE IN HONG KONG WE STAND, AS ALL OF US KNOW, AT THE EPICENTRE OF THE FASTEST GROWING ECONOMIC REGION IN THE WORLD. OUR OWN HARBOUR, WHICH FIRST INSPIRED SEE-GOING MERCHANTS A CENTURY AND A HALF AGO REMAINS THE FINEST DEEP WATER PORT ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.

TODAY AN OCEAN-GOING SHIP ENTERS OR LEAVE ITS WATERS EVERY 13 MINUTES. MOST OF THEM ARE CONTAINER SHIPS LIKE REPULSE BAY LOADING OR UNLOADING AT THE KWAI CHUNG CONTAINER PORT, WHICH HAS NOW SURPASSED SINGAPORE AS THE BUSIEST IN THE WORLD.

THE TRADE THAT PASSES THROUGH OUR HARBOUR COMES AND GOES TO PORTS RIGHT ACROSS THE GLOBE. BUT MOST OF THE CARGO WE HANDLE IS GOING TO OR COMING FROM MUCH CLOSER TO HOME, ALONG THE COAST OF SOUTHERN CHINA. AND IT IS ACROSS THE BORDER IN SOUTHERN CHINA WHERE FREE MARKET ECONOMICS ARE BLAZING A TRAIL IN THE MOST REMARKABLE ECONOMIC REVOLUTION OF MODERN TIMES.

IT IS THOSE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PEARL RIVER DELTA AND BEYOND THAT ARE HELPING TO DRIVE GROWTH IN HONG KONG AND IN OUR OWN CONTAINER PORT. THE ECONOMY OF GUANGDONG, WITH A POPULATION OF 63 MILLION PEOPLE, BIGGER THAN BRITAIN, BUT ONLY A FRACTION OF THE MASSIVE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA; THE ECONOMY OF GUANGDONG HAS GROWN BY 13% EACH YEAR OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS SOME 90% OF THE GOODS RE-EXPORTED THROUGH HONG KONG ARE DESTINED FOR OR ORIGINATE IN CHINA.

HONG KONG IS SET TO CONTINUE AS THE ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE OF THE REGION. FOR A START WE ARE DETERMINED TO BUILD FOR TOMORROW TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE TRADE BOOM WE ARE SEEING TODAY. WE ARE ALREADY BUILDING HONG KONG'S EIGHTH CONTAINER TERMINAL AT STONECUTTER'S ISLAND. AND WE ARE PLANNING FOR THE NINTH ON TSING YI AND THEN THE TENTH ON LANTAU.

BY THE SUMMER OF 1997, HONG KONG'S PORT WILL BE ABLE TO HANDLE OVER 10 MILLION TWENTY FOOT EQUIVALENT UNITS, AS I THINK THEY ARE KNOWN EVERY YEAR. WE ARE, TO PUT IT IN TERMS THE REST OF US WOULD UNDERSTAND, BUILDING THE EQUIVALENT OF A NEW OAKLAND OR SEATTLE EVERY YEAR THROUGH TO THE TURN OF THE CENTURY.

/OUR PORT

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OUR PORT, AND THE ENERGY AND EFFICIENCY WITH WHICH IT OPERATES, MAKE HONG KONG THE MARITIME CENTRE OF THE FAR EAST. OUR PORT IS AT THE HEART OF OUR PROSPECTS AND I THINK AT THE HEART OF OUR PROSPERITY.

AT THIS TIME OF ASTONISHING CHANGE, THERE IS ONE THING THAT DOES NOT CHANGE, HOWEVER. AND THAT IS THE FORMULA FOR HONG KONG'S EXTRAORDINARY ECONOMIC SUCCESS OVER THE YEARS. OUR WINNING FORMULA - THE HONG KONG FORMULA - IS NO TRADE SECRET. BUT IT IS THE BEST PROOF, LIVING PROOF, ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD, THAT A FREE ECONOMY, OPERATING WITHIN A SOUND FRAMEWORK OF LAW, AND GUARANTEED BY THE GROWING PARTICIPATION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF HONG KONG IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THEIR OWN AFFAIRS, OFFERS THE BEST PROSPECT OF PROSPERITY AND RISING STANDARDS OF LIVING.

OUR PRESCRIPTION FOR PROSPERITY IS STRAIGHT-FORWARD. WE FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT BUSINESSMEN - NOT POLITICIANS OR CIVIL SERVANTS - MAKE THE BEST COMMERCIAL DECISIONS. THE JOB OF GOVERNMENT IS TO OFFER MAXIMUM SUPPORT BUT MINIMUM INTERFERENCE. WE BELIEVE IN COMPETITION WITHIN A SOUND, FAIR FRAMEWORK OF REGULATION. WE BELIEVE IN LOW TAXES AND IN FIRM CONTROL OF PUBLIC SPENDING, WHICH MUST FOLLOW NOT OUT-PACE ECONOMIC GROWTH.

IT IS THAT SIMPLE, TRIED AND TESTED ECONOMIC PRESCRIPTION, COUPLED WITH THE HARD WORK OF HONG KONG'S REMARKABLE PEOPLE, THAT HAVE TURNED THIS GREAT COMMUNITY INTO ONE OF THE ECONOMIC WONDERS OF THE WORLD. AN ECONOMIC PRESCRIPTION THAT ITSELF FORMS AN INTEGRAL PART OF WHAT WE MEAN BY HONG KONG'S "WAY OF LIFE", A WAY OF LIFE DESCRIBED IN LINE AFTER LINE OF THE JOINT DECLARATION. IT IS THAT WAY OF LIFE THAT UNDERPINS HONG KONG'S PROSPERITY AND STABILITY. THAT WAY OF LIFE WHICH IT IS MY JOB AS GOVERNOR TO PRESERVE IN THE RUN-UP TO 1997 AND BEYOND THE NIGHT WHEN THE FLAG COMES DOWN. ALL THOSE VALUES OF AN OPEN, TOLERANT AND FREE SOCIETY INTERLOCK. TAKE AWAY ONE AND THE WHOLE EDIFICE IS ENDANGERED. BIND THEM TOGETHER AND THE COMMUNITY CONTINUES TO THRIVE AND PROSPER.

P & O'S ASSOCIATION WITH HONG KONG IS, AS WE LEARNED THIS EVENING, AS OLD AS THE TERRITORY ITSELF. REPULSE BAY IS ONLY THE LATEST - IF THE LARGEST - OF A LONG LINE OF YOUR VESSELS THAT HAVE STEAMED IN AND OUT OF HONG KONG HARBOUR. TODAY YOUR SHARES ARE LISTED ON THE HONG KONG STOCK EXCHANGE. YOU PLAY A FORMIDABLE PART IN HONG KONG'S ECONOMY, JUST AS YOU DO IN SO MANY ECONOMIES ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD. YOU ARE GOING, I KNOW, TO PLAY AS IMPORTANT A PART IN SHAPING THE HONG KONG OF TOMORROW, JUST AS YOU HAVE PLAYED A LARGE PART IN SHAPING THE HONG KONG OF TODAY.

AS REPULSE BAY PREPARES TO PLY HER TRADE, THE PROSPECTS COULD HARDLY BE SET MORE FAIR FOR HER. JUST THINK. DURING HER WORKING LIFE SHE WILL SEE THIS REGION TRANSFORMED. YOU CAN ALREADY FEEL IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD THE ECONOMIC PULSE. IN THE COMING YEARS ASIA IS SET TO TRANSFORM ITSELF INTO THE WORLD'S ECONOMIC HEART. REPULSE BAY AND HER CREWS WILL WITNESS IT HAPPEN AS ALL OF YOU, THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY OF HONG KONG, HELP TO MAKE IT HAPPEN. I WANT THIS EVENING TO SALUTE YOU BOTH.

/THIS IS

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THIS IS, I SUPPOSE, THE MOST BUSINESS-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY IN THE WORLD. IT IS A COMMUNITY IN WHICH EVERYONE SEEMS TO UNDERSTAND WHAT REALLY MAKES AN ECONOMY TICK. AND IT'S A COMMUNITY IN WHICH EVERYONE PLAYS A PART IN CREATING OUR SUCCESS STORY. THE STORY OF A VIBRANT, SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE MARKET ECONOMY, WHICH EMBRACES CHANGE; CHANGE IN EVERY SECTOR RATHER THAN REJECTING IT.

SO WHEN YOU SALUTE BUSINESS YOU SALUTE HONG KONG, AND WHEN YOU TOAST HONG KONG YOU TOAST BUSINESS.

AND IT'S IN THAT SPIRIT OF ENTHUSIASTIC REALISM AND CHEERFUL AMITY, I ASK EVERYONE TO RAISE THEIR GLASSES AND DRINK A TOAST TO THE CORE OF OUR SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE AND SUCCESSFUL ECONOMY, TO THE CONTINUING REASON FOR OUR ABILITY TO SUSTAIN CIVILISED VALUES. THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY OF HONG KONG.

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SPEECH BY SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SZE,
ON THE MOTION ON POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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MR DEPUTY PRESIDENT,

WE HAVE SEEN TODAY ONE OF THE MOST LIVELY DEBATES IN THIS CHAMBER. I AM GRATEFUL TO MEMBERS FOR ALL THE VIEWS SO ELOQUENTLY EXPRESSED ON THIS VERY IMPORTANT SUBJECT. I CONGRATULATE MISS CHRISTINE LOH FOR HER POWERFUL SPEECH.

MEMBERS WHO HAVE SPOKEN HAVE PLACED EMPHASIS ON DIFFERENT ASPECTS IN THIS DEBATE. THIS IS ALSO EVIDENT FROM THE SUCCESSIVE AND, I WOULD SAY, IMAGINATIVE AMENDMENTS PROPOSED TO THE ORIGINAL MOTION. DESPITE THIS, I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT THERE IS INDEED A COMMON THEME IN ALL THE EXPOSITIONS, AND THAT IS : ANY CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM MUST BE OPEN, FAIR AND ACCEPTABLE TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG. AS THE GOVERNOR HAS SAID ON MANY OCCASIONS, THIS IS PRECISELY THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF HIS CONSTITUTIONAL PACKAGE. INDEED, IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S BOTTOM LINE. IT IS ALSO THE COMMON VIEW OF THIS COUNCIL AND, I FIRMLY BELIEVE, THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG.

THE OBJECT OF OUR PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL PACKAGE IS CLEAR. IT IS TO FIND A POINT OF BALANCE BETWEEN DEVELOPING A GREATER MEASURE OF DEMOCRACY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY ON THE ONE HAND, AND ON THE OTHER, MEETING THE GENERAL DESIRE FOR SUCH REFORMS TO BE COMPATIBLE, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, WITH THE BASIC LAW AND, THEREFORE, CAPABLE OF TRANSCENDING 1997.

/THE GOVERNOR

THE GOVERNOR HAS REPEATEDLY EMPHASISED, AS I POINTED OUT IN MY SPEECH IN THIS COUNCIL ON 14 OCTOBER THIS YEAR, THAT THESE PROPOSALS WERE PUT FORWARD FOR CONSULTATION WITHIN THE COMMUNITY OF HONG KONG AND WITH CHINA. DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT HAVE STARTED WITH THE VISIT OF THE GOVERNOR TO PEKING LAST MONTH. I ENTIRELY AGREE WITH MEMBERS THAT OUR DIALOGUE WITH THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT ON THIS MATTER MUST CONTINUE. BUT LET ME REPEAT ONE POINT. THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO QUESTION OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT MAKING A "SECRET DEAL" OVER THE HEADS OR BEHIND THE BACKS OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG, AND IMPOSE IT ON THIS COUNCIL AND THE COMMUNITY.

GIVEN THAT DOUBTS EXPRESSED BY SOME MEMBERS ON THE NATURE OF THE GOVERNOR'S PACKAGE, I THINK IT IS WORTH REPEATING THAT THE PRESENT PACKAGE IS A SET OF PROPOSALS, NOT DECISIONS. WE ENCOURAGE MEMBERS, AND THE COMMUNITY, TO CONTINUE TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON THESE PROPOSALS. IF ANYBODY HAS OTHER SPECIFIC PROPOSALS, LET US HEAR THEM AND LET US DISCUSS THEM LOGICALLY AND RATIONALLY. I HOPE THAT SUCH A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS IS TAKEN POSITIVELY. IT IS DEFINITELY NOT A THREAT. I HAVE HEARD RUMOURS AND ALLEGATIONS OF INTIMIDATION BUT CANNOT IMAGINE THAT ANYONE WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT IS THE CULPRIT. I AM ENCOURAGED THAT WE ARE BEGINNING TO SEE SOME IDEAS EMERGING FROM WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. I AGREE WITH SOME MEMBERS WHO HAVE MADE THE POINT THAT THE TIME FOR A FINAL DECISION IS NOT YET WITH US. MUCH MORE DISCUSSION WILL NO DOUBT TAKE PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY, AND IN THIS CHAMBER BEFORE THAT TIME COMES. UNFORTUNATELY BECAUSE OF THE NEED TO HAVE ARRANGEMENTS IN PLACE WELL BEFORE THE DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS IN 1994 AND THEIR ENABLING LEGISLATION WOULD HAVE TO BE IN PLACE MUCH EARLIER, IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR US TO ADOPT THE GREEN PAPER FOLLOWED BY THE WHITE PAPER PROCESS. WE DO NOT UNFORTUNATELY HAVE THE LUXURY OF TIME. IT IS THEREFORE ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT FOR THE PUBLIC TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS NOW.

OUR CURRENT INTENTION IS TO INTRODUCE INTO THIS COUNCIL, BY EARLY NEXT YEAR, LEGISLATION ON THE PRECISE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 1994-95 ELECTIONS. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REASSURE MR NGAI THAT THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WOULD BE ASKED TO ADVISE ON THESE PROPOSALS BEFORE THEY ARE PRESENTED TO THIS COUNCIL. MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL WILL THEN HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO JUDGE FOR THEMSELVES WHETHER THESE PROPOSALS TRULY REFLECT THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY, AND WHETHER THEY SERVE THE LONG-TERM INTEREST OF HONG KONG.

MR DEPUTY PRESIDENT, AS THE GOVERNOR HAS ALSO MADE CLEAR, WE INTEND TO BE FRANK AND TO BE OPEN WITH THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG. FOR IT IS THEIR FUTURE THAT WE ARE DISCUSSING, AND IT IS THEY WHO WILL BEAR THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR DECISIONS. CLEARLY, WE ALL ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO CONVERGENCE OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM BEFORE AND AFTER 1997; I ENTIRELY AGREE WITH MR BARROW AND MR IP THAT IT IS WRONG TO ASSUME THAT CONVERGENCE AND DEMOCRACY ARE IRRECONCILABLE OPPOSITES. MR BARROW IS RIGHT THAT CONVERGENCE IS NOT A ONE-SIDED PROCESS. THE ULTIMATE TEST IS WHETHER SUCH ARRANGEMENTS ARE OPEN, FAIR AND ACCEPTABLE TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG. THERE CAN BE NO QUESTION OF QUALIFYING THAT ACCEPTABILITY WHICH IS, AS I SAID, THE GOVERNMENT'S VERY BOTTOM LINE. FOR THAT REASON, EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ARE NOT ABLE TO SUPPORT MR CHIM PUI-CHUNG'S AMENDMENT. THANK YOU, MR DEPUTY PRESIDENT.

BRITISH GOVT SEEKS DEMOCRACY FOR HK

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THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT WAS FULLY CONSULTED AT ALL TIMES ABOUT THE POSITION BEING ADOPTED BY BRITISH GOVERNMENT WITH THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT ON CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS, THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SZE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LI WAH-MING, MR SZE SAID THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S AIM IN THESE DISCUSSIONS WAS TO SEEK THE MAXIMUM EXTENT OF DEMOCRACY FOR THE FUTURE CONSISTENT WITH THE EXPRESSED DESIRE FOR THE SMOOTH TRANSFER OF GOVERNMENT IN 1997.

MR SZE ADDED THAT THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WERE KEPT FULLY BRIEFED THROUGHOUT THESE DISCUSSIONS.

ON THE REASONS WHY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT DID NOT MENTION THE OMELCO CONSENSUS ON POLITICAL REFORM IN THE SINO-BRITISH DIPLOMATIC LETTERS, THE SECRETARY SAID THE OMELCO CONSENSUS WAS PASSED TO THE CHINESE SIDE AT AN EARLIER STAGE AND IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT IT COMMANDED WIDE PUBLIC SUPPORT IN HONG KONG.

"THE REASON WHY IT WAS NOT MENTIONED IN THE PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS IS THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS HAD BY THEN MOVED BEYOND THAT STAGE," MR SZE SAID.

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GOVERNOR'S SPENDING PROPOSALS WILL NOT CUT RESERVES

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THE SPENDING PROPOSALS ANNOUNCED IN THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS WILL NOT REDUCE THE LEVEL OF THE FISCAL RESERVES THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS SHOWN IN THE LAST BUDGET, IN IT'S MEDIUM RANGE FORECAST FOR 1992/93 TO 1996/97, THE SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR K Y YEUNG, SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID LI KWOK-PO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR YEUNG SAID AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, IT WAS NOT NECESSARY TO FORMULATE MORE CONCRETE GUIDELINES.

"HOW LARGE THE RESERVES SHOULD BE MUST INEVITABLY REMAIN A MATTER OF JUDGEMENT, WHICH WOULD BE INFLUENCED BY A NUMBER OF FACTORS," THE SECRETARY SAID.

THESE INCLUDED THE LEVEL OF ANNUALLY RECURRENT EXPENDITURE; THE LEVEL OF OUTSTANDING CONTRACTUAL COMMITMENTS; THE EXTENT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S CONTINGENT LIABILITIES; AND ANY COMMITMENT SUCH AS THAT UNDER THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW AIRPORT AND RELATED QUESTIONS.

MR YEUNG ALSO REASSURED THAT THE SPENDING PROPOSALS ON SOCIAL WELFARE AND OTHER KEY PROGRAMME AREAS OVER THE FORECAST PERIOD CONFORMED WITH THE BUDGETARY GUIDELINE THAT THE GROWTH RATE OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE WOULD NOT OUTPACE THE TREND GROWTH RATE OF THE ECONOMY.

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WITHDRAWAL OF CBF FROM EXCO ENDORSED

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE ENDORSED THE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSAL THAT THE COMMANDER BRITISH FORCES' EX-OFFICIO MEMBERSHIP ON THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL SHOULD CEASE, THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SZE, SAID.

HE SAID THE COMMANDER WOULD REMAIN FORMALLY A MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL UNTIL THE NECESSARY AMENDMENTS WERE MADE TO THE ROYAL INSTRUCTIONS TO ABOLISH HIS MEMBERSHIP.

"THERE IS THEREFORE NO QUESTION OF ANY VIOLATION TO CLAUSE II OF THE ROYAL INSTRUCTIONS," HE ADDED.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHIM PUI-CHUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR SZE SAID THE COMMANDER HAD AGREED THAT HE WOULD NOT NORMALLY ATTEND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETINGS IN THE INTERIM.

THIS WILL NOT IN ANY WAY AFFECT THE COUNCIL'S OPERATION, HE SAID, ADDING THAT THERE WAS NO REQUIREMENT THAT MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MUST BE ATTENDED BY ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS.

MR SZE SAID IT WAS NOT UNCOMMON FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO ANNOUNCE, IN THE PUBLIC'S INTERESTS, CERTAIN POLICY DECISIONS BEFORE THE RELEVANT LEGAL PROVISION WAS IN PLACE.

"PROVIDING THE PUBLIC WITH TIMELY INFORMATION ON GOVERNMENT'S DECISIONS IMPROVES, RATHER THAN WEAKENS, THE GOVERNMENT'S CREDIBILITY," HE SAID.

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MITIGATION MEASURES TO IMPROVE FLOODING

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AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IN DETERMINING THE PHASING AND DESIGN OF FLOOD MITIGATION PROJECTS IS THAT FLOODING PROBLEM SHOULD NOT BE WORSENERD DURING THE PROGRESS OF WORK.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR WORKS, MR JAMES BLAKE, IN A REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ZACHARY WONG WAI-YIN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE GOVERNMENT HAD DEVISED BOTH LONG-TERM AND SHORT-TERM FLOOD MITIGATION PROJECTS TO IMPROVE THE FLOODING PROBLEM IN THE NORTHWEST NEW TERRITORIES.

MR BLAKE SAID THE LONG-TERM WORKS TO MITIGATE FLOODING THERE COMPRISED RIVER TRAINING SCHEMES AND VILLAGE FLOOD PUMPING SCHEMES.

SPECIFIC WORKS WERE CARRIED OUT IN TIN SHUI WAI, YUEN LONG, KAM TIN, NGAU TAM MEI AND SAN TIN.

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THE WORKS WERE SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION BY THE END OF 1999 IN TIN SHUI WAI, 1998 IN YUEN LONG AND KAM TIN, 1997 IN NGAU TAM MEI AND 1999 IN SAN TIN.

DURING CONSTRUCTION THERE WOULD BE CONTRACTUAL PROVISIONS FOR THE WORKS NOT TO INTERFERE WITH THE FREE FLOW OF THE EXISTING DRAINAGE SYSTEM AND FOR CONSTRUCTION SEQUENCES AND TEMPORARY WORKS TO RECEIVE INDEPENDENT CHECKS BY THE RESIDENT ENGINEERS.

"THEY WILL BE PARTICULARLY WATCHFUL TO ENSURE THAT THESE CONTRACTUAL PROVISIONS ARE COMPLIED WITH, ESPECIALLY DURING THE WET SEASON," HE SAID.

HE SAID IT WOULD TAKE SOME TIME FOR THE BENEFITS OF THE LONG-TERM FLOOD MITIGATION PROJECTS TO BE REALISED.

MEANWHILE, THE GOVERNMENT WAS UNDERTAKING A VARIETY OF SHORT-TERM FLOOD MITIGATION MEASURES.

THE SHORT-TERM FLOOD MITIGATION MEASURES INCLUDED FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT, RIVER MAINTENANCE, LOCAL DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS AND A FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM.

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PLUTONIUM CARRIER WILL NOT NAVIGATE CLOSE TO HK
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE COURSE OF THE PLUTONIUM CARRIER "AKATSUKI MARU" WILL BRING IT CLOSE TO HONG KONG.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MS ELIZABETH BOSHER, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHRISTINE LOH KUNG-WAI IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MS BOSHER SAID ASSURANCES HAD BEEN GIVEN BY THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT THAT SHOULD THE CARRIER ENTER THE SOUTH CHINA SEA, IT WOULD, IN NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, REMAIN IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS AND NOT NAVIGATE CLOSER THAN 200 MILES TO THE TERRITORY.

THE JAPANESE VESSEL IS CARRYING A CARGO OF RADIOACTIVE PLUTONIUM FROM FRANCE TO JAPAN.

SHE SAID HONG KONG PORT AUTHORITIES WOULD, IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS, BE ENTITLED TO DENY ENTRY INTO HONG KONG WATERS OF ANY VESSEL DEEMED TO POSE A GRAVE AND IMMINENT THREAT TO THE SAFETY OF THE PORT OR TO THE ENVIRONMENT.

SHE SAID THE NUMBER OF IMPORT LICENCES ISSUED FOR RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCES TRANSHIPPED OR LANDED IN THE LAST TWO YEARS WAS 1,140 (IN 1990) AND 1,180 (IN 1991) RESPECTIVELY.

THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THESE WERE IN RESPECT OF MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT REQUIRED BY HOSPITALS AND BY LABORATORIES IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

/FURTHER CONTROLS

FURTHER CONTROLS ON TOXIC MATERIALS ARE PROVIDED UNDER THE DANGEROUS GOODS ORDINANCE, THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (SAFETY) ORDINANCE AND THE WASTE DISPOSAL ORDINANCE, DEPENDING ON THEIR NATURE.

SHE ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON THE SHIPMENT OF RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCES WAS NOT AFFECTED BY THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF BRITAIN.

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COMPANY INVESTIGATION POWER UNDER REVIEW
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THERE HAVE BEEN ON-GOING DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE SECURITIES AND FUTURES COMMISSION AND THE ADMINISTRATION ON SOME PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS TO ALLOW THE POWERS OF INVESTIGATION TO BE EXERCISED MORE EFFECTIVELY.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS, MR DAVID NENDICK, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON EMILY LAU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR NENDICK SAID MEMBERS WOULD BE ABLE TO EXAMINE THE DETAILED PROPOSALS ON THE POWER OF INVESTIGATION UNDER THE RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE AND/OR OTHER ORDINANCES WHEN A BILL IS SUBMITTED TO LEGCO.

MR NENDICK SAID UNTIL CONCRETE PROPOSALS WERE DEVELOPED, IT WAS PREMATURE TO SAY WHETHER OR NOT ANY FURTHER LEVY, IN ADDITION TO THE PRESENT TRANSACTION AND THE SPECIAL LEVIES WOULD HAVE TO BE ENVISAGED TO FUND THE INVESTIGATION WORK.

"BUT I AM CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT THE HONG KONG SECURITIES MARKETS REMAIN COMPETITIVE AS FAR AS INTERMEDIATION COSTS ARE CONCERNED," HE SAID.

THERE WERE THREE INSPECTIONS CONDUCTED OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS UNDER THE SECURITIES ORDINANCE.

THE TOTAL COSTS FOR THE THREE INSPECTIONS AMOUNTED TO ABOUT \$47 MILLION AND THE TIME TAKEN BY THE INSPECTORS TO COMPLETE THEIR TASKS VARIED FROM SEVEN-AND-A-HALF MONTHS TO FOUR YEARS AND TWO MONTHS.

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ADEQUATE AIR SERVICE BETWEEN HONG KONG AND TAIWAN
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THE EXISTING AIR PASSENGER AND FREIGHT SERVICES BETWEEN HONG KONG AND TAIWAN ARE GENERALLY ADEQUATE TO COPE WITH CURRENT DEMANDS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ELIZABETH BOSHER, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HUANG CHEN-YA IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ON WHETHER IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR SUCH SERVICES WILL BE CONTEMPLATED, MRS BOSHER SAID THE PLANNING OF ADDITIONAL SERVICES TO MEET INCREASING DEMAND WAS A MATTER FOR THE AIRLINES IN WHICH GOVERNMENT DID NOT INTERVENE.

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LAND RESUMPTION PROCEDURES FAIR AND REASONABLE

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THE CURRENT LAND RESUMPTION PROCEDURES, BOTH STATUTORY AND ADMINISTRATIVE, ARE CONSIDERED TO BE FAIR AND REASONABLE, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHIM PUI-CHUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR EASON EXPLAINED THAT PROPERTY OWNERS WERE OFFERED COMPENSATION BASED ON THE MARKET VALUE OF THEIR PROPERTIES.

IF THEY DO NOT AGREE WITH THE AMOUNT OF COMPENSATION OFFERED, THEY HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPEAL TO THE LANDS TRIBUNAL FOR A DETERMINATION, SHE ADDED.

"THE ADMINISTRATION PLANS TO REVIEW THE CROWN LANDS RESUMPTION ORDINANCE TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE RESULTS OF THE CURRENT REVIEW OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE SINCE THE TWO ORDINANCES ARE CLOSELY CONNECTED.

"EXPERIENCE FROM PREVIOUS LAND RESUMPTIONS WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT," HE SAID.

REGARDING THE APPLICATION OF THE CROWN LANDS RESUMPTION ORDINANCE, MR EASON SAID THE SYSTEM HAD BEEN OPERATING SATISFACTORILY FOR MANY YEARS.

THERE APPEARS TO BE NO NEED FOR STATUTORY GUIDELINES TO HELP THE DETERMINATION OF WHAT CONSTITUTES A 'PUBLIC PURPOSE' WHEN APPLYING SECTION 2(D) OF THE ORDINANCE, HE SAID.

GENERALLY, PROPOSALS FOR RESUMPTION ARE ONLY PUT TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS OR TOWN PLANS.

"ADVICE FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS IS INVARIABLY SOUGHT BEFORE RESUMPTION PROPOSALS ARE SUBMITTED TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL," MR EASON SAID.

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REVIEW TO IMPROVE LAND USE UNDERWAY

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A REVIEW OF THE APPLICATION OF THE PROVISIONS INTRODUCED BY THE TOWN PLANNING (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE 1991 TO IMPROVE CONTROL OVER HAPHAZARD LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE RURAL AREAS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES HAS BEEN CONDUCTED, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON EDWARD HO, MR EASON SAID AREAS COVERED BY THE REVIEW ALSO INCLUDED THE STORAGE OF CONTAINERS AND OTHER MATERIALS ON AGRICULTURAL LAND.

HOWEVER, MR EASON SAID IT WAS A LITTLE TOO EARLY TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE NEW PROVISIONS, SINCE LAND OWNERS AND OPERATORS COULD APPLY TO THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD FOR PLANNING PERMISSION TO USE LAND NOT ZONED FOR OPEN STORAGE FOR THAT PURPOSE.

"THEY CAN ALSO SEEK A REVIEW AND APPEAL IF THEIR APPLICATIONS ARE NOT APPROVED," HE ADDED.

NEVERTHELESS, HE SAID THE NEW PROVISIONS HAD AT PRESENT COME TO PUBLIC ATTENTION AND WERE HELPING THE PROCESS OF DETECTING AND CONTROLLING NEW UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENT AND CONTAINER AND OTHER OPEN STORAGE ON AGRICULTURAL LAND AND PREVENTING THE PROBLEM WORSENING.

"THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR PROGRESS AND REPORT TO THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD," HE SAID.

WITHIN THE 31 DEVELOPMENT PERMISSION AREAS WHICH HAD SO FAR BEEN DESIGNATED, 53 CASES OF UNAUTHORISED OPEN STORAGE USES WERE DETECTED, AND 232 WARNING LETTERS WERE ISSUED.

IN SOME CASES THE UNAUTHORISED USES CEASED UPON RECEIPT OF THE WARNING LETTERS; AND ONLY EIGHT ENFORCEMENT NOTICES HAD TO BE ISSUED. IN 16 CASES PLANNING PERMISSION WAS SOUGHT.

ON WHETHER THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENTS AND THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT HAVE SUFFICIENT STAFF AND RESOURCES TO ENFORCE THE SAID LEGISLATION, MR EASON SAID BOTH DEPARTMENTS HAVE CREATED OR ARE CREATING NEW POSTS TO SUPPORT APPLICATION OF THE NEW PROVISIONS SINCE THEIR ENACTMENT IN JANUARY LAST YEAR; AND INTENDED TO CREATE MORE POSTS NEXT YEAR.

"THE NEED TO ALLOCATE MORE STAFF RESOURCES TO THIS TASK IS KEPT UNDER REVIEW AND WILL BE CONSIDERED IF NECESSARY, AS USUAL IN THE LIGHT OF OTHER PRIORITIES AND THE OVERALL LIMITS ON WHAT CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE.

"IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE RESOURCES PROVIDED SO FAR ARE SUFFICIENT TO MAINTAIN CURRENT LEVELS OF ENFORCEMENT," MR EASON ADDED.

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LDC INSPECTS ACQUIRED BUILDINGS REGULARLY

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THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION REGULARLY INSPECTS BUILDINGS IT HAS ACQUIRED AND GENERALLY WILL KEEP THEM UNDER REPAIR UNTIL THEY ARE REDEVELOPED.

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

MR EASON SAID WHERE THEIR CONDITION WARRANTED IT, BUILDINGS, ONCE VACATED, WOULD BE DEMOLISHED PROVIDED THIS COULD BE DONE WITHOUT AFFECTING ADJACENT BUILDINGS.

MR EASON SAID THERE WERE NO RECORDS WHICH SHOWED SPECIFICALLY THAT STRUCTURALLY UNSAFE BUILDINGS HAD BEEN ACQUIRED BY THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.

HOWEVER, 15 BUILDINGS HAD BEEN CLOSED AND WERE BEING DEMOLISHED OR WERE AWAITING DEMOLITION IN AREAS TO BE REDEVELOPED BY THE CORPORATION.

MR EASON NOTED THAT THE MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS, INCLUDING THOSE WITHIN AREAS DESIGNATED FOR URBAN RENEWAL, WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OWNERS.

PRE-WAR BUILDINGS IN THE URBAN AREA WERE INSPECTED BY BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE STAFF PERIODICALLY, HE ADDED.

THEY ALSO INVESTIGATE COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CONDITION OF BUILDINGS AND TAKE ACTION TO SECURE THEIR REPAIR, CLOSURE OR DEMOLITION UNDER SECTIONS 26 AND 27 OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE IF THEY ARE FOUND TO BE STRUCTURALLY UNSAFE, HE SAID.

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VULNERABLE SQUATTERS TO GO BY WET SEASON

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ALL OF THE ABOUT 6,000 NEW TERRITORIES SQUATTERS FOUND BY THE GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEERING OFFICE TO BE ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE TO LANDSLIPS DURING HEAVY RAIN WILL BE CLEARED BY THE NEXT WET SEASON, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ALBERT CHAN WAI-YIP IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR EASON SAID ABOUT 5,000 OF THESE HAD BEEN CLEARED TO DATE.

SQUATTERS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES ARE CLEARED EITHER WHEN THE LAND IS REQUIRED FOR PUBLIC WORKS OR ON SAFETY GROUNDS WHEN RECOMMENDED BY THE GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEERING OFFICE.

THE OFFICE IS CARRYING OUT A RE-INSPECTION OF THE NEW TERRITORIES SQUATTER AREAS PREVIOUSLY COVERED BY THE STUDIES BETWEEN 1988 AND 1991, HE SAID.

"THIS WILL BE COMPLETED BY JUNE 1993 AND ADDITIONAL AREAS WILL BE INSPECTED THEREAFTER.

"FURTHER CLEARANCES ON SAFETY GROUNDS ARE LIKELY TO FOLLOW," MR EASON SAID.

AS AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER, THERE WERE ABOUT 414,000 SQUATTER STRUCTURES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, OF WHICH SOME 88,000 WERE USED FOR DWELLING PURPOSES, HOUSING ABOUT 228,000 PEOPLE.

THE NUMBER OF SQUATTER STRUCTURES FOR DOMESTIC USE ON STEEP SLOPES IS AROUND 16,000.

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TELEPHONE INTERCEPTION APPLICATIONS CAREFULLY CONSIDERED

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THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ASSURED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT ALL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED AND DECISIONS MADE REGARDING INTERCEPTION OF TELEPHONE TRANSMISSIONS WERE CONSIDERED CAREFULLY ON THEIR OWN MERITS.

ORDERS UNDER THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ORDINANCE TO INTERCEPT TELEPHONE TRANSMISSIONS ARE MADE ONLY WHEN THE PUBLIC INTEREST SO REQUIRES AND ONLY IN CASES INVOLVING THE PREVENTION OR DETECTION OF SERIOUS CRIME, INCLUDING CORRUPTION, OR IN THE INTERESTS OF THE SECURITY OF HONG KONG.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON GILBERT LEUNG KAM-HO, MR STRACHAN SAID: "SUCH ORDERS ARE AUTHORISED BY THE GOVERNOR, WHO HAS TO BE SATISFIED PERSONALLY THAT THESE CRITERIA ARE MET."

"IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE ON LAW AND ORDER AND SECURITY GROUNDS TO DISCLOSE DETAILS OF ORDERS MADE, INCLUDING NUMBERS," HE ADDED.

MR STRACHAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS LOOKING AT ITS LEGISLATION TO SEE IF IT WAS IN NEED OF MODERNISATION IN THE LIGHT OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS, AND A REVIEW WAS UNDER WAY.

IN THE REVIEW THE GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE CAREFULLY INTO ACCOUNT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LAW REFORM COMMISSION, WHICH IS AT PRESENT EXAMINING EXISTING HONG KONG LAWS AFFECTING PRIVACY, INCLUDING THE INTERCEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS, HE SAID.

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KINDERGARTEN FEE REMISSION SCHEME SET FOR IMPROVEMENT

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THE KINDERGARTEN FEE REMISSION SCHEME IS BEING IMPROVED TO ALLOW MORE PARENTS TO BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, THEREBY MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR THE OPERATORS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THEIR TEACHERS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG MAN-KWONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR CHAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT HELPED PARENTS WHO PASSED A MEANS TEST WITH FEE REMISSION, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEIR CHILDREN WERE IN NON-PROFIT-MAKING OR OTHER PRIVATE KINDERGARTENS.

THEY ARE REIMBURSED THE STANDARD FEE, EITHER IN FULL OR IN PART, DEPENDING ON NEED.

IN 1991/92, THESE REIMBURSEMENTS RANGED FROM \$100 TO \$400 A MONTH IN THE CASE OF SINGLE SESSION KINDERGARTENS OR \$200 TO \$800 A MONTH IN RESPECT OF WHOLE-DAY OPERATIONS.

"ABOUT 22 PER CENT OF ELIGIBLE PARENTS WERE REIMBURSED THE FULL STANDARD FEE," MR CHAN NOTED.

"TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS AMOUNT TO \$24.7 MILLION FOR THE PARENTS OF 10,988 CHILDREN, REPRESENTING 5.7 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL KINDERGARTEN ENROLMENT," HE ADDED.

MR CHAN TOLD THE COUNCILLORS THAT FUNDING FOR THE KINDERGARTEN FEE REMISSION SCHEME WOULD BE INCREASED FROM \$26 MILLION AT PRESENT TO \$63 MILLION BY 1996/97.

HOWEVER, HE SAID IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE AT THIS STAGE TO SAY HOW THIS INCREASE WOULD BE TRANSLATED INTO A NEW RATIO AS OTHER FACTORS TO BE INVOLVED IN THE CALCULATION WERE UNKNOWN.

THE GOVERNMENT ALSO SUBSIDISES NON-PROFIT-MAKING KINDERGARTENS BY REIMBURSING THEIR RENTS AND RATES. EXPENDITURE IN THIS RESPECT IN 1992/93 AMOUNTED TO \$113 MILLION.

THE SECRETARY SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S EXPENDITURE ON KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION TOTALLED \$83.7 MILLION IN 1989/90, \$93 MILLION IN 1990/91 AND \$128.9 MILLION IN 1991/92.

THE FIGURES REPRESENTED ONE PER CENT, 0.9 PER CENT AND 1.1 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL BUDGET FOR THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IN THE SAME PERIOD RESPECTIVELY.

MR CHAN ALSO CITED STATISTICS SHOWING THERE WERE 86,867 CHILDREN AGED SIX, WHICH IS THE NORMAL AGE OF ENTRY INTO PRIMARY ONE, IN 1989, 81,992 IN 1990 AND 77,043 IN 1991.

IN ADDITION, THERE WERE 201,750 TWO TO SIX-YEAR-OLDS ENROLLED IN VARIOUS KINDERGARTENS GRADES INCLUDING NURSERY CLASSES, LOWER KG CLASSES AND UPPER KG CLASSES IN 1989, 196,466 IN 1990 AND 193,658 IN 1991.

DURING THE SAME THREE-YEAR PERIOD, THERE WERE 791, 785 AND 767 NON-PROFIT-MAKING AND OTHER PRIVATE KINDERGARTENS IN HONG KONG RESPECTIVELY.

TOGETHER, THEY PROVIDED 224,267 PLACES IN 1989, 224,718 IN 1990 AND 223,376 IN 1991.

THE ACTUAL ENROLMENT IN THE THREE YEARS WAS 201,750, 196,466 AND 193,658 RESPECTIVELY.

AS TO THE QUESTION WHETHER CHILDREN ENROLLED IN PRIMARY 1 DIRECT WITHOUT COMPLETING KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION AND MORE LIKELY TO HAVE LEARNING PROBLEMS, MR CHAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT CARRIED OUT ANY SPECIFIC STUDY TO EXAMINE THIS ISSUE.

"THE PRESENT PRIMARY 1 CURRICULUM DOES NOT PRESUPPOSE THAT PUPILS STARTING THEIR SCHOOLING HAVE ANY PRIOR ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE," HE SAID.

"WE ARE AWARE, HOWEVER, THAT ONE RESEARCH PROJECT, WHICH IS BEING UNDERTAKEN BY THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG, MAY THROW LIGHT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KINDERGARTEN EXPERIENCE AND POSSIBLE LEARNING PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY PRIMARY 1 PUPILS.

"THIS STUDY HAS STARTED BUT IS NOT EXPECTED TO PUBLISH ITS FINDINGS ON THE ISSUE IN QUESTION FOR SOME TIME," MR CHAN ADDED.

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MEASURES TO CURB ILLEGAL CAR RACING

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THE POLICE TASK FORCES HAVE MOUNTED SOME 60 SPECIAL OPERATIONS TO COUNTER ILLEGAL CAR RACING ACTIVITIES SINCE JANUARY 1990, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON JAMES TO KUN-SUN, MR STRACHAN SAID OTHER MEASURES TAKEN INCLUDED THE SETTING UP OF TRAFFIC PATROLS, RADAR SPEED DETECTION AND ROAD BLOCK CHECKS TO DETECT OFFENDERS.

THE PUBLIC MADE 112 COMPLAINTS IN 1990, 89 IN 1991 AND 90 IN THE FIRST 10 MONTHS OF THIS YEAR TO THE POLICE ABOUT NOISE NUISANCE CAUSED BY CARS.

SOME OF THESE COMPLAINTS MAY RELATE TO ILLEGAL CAR RACING. ALL THESE COMPLAINTS WERE RECEIVED ON THE KOWLOON SIDE OF THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL.

MR STRACHAN SAID PRINCESS MARGARET ROAD WAS POPULAR AMONG ILLEGAL CAR RACERS, ESPECIALLY DURING THE EARLY HOURS OF WEEKENDS.

HE ADDED THAT THOSE WHO TOOK PART WERE FAIRLY WELL ORGANISED AND WERE EXTREMELY ALERT TO POLICE ACTION.

FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS SUSPECTED THAT THEY HAVE THEIR OWN TOWING TRUCKS TO CLEAR AWAY CARS THAT HAVE BROKEN DOWN.

THEY MAY ALSO HAVE THEIR OWN SPEED OBSERVATION, RADAR TRACKING DEVICES AND RADIO COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT TO MONITOR POLICE ACTION AGAINST THEM.

IT IS AN OFFENCE UNDER THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN CAR RACING AND THE MAXIMUM PENALTY IS A FINE OF \$10,000 AND IMPRISONMENT OF 12 MONTHS AS WELL AS DISQUALIFICATION TO HOLD A DRIVING LICENCE FOR 12 MONTHS UPON CONVICTION.

"OTHER TRAFFIC OFFENCES SUCH AS SPEEDING, RECKLESS DRIVING, DRIVING WHILST DISQUALIFIED AND DRIVING WITHOUT INSURANCE, MAY BE INVOKED AS APPROPRIATE," MR STRACHAN SAID.

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CONTAINER PORT PARKING PROBLEM TO BE RELIEVED
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THE PARKING PROBLEM ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONTAINER PORT SHOULD BE RELIEVED OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS WITH THE COMMISSIONING OF TERMINALS 8 AND 9, WHICH WILL HAVE 52 HECTARES OF BACK-UP LAND, INCLUDING SPACE FOR HEAVY GOODS VEHICLE PARKING.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LI WAH-MING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID MAKING THE AVAILABILITY OF FIXED PARKING SPACES A LICENSING REQUIREMENT FOR HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES AND CONTAINER TRUCKS WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO ENFORCE.

"INSTEAD, THE ADMINISTRATION IS CONCENTRATING ON INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF PARKING SPACES AS A BETTER SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM."

MR LEUNG SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD PLANNED TO PROVIDE ABOUT 2,000 PARKING SPACES FOR HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES IN THE COMING YEAR.

"CONTAINER TERMINAL OPERATORS HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED TO PROVIDE SPACES WITHIN THEIR TERMINALS FOR OVERNIGHT PARKING, AND ONE OPERATOR HAS ALREADY AGREED TO DESIGNATE 300 SUCH SPACES," HE ADDED.

MR LEUNG SAID THE POLICE INVARIABLY TOOK ENFORCEMENT ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL PARKING, PARTICULARLY WHERE THIS CAUSED TRAFFIC CONGESTION OR POSED A DANGER TO PEDESTRIANS AND OTHER ROAD USERS.

"THEY INTENSIFY ENFORCEMENT MEASURES IN BLACKSPOT AREAS WHERE POSSIBLE, COMMENSURATE WITH THEIR MANPOWER RESOURCES AND OTHER PRIORITIES.

"CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN TO RAISING THE LEVEL OF FIXED PENALTY FINES FOR ILLEGAL PARKING AND OTHER OFFENCES," HE ADDED.

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STOP LIST SYSTEM FUNCTIONS WELL
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THE GOVERNMENT SEES NO REASON TO CHANGE THE PRESENT STOP LIST SYSTEM WHICH OPERATES LAWFULLY, FLEXIBLY AND SUCCESSFULLY IN THE PURSUIT AND APPREHENSION OF CRIMINALS, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON SIMON IP SIK-ON, MR STRACHAN SAID THE ONLY PEOPLE STOPPED WHEN LEAVING HONG KONG BY IMMIGRATION OFFICERS BECAUSE OF THEIR NAMES BEING ON THE STOP LIST WERE PEOPLE ACTUALLY SUBJECT TO ARREST WARRANTS OR IMMEDIATE ARREST, OR WHO WERE REASONABLY SUSPECTED EITHER LOCALLY OR THROUGH INTERNATIONAL INTERPOL NOTIFICATION, OF TRYING TO EVADE THE DUE PROCESS OF LAW.

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84 LAWS TO GO BEFORE LEGCO THIS SESSION

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THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT 84 ITEMS OF LEGISLATION WERE CURRENTLY SCHEDULED FOR INTRODUCTION INTO THE COUNCIL IN THIS LEGISLATIVE SESSION, INCLUDING THE NINE BILLS WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN INTRODUCED.

REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MARTIN BARROW, HE SAID THE CHIEF SECRETARY'S OFFICE WAS ARRANGING FOR A LIST OF THESE ITEMS TO BE CIRCULATED TO MEMBERS FOR INFORMATION.

"THE LIST IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE, SINCE NEW ITEMS MAY BECOME NECESSARY AND EXISTING ITEMS MAY BE POSTPONED OR DROPPED ALTOGETHER," MR MATHEWS SAID.

HE SAID 64 PROPOSED ITEMS OF LEGISLATION HAD NOT BEEN ALLOCATED A LEGISLATIVE SLOT IN THIS SESSION, EITHER BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT CONSIDERED TO MERIT PRIORITY OR BECAUSE THEY WERE UNLIKELY TO BE READY FOR INTRODUCTION IN THIS SESSION.

MR MATHEWS SAID: "WE HAVE EMBARKED ON AN 'ADAPTATION OF LAWS' EXERCISE TO REVIEW, AND IF NECESSARY, AMEND EXISTING LEGISLATION TO ENSURE ITS COMPATIBILITY WITH THE BASIC LAW WHEN THAT LAW COMES INTO FORCE ON JULY 1, 1997.

"THIS EXERCISE IS CARRIED OUT IN PARALLEL WITH THE HANDLING OF OTHER LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS."

HE SAID AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, ADAPTATION WOULD BE CARRIED OUT IN THE COURSE OF REGULAR AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING LEGISLATION, IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF ADAPTATION BILLS THAT WERE NEEDED.

PROBLEMS OF ADAPTATION THAT APPLIED ACROSS THE BOARD (FOR EXAMPLE, CHANGES IN TERMINOLOGY) MIGHT BE DEALT WITH IN A SINGLE ADAPTATION BILL.

MR MATHEWS SAID THE PROGRESS OF ALL DRAFT LEGISLATION WAS CAREFULLY MONITORED IN ORDER TO MAKE SURE THAT DEADLINES WERE MET AND THAT THE DRAFTS WERE HANDLED EFFICIENTLY.

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RULES TO GOVERN VENTILATING SYSTEMS IN BUILDINGS

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THERE ARE REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE VENTILATING SYSTEMS INSTALLED IN PRIVATE BUILDINGS WHICH INVOLVE THE USE OF DUCTING OR TRUNKING PASSING THROUGH COMPARTMENTS, INCLUDING THOSE IN UNDERGROUND PUBLIC CAR PARKS.

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

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THE BUILDING (VENTILATING SYSTEMS) REGULATIONS SPECIFY SAFETY REQUIREMENTS IN RESPECT OF THE CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS USED IN THE VENTILATING SYSTEMS TO MINIMISE FIRE HAZARDS.

MR EASON SAID THE OWNER OF THE VENTILATING SYSTEM WAS REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN IT IN SAFE CONDITION AND EFFICIENT WORKING ORDER AT ALL TIMES.

A REGISTERED VENTILATION CONTRACTOR HAS TO BE EMPLOYED TO INSPECT THE DAMPERS, FILTERS AND PRECIPITATORS FITTED IN THE SYSTEM AT INTERVALS NOT EXCEEDING 12 MONTHS, HE ADDED.

"FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THIS REQUIREMENT IS AN OFFENCE PUNISHABLE BY A FINE OF \$2,000 ON CONVICTION," HE SAID.

AFTER THE INSPECTION, THE CONTRACTOR IS REQUIRED TO ISSUE CERTIFICATES, WITH COPIES TO THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES, TO THE OWNERS CONFIRMING THAT THE DAMPERS, FILTERS AND PRECIPITATORS ARE IN SAFE AND EFFICIENT WORKING ORDER.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENT IS AN OFFENCE PUNISHABLE ON CONVICTION BY A FINE OF \$2,000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR SIX MONTHS, HE SAID.

THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENFORCING THE PROVISION.

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DISABLED ENCOURAGED TO JOIN DAILY ACTIVITIES

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DISABLED PERSONS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED AS FAR AS POSSIBLE TO TAKE PART IN DAILY ACTIVITIES, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ZACHARY WONG WAI-YIN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MRS WONG SAID THE ULTIMATE GOAL WAS TO ACHIEVE INTEGRATION OF DISABLED PERSONS INTO THE COMMUNITY.

MRS WONG NOTED THAT NO RATIO HAD BEEN SET ON THE NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES FOR DIFFERENT TARGET GROUPS.

SHE POINTED OUT THAT CULTURAL ACTIVITIES WERE ORGANISED MAINLY BY THE URBAN AND REGIONAL COUNCILS FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC, INCLUDING DISABLED PERSONS WHO HAD ACCESS TO MOST OF THE VENUES.

IN RESPECT OF RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES ORGANISED BY THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS FOR DISABLED PERSONS, THE URBAN COUNCIL HAD SPENT \$1.42 MILLION TO ORGANISE A TOTAL OF 466 ACTIVITIES WITH 26,670 PARTICIPANTS IN THE PAST THREE YEARS.

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DURING THE SAME PERIOD, THE REGIONAL COUNCIL HAD ORGANISED 272 ACTIVITIES FOR 13,752 DISABLED PERSONS, AND A TOTAL OF \$518,000 WERE SPENT AS DIRECT PROGRAMME EXPENSES.

THESE ACTIVITIES INCLUDED EXCURSIONS, FUN DAYS, CAMPING AND SPORTS TRAINING COURSES.

APART FROM THESE, MRS WONG SAID THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT IN COLLABORATION WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS ORGANISED SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DISABLED PERSONS THROUGH SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL CENTRES, SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS AND SOCIAL CLUBS.

"THEIR ABLE-BODIED RELATIVES AND FRIENDS ALSO TAKE PART IN SUCH ACTIVITIES," SHE ADDED.

IN THE PAST THREE YEARS, 225,260 PERSONS HAD PARTICIPATED IN DAILY ACTIVITIES ORGANISED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT WHILE 348,300 PERSONS HAD TAKEN PART IN 9,470 SPECIAL ACTIVITIES. THE EXPENDITURE INCURRED TALLING \$34.5 MILLION.

IN ADDITION, MRS WONG SAID WORK GROUP UNITS AND YOUTH OFFICES OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT ALSO ORGANISED PROGRAMMES FOR DISABLED AND ABLE-BODIED PERSONS.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSON/TIMES OF DISABLED PARTICIPANTS IN THESE PROGRAMMES AMOUNTS TO 38,972 OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS.

MRS WONG SAID: "THE INTEREST CULTIVATED BY SPORTS TRAINING COURSES ORGANISED BY THE TWO MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND THE TALENTS OF OUR DISABLED ATHELETES HAVE ENABLED THEM TO ACHIEVE RESOUNDING SUCCESS IN INTERNATIONAL SPORTS EVENT."

"A TOTAL OF 344 GOLD, 227 SILVER AND 171 BRONZE MEDALS HAVE BEEN WON OVER THE LAST DECADE," MRS WONG SAID.

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QUALITY OF LEGCO DOCUMENTS ASSURED

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GOVERNMENT OFFICES WILL BE REMINDED THAT WRITTEN MATERIAL GIVEN TO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS SHOULD BE OF A GOOD LEGIBLE QUALITY, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, SAID.

"WE ARE AWARE THAT ON OCCASIONS THE DOCUMENTS PRESENTED TO MEMBERS ARE QUITE DIFFICULT TO READ BECAUSE OF THE POOR QUALITY OF FAXES OR AS A RESULT OF FAXING A FACSIMILE COPY," HE SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MARTIN BARROW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), SIR DAVID SAID THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE OMELCO SECRETARIAT HAD ALSO TAKEN THE NECESSARY STEPS TO ENSURE THE MATERIAL WAS OF A GOOD LEGIBLE QUALITY.

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BILL TO ABOLISH DEATH PENALTY INTRODUCED

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THE CRIMES (AMENDMENT) (NO.3) BILL 1992 PROPOSING TO REMOVE CAPITAL PUNISHMENT FROM THE STATUTE BOOKS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ONCE THE BILL BECOMES LAW, ALL THOSE WHO ARE THEN UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH WILL HAVE THEIR SENTENCES COMMUTED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT.

CURRENTLY THERE ARE 32 PRISONERS WHO FALL INTO THIS CATEGORY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, EXPLAINED THAT CAPITAL PUNISHMENT WAS AT PRESENT THE MANDATORY PENALTY FOR MURDER, TREASON AND PIRACY WITH VIOLENCE.

THE DEATH PENALTY MAY ALSO BE IMPOSED BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL UNDER THE EMERGENCY REGULATIONS, HE ADDED.

MR STRACHAN SAID THE BILL SOUGHT TO MAKE ALL THE ADJUSTMENTS TO LEGISLATION NECESSARY TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY.

IN ITS PLACE, IT IS PROPOSED THAT LIFE IMPRISONMENT SHOULD BE THE MANDATORY SENTENCE FOR MURDER, TREASON AND PIRACY WITH VIOLENCE.

ALSO MANDATORY LIFE IMPRISONMENT IS PROPOSED TO BE THE MAXIMUM SENTENCE THAT MAY BE PROVIDED FOR BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL UNDER THE EMERGENCY REGULATIONS.

IN CASES WHERE A SENTENCE OF LIFE IMPRISONMENT IS IMPOSED, THE GOVERNOR WILL CALL ON THE TRIAL JUDGE TO GIVE HIM A WRITTEN REPORT INDICATING ANY SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS OR MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, WHAT IN HIS VIEW SHOULD BE THE MINIMUM TERM OF IMPRISONMENT TO BE SERVED.

HE SAID THIS WAS CURRENTLY THE PRACTICE WITH REGARD TO SENTENCES OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

THE BOARD OF REVIEW WILL REVIEW LIFE SENTENCES INITIALLY AFTER FIVE YEARS AND SUBSEQUENTLY EVERY TWO YEARS, UNLESS THE GOVERNOR DIRECTS THAT A CASE SHOULD BE REVIEWED EARLIER AFTER HAVING CONSIDERED THE TRIAL JUDGE'S REPORT.

ON JUNE 26 LAST YEAR, THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VOTED IN FAVOUR OF THE INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATIVE MEASURES WHICH WOULD ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY AND REPLACE IT WITH LIFE IMPRISONMENT.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1992

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45 SPEAK ON POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT MOTION

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A TOTAL OF 45 LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS SPOKE IN A SIX-HOUR MOTION DEBATE ON THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF HONG KONG AT THE COUNCIL MEETING TONIGHT (WEDNESDAY).

THE MOTION PROPOSED BY THE HON CHRISTINE LOH AS AMENDED BY THE HON JIMMY MCGREGOR WAS PASSED. AN AMENDMENT MOVED BY THE HON CHIM PUI-CHUNG WAS DEFEATED.

WINDING UP THE DEBATE WAS THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SZE.

IN ADDITION, THE WATERWORKS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 WAS PASSED WITHOUT AMENDMENT.

ALSO PASSED WAS A MOTION MOVED UNDER THE TELEPHONE ORDINANCE BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ELIZABETH BOSHER.

TWO BILLS WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS. THEY WERE CRIMES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1992 AND LORD WILSON HERITAGE TRUST BILL. DEBATES ON THE BILLS WERE ADJOURNED.

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN,
SPEAKING TO THE PRESS AT THE AIRPORT
BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR CANADA TODAY

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GOVERNOR: GOOD AFTERNOON LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. AS I THINK YOU KNOW, I AM GOING ON A TEN-DAY VISIT TO CANADA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM. IT'S AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT VISIT FOR HONG KONG FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS. FIRST OF ALL, IN CANADA I AM GOING TO THE GALA DINNER WHICH WILL CLOSE THE EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE AND IMPORTANT FESTIVAL WHICH WE HAVE HELD IN CANADA. IT HAS PROVED I THINK ANOTHER OF THE VERY STRONG LINKS BETWEEN OUR COMMUNITIES. I'M LOOKING FORWARD OF COURSE TO SEEING MANY MEMBERS OF THE HONG KONG COMMUNITY IN CANADA WHO ARE MAKING SUCH A CONTRIBUTION TO THEIR NEW HOME AND I'M LOOKING FORWARD AS WELL TO MY TALKS WITH PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY AND WITH THE EXTERNAL AFFAIRS SECRETARY BARBARA MCDUGALL. SO IT'S A VERY IMPORTANT TRIP FOR ME TO CANADA BECAUSE THE RELATIONS BETWEEN CANADA AND HONG KONG ARE SO STRONG AND SO IMPORTANT. I'LL THEN BE GOING ON TO THE UNITED KINGDOM. IN THE UNITED KINGDOM THE MOST IMPORTANT OF MY FUNCTIONS IS TO ADDRESS A DINNER OF THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AT WHICH THERE WILL BE VERY MANY FRIENDS OF HONG KONG. I'M ALSO UNDERTAKING A NUMBER OF OTHER SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS, I'M MEETING THE PRIME MINISTER, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY AND OTHER MINISTERS AND TAKING PART IN A NUMBER OF TALKS AND DISCUSSIONS ABOUT HONG KONG. SO IT'S A VERY IMPORTANT TRIP, AND THEN BACK FOR A FEW DAYS AND THEN I HAVE AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO JAPAN. SO I'LL SEE YOU WHEN I COME BACK.

QUESTION: MR PATTEN WHAT SORT OF ADVICE WILL YOU BE SEEKING WHEN YOU MEET PRIME MINISTER MAJOR.

GOVERNOR: I'LL BE HAVING A GENERAL DISCUSSION ABOUT THE POSITION IN HONG KONG, ABOUT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND ABOUT OTHER MATTERS AS WELL. AS YOU KNOW, THE UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT IS WHOLLY BEHIND THE PROPOSALS WHICH HAVE BEEN PUT FORWARD BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT, AND LIKE US THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAY THAT IF OTHERS HAVE PROPOSALS WHICH THEY THINK ARE BETTER THAN OURS THEY SHOULD PUT THEM FORWARD SO THAT THE WHOLE COMMUNITY IN HONG KONG CAN SEE WHETHER THERE ARE ANY VIABLE ALTERNATIVES. LIKE ME, THEY ALSO TAKE THE VIEW THAT ANY PROPOSALS FOR THE 1995 ELECTIONS HAVE TO BE FIRST OF ALL FAIR, SECONDLY OPEN AND THIRDLY ACCEPTABLE TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG.

QUESTION: CAN YOU TELL US WHAT YOU HAVE TALKED WITH MR ZHOU NAM YESTERDAY?

GOVERNOR: I HAD A 45-MINUTE DISCUSSION WITH MR ZHOU NAM. I DON'T THINK, TO BE HONEST, THAT EITHER OF US WAS SURPRISED BY THE TERMS OF OUR DISCUSSION. I SAID TO MR ZHOU NAM ONCE AGAIN THAT IF THE CHINESE SIDE HAD ANY PROPOSALS TO PUT FORWARD FOR THE 1995 ELECTIONS ON, FOR EXAMPLE, FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES OR THE ELECTION COMMITTEE OR ANY OTHER MATTERS, I THOUGHT PEOPLE IN HONG KONG WOULD WELCOME A CONSTRUCTIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEBATE WHICH SEEMED TO ME TO BE THE BEST WAY OF DEALING WITH ISSUES WITH THE SERIOUSNESS AND RATIONALITY THAT THEY DESERVE. AND NOW I HOPE THAT WHILE I'M AWAY THE DEBATE WILL CONTINUE IN A CALM AND CONSTRUCTIVE AND REASONABLE WAY, AND THAT IF ANYBODY DOES HAVE ANY BETTER PROPOSAL TO PUT FORWARD THEY WILL PUT THEM FORWARD EITHER DURING MY ABSENCE OR SHORTLY AFTER I GET BACK.

QUESTION: DO YOU THINK THAT APPOINTED LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS SHOULD RESIGN IF THEY DO NOT SUPPORT YOUR PROPOSALS?

GOVERNOR: NO, THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IS AS IT IS. I NOTE THAT I THINK AT THE MOMENT MANY COUNCILLORS FROM ALL DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF ELECTION OR APPOINTMENT HAVE SUPPORTED VARIOUS ASPECTS OF MY PROPOSALS. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE WAS A VOTE THE OTHER DAY ABOUT THE PROPOSALS I HAD PUT FORWARD ON THE ELECTION COMMITTEE WHICH SUGGESTED THAT THERE WAS A GOOD DEAL OF SUPPORT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FOR THOSE PARTICULAR PROPOSALS, BUT THE FINAL VOTES IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WON'T COME FOR SOME TIME UNTIL THEY ARE ACTUALLY PRESENTED WITH REAL LEGISLATION. AND THEN THEY'LL HAVE TO MAKE UP THEIR MINDS AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMMUNITY AND AS LEADERS OF THE COMMUNITY, AND THEY'LL HAVE TO EXPLAIN THE DECISIONS THEY MAKE TO THE COMMUNITY.

QUESTION: ANY NEWS ON SODA? AND GARETH EVANS REMARKS?

GOVERNOR: NO, IF ANYBODY SEES SODA I HOPE THEY'LL EITHER BRING HER BACK TO GOVERNMENT HOUSE OR TAKE HER TO THE RSPCA. SHE'S A WONDERFUL LITTLE PUPPY AND WE VERY MUCH HOPE THAT WE'LL SEE HER AGAIN SOON.

AS FOR THE AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER'S REMARKS, HE IS AS YOU KNOW A VERY GOOD FRIEND TO HONG KONG. I THINK HE SAID IF ANYBODY TOOK OFFENCE AT HIS REMARKS THEN HE'LL APOLOGISE. BUT I THINK ALL OF US KNOW HIM AS A GOOD AND COMMITTED AND SINCERE FRIEND OF HONG KONG AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING HIM IN HONG KONG ON MANY FUTURE OCCASIONS. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

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ECONOMIC MISSION TO VIETNAM

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AN ECONOMIC MISSION, LED BY THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ANSON CHAN, AND JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE HONG KONG GENERAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, LEFT FOR VIETNAM TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE 35-MEMBER MISSION COMPRISES BUSINESSMEN FROM THE TRADING, FINANCIAL, RETAILING, MANUFACTURING, GARMENT AND TEXTILES, AND SERVICES SECTORS, AS WELL AS OFFICIALS FROM THE TRADE AND INDUSTRY BRANCH AND THE TRADE DEPARTMENT.

IN HANOI, THE DELEGATES WILL HAVE MEETINGS WITH THE MINISTRY OF TRADE, MINISTRY OF LIGHT INDUSTRY, STATE PLANNING COMMITTEE, THE STATE COMMITTEE FOR CO-OPERATION & INVESTMENT, AND THE VIETCOCHAMBER-HANOI.

FROM HANOI, THE MISSION, LED BY VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE HK GENERAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, MR WILLIAM FUNG, WILL GO TO HO CHI MINH CITY WHERE THEY WILL MEET THE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE OF HO CHI MINH CITY AND LEADING REPRESENTATIVES OF SEPZONE (SAIGON EXPORT PROCESSING JOINT) HEAD OFFICE.

MRS CHAN NOTED THAT HONG KONG WAS THE SECOND LARGEST INVESTOR IN VIETNAM IN TERMS OF INVESTMENT VALUE AND IT WOULD BE OF MUTUAL BENEFIT TO BOTH TERRITORIES TO FOSTER A CLOSER UNDERSTANDING OF EACH OTHER'S TRADE AND INVESTMENT REGIME.

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FORFEITURE OF SEIZED GOODS TO BE STREAMLINED

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A BILL THAT AIMS TO STREAMLINE THE PROCEDURES FOR THE FORFEITURE OF SEIZED GOODS WILL BE GAZETTED ON FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 13).

"THE IMPORT AND EXPORT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992, IF PASSED, WILL AMELIORATE THE PROBLEMS FACED BY THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT IN THE STORAGE AND DISPOSAL OF SEIZED ARTICLES," A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HOWEVER, HE STRESSED THAT THE AMENDMENTS WOULD NOT UNDERMINE THE PRINCIPLE OF FAIRNESS TO PARTIES CONCERNED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT OWING TO INCREASE IN ILLICIT TRADE AND SMUGGLING ACTIVITIES IN RECENT YEARS, THE QUANTITY OF GOODS SEIZED AND DETAINED HAD INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY.

"SINCE 1988 THE SPACE REQUIRED FOR STORING SEIZED ARTICLES HAS INCREASED FIVE TIMES AND ADDITIONAL STORAGE COSTS HAVE BEEN INCURRED.

"THIS HAS POSED AN INCREASING BURDEN ON THE DEPARTMENT," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"AMENDMENTS ARE PROPOSED TO ENABLE THE COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS AND EXCISE TO DISPOSE OF THOSE SEIZED ARTICLES WHICH ARE PERISHABLE OR DETERIORATING IN NATURE OR DIFFICULT TO STORE, PRIOR TO CONCLUSION OF ANY FORFEITURE PROCEEDINGS SUBJECT TO ADEQUATE CHECKS AND BALANCES," HE SAID.

AS FOR THE SERVING OF NOTICES OF SEIZURE, AT PRESENT THE COMMISSIONER IS OBLIGED TO SERVE NOTICES ON ALL PARTIES WHO APPEAR TO HIM TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE SEIZED GOODS.

"THERE ARE HOWEVER DIFFICULTIES IN SERVING NOTICES OF SEIZURE AND COURT SUMMONSES IF THE OFFENDERS ARE NOT RESIDENTS OF HONG KONG," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

AMENDMENTS ARE INTRODUCED TO STIPULATE CLEARLY THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THE COMMISSIONER NEEDS TO SERVE A NOTICE OF SEIZURE TO THE OWNER, AND AT THE SAME TIME, TO BROADEN THE CATEGORIES OF PERSONS WHO CAN MAKE A CLAIM TO THE COMMISSIONER AND TO THE MAGISTRATE IN A FORFEITURE HEARING.

"THIS WOULD ALLOW MORE EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES BY THE COMMISSIONER WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUITY," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

ON THE FORFEITURE PROCEEDINGS, HE NOTED THAT AT PRESENT AN AVERAGE OF ABOUT 12 MONTHS WAS REQUIRED TO CONCLUDE CRIMINAL AND FORFEITURE PROCEEDINGS FROM THE POINT OF SEIZURE.

"THE AMENDMENTS SEEK TO SHORTEN THE PROCEEDINGS BY SIX MONTHS WHERE THE CLAIMANT OF THE SEIZED GOODS IS ALSO THE DEFENDANT.

"THIS WOULD HELP ECONOMISE THE USE OF PUBLIC RESOURCES AND ADDRESS THE STORAGE PROBLEM," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

SEPARATELY, THE BILL ALSO SEEKS TO INCREASE THE MAXIMUM PENALTIES FOR OFFENCES RELATED TO STRATEGIC COMMODITIES SO AS TO PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE DETERRENT AGAINST ILLEGAL TRADE IN WEAPONS AND GOODS WITH MILITARY APPLICATIONS.

"STRATEGIC COMMODITIES OFFENCES TRIED ON INDICTMENT WILL ATTRACT A MAXIMUM PENALTY OF SEVEN YEARS' IMPRISONMENT AND AN UNLIMITED FINE; WHICH ARE IN LINE WITH THE PENALTIES IN OTHER COMMON LAW JURISDICTIONS," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE MAXIMUM PENALTY OF A FINE OF \$500,000 AND TWO YEARS' IMPRISONMENT FOR OFFENCES ON SUMMARY CONVICTION REMAINS UNCHANGED.

THE BILL IS EXPECTED TO BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON NOVEMBER 25.

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NEW POST OFFICE OPENS TODAY
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THE WAN TAU TONG POST OFFICE, A NEW BRANCH POST OFFICE LOCATED AT SHOP CX28, SHOPPING CENTRE, WAN TAU TONG ESTATE, TAI PO, NEW TERRITORIES, OPENED FOR BUSINESS AT NOON TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THIS POST OFFICE PROVIDES THE NORMAL RANGE OF COUNTER SERVICES. THE BUSINESS HOURS ARE:

MONDAY TO FRIDAY: 9.30 AM TO 1 PM

2 PM TO 5 PM

SATURDAY : 9.30 AM TO 1 PM

THE TELEPHONE NUMBER IS 656 7717.

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL, MR MICHELANGELO PAGLIARI, TAI PO DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMAN, MR HO YUNG-SANG, AND THE TAI PO DISTRICT OFFICER, MR PO PUI-LEONG, OFFICIATED AT THE OPENING CEREMONY THIS MORNING.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF BRANCH POST OFFICES IN HONG KONG AT PRESENT IS 121.

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DEATH SENTENCE COMMUTED
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THE GOVERNOR, AFTER TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE ADVICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, HAS DECIDED THAT THE DEATH SENTENCE PASSED ON KWOK CHI-WO ON MAY 23, 1989 SHOULD BE COMMUTED TO A SENTENCE OF LIFE IMPRISONMENT.

KWOK WAS FOUND GUILTY OF THE MURDER OF MISS YAU TSE-KWAN.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1992

- 25 -

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS
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	\$ MILLION -----
OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	2,490
REVERSAL OF LAF	-990
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	1,500
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	-150
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,350

LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER TWI 112.8 *-0.2* 11.11.92

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS

TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	2.86 PCT	12 MONTHS	2311	6.25	102.32	3.94
1 MONTH	3.11 PCT	15 MONTHS	2402	5.50	101.43	4.37
3 MONTHS	3.42 PCT	18 MONTHS	2405	5.50	101.43	4.57
6 MONTHS	3.56 PCT	21 MONTHS	2408	4.375	99.46	4.75
12 MONTHS	4.00 PCT					

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 15,531 MN

CLOSED 11 NOVEMBER 1992

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