



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1988

## CONTENTS

## PAGE NO.

### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING :

CS: AN EVOLVING SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT THAT COMMANDS CONFIDENCE .....	1
ELECTORAL CHANGE DICTATED BY TIMING OF REVIEW .....	7
CRITICS TAKING ISSUE WITH WRONG MATTER .....	8
INTRODUCTION OF ELECTORAL PROVISIONS BILL 'ILL-TIMED' ..	9
IMPLICATIONS NOT BENEFICIAL TO URBCO, PUBLIC .....	11
IMPLEMENTATION OF BILL SHOULD BE DEFERRED .....	12
DELAY CHANGES IN DB SEATS UNTIL 1991 .....	13
WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED ON COMPANIES LAW AMENDMENTS .....	13
COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL SUPPORTED .....	16
COMPANIES LAW AMENDMENTS BASED ON COMMON SENSE .....	17
BACKGROUND TO DISTRICT BOARDS (AMENDMENT) BILL EXPLAINED	18
DISTRICT BOARDS (AMENDMENT) BILL SUPPORTED .....	19
CHANGES IN TOBACCO DUTY STRUCTURE FORMALISED .....	20
STEADY PROGRESS MADE IN IMPROVING MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC FUNDS .....	21
CITY POLYTECHNIC ANNUAL REPORT TABLED .....	21
OVERALL REVIEW OF BUILDING REGULATIONS URGED .....	23
TRIBUTES PAID TO DAVID JEAFFRESON .....	24

/CO-ORDINATED ACTION .....

CO-ORDINATED ACTION AGAINST HEPATITIS A .....	26
DISPARITIES REFLECT DIFFERENT CHARACTERISTICS .....	27
WIDE RANGE OF PROGRAMMES PROMOTE CIVIC EDUCATION .....	27
MEASURES IN HAND FOR CONTAINER VEHICLE PARKING .....	28
STEPS TAKEN TO PROTECT WILD LIFE .....	29
MERITS OF NEW CONSUMER SAFETY LAWS UNDER STUDY .....	30
EXISTING LAW PROTECTS SUB-CONTRACTOR'S WORKERS .....	31
NO DECISION YET ON UPGRADING VOLTAGE .....	32
PLANS TO IMPROVE URBAN FRINGE, RURAL AREAS .....	32
FIRE FIGHTING ARRANGEMENTS ADEQUATE .....	33
TRAINING PROVIDED TO OFFICERS HANDLING PLACEMENT OF DISABLED .....	35
BRIEFINGS ON CERTAIN JLG MATTERS POSSIBLE .....	36
FIVE BILLS PASSED .....	36
SIR DAVID: DECISIONS BASED ON VIEWS OF PEOPLE .....	37
FREE COPIES OF WHITE PAPER AVAILABLE .....	37
KWUN TONG CANDIDATES TO MEET THE PUBLIC .....	38
FESTIVE LIGHTS READY IN SHA TIN .....	39
BOE MEMBERS VISIT OLD URBAN PRIMARY SCHOOL .....	40
DB COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS LION ROCK TUNNEL TRIAL SCHEMES .....	41
KEEP CLEAN CARNIVAL IN TYPHOON SHELTER .....	41
DEATH SENTENCE COMMUTED .....	42
GOVERNMENT SITE TO LET .....	42
KWUN TONG ILLEGAL STRUCTURES FACE DEMOLITION .....	43
PROHIBITION ZONES AT TAI PO KCR STATION .....	43
SPECIAL TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN YAU MA TEI .....	44
RESTRICTED ZONES IN NORTH POINT .....	44
TAXI RESTRICTION ZONE ON CHATHAM ROAD SOUTH RESCINDED .....	44

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1988

- 1 -

CS: AN EVOLVING SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT THAT COMMANDS CONFIDENCE  
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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DAVID FORD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S AIM TO MAINTAIN A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH WAS BOTH EFFECTIVE AND RESPONSIVE, AND WHICH COULD CONTINUE TO EVOLVE IN A WAY THAT COMMANDED THE FULL CONFIDENCE OF HONG KONG PEOPLE.

IN TABLING THE WHITE PAPER ON "THE DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT: THE WAY FORWARD", SIR DAVID SAID: "THIS WHITE PAPER CONTAINS A CLEAR COMMITMENT TO THE NEXT STEPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUCH A SYSTEM."

HE SAID FURTHER CHANGES WOULD BE NEEDED TO BRING HONG KONG'S POLITICAL SYSTEM INTO LINE WITH THAT DESCRIBED IN THE JOINT DECLARATION AND WITH THE PROVISIONS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE BASIC LAW.

"I HAVE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE FOR CONTINUITY UP TO AND BEYOND 1997 AND THE NEED TO MAINTAIN THE HIGH DEGREE OF AUTONOMY WHICH WE CURRENTLY ENJOY AND WHICH IS PROVIDED FOR IN THE JOINT DECLARATION," HE SAID.

"THE STEPS TO BE TAKEN FULLY REFLECT THE IMPORTANCE WHICH WE PLACE UPON THESE TWO PRINCIPLES."

SIR DAVID SAID THE TITLE OF THE WHITE PAPER HAD BEEN SELECTED WITH GREAT CARE.

THE PURPOSE OF THE WHITE PAPER WAS TO CHART THE COURSE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT BETWEEN NOW AND 1991, ADOPTING THE GRADUAL APPROACH WHICH HAD SERVED HONG KONG WELL, AND BUILDING ON THE FIRM BASIS OF THE EXISTING THREE TIER STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT.

"THE DECISIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN TAKEN IN THE WHITE PAPER HAVE TAKEN FULL ACCOUNT OF PUBLIC OPINION WHICH HAS BEEN EXPRESSED DURING THE 1987 REVIEW.

"INDEED, PUBLIC OPINION HAS BEEN THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE MINDS OF MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WHEN DECIDING HOW THE SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE DEVELOPED IN HONG KONG," HE SAID.

"I BELIEVE THAT IT WILL BE WELCOMED AND SUPPORTED BY THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG."

SIR DAVID SAID THE COMPOSITION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED IN 1988, BUT 10 DIRECTLY ELECTED SEATS WOULD BE INTRODUCED INTO THE COUNCIL IN 1991.

THE 10 DIRECTLY ELECTED SEATS WOULD REPLACE THOSE AT PRESENT INDIRECTLY ELECTED BY THE DISTRICT BOARD CONSTITUENCIES OF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE, HE ADDED.

SIR DAVID SAID WHILE THE COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED, ADJUSTMENTS IN THE SEATS WOULD BE MADE.

THE NUMBER OF APPOINTED MEMBERS WOULD BE REDUCED BY TWO, FROM 22 TO 20, AND THE NUMBER OF MEMBERS ELECTED BY FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES WOULD BE INCREASED BY TWO, FROM 12 TO 14.

SIR DAVID EXPLAINED THAT THE ADDITIONAL SEATS FOR THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES WOULD NOT BE NEW ONES, BUT RATHER AN EXPANSION OF EXISTING FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES.

THE NUMBERS OF OFFICIAL MEMBERS AND MEMBERS ELECTED BY THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED.

THERE WOULD ALSO BE NO CHANGE IN THE POSITION OF THE GOVERNOR AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FOR THE TIME BEING, HE ADDED.

IN DELIBERATIONS ON THE FRAMEWORK OF THE WHITE PAPER, THE GOVERNMENT STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF LOOKING AT THE STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT AS A WHOLE, SIR DAVID SAID.

"THE PRESENT STRUCTURE IS BASED ON THREE SEPARATE BUT INTER-CONNECTED TIERS : AT THE DISTRICT, THE REGIONAL AND CENTRAL LEVELS, COMPRISING DISTRICT BOARDS, THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL," HE SAID.

IN DECIDING HOW BEST TO BUILD FURTHER ON THAT STRUCTURE, THE GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN THE FOLLOWING GUIDING PRINCIPLES INTO ACCOUNT.

- \* "FIRST, THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH OF THE THREE TIERS OF GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE CLEAR, AND THEIR ROLES SHOULD NOT OVERLAP;
- \* "SECONDLY, THE THREE TIERS SHOULD CO-OPERATE EFFECTIVELY, AND BE LINKED IN A WAY WHICH PROVIDES FOR THE VIEWS AND CONCERNS AT EACH LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT TO BE ADEQUATELY REPRESENTED AT THE NEXT HIGHER LEVEL; AND
- \* "THIRDLY, THE METHODS OF CHOOSING THE MEMBERSHIP OF EACH TIER OF GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE SUCH THAT THE BOARD OR COUNCIL WILL BE IN CLOSE TOUCH BOTH WITH THE VIEWS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND OF THOSE SECTORS WHOSE CONCERNS ARE PARTICULARLY RELEVANT TO ITS WORK."

/SIR DAVID .....

SIR DAVID SAID IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG WISHED TO SEE THIS SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT CONTINUE TO EVOLVE AND BELIEVED THE PRESENT THREE TIER STRUCTURE SHOULD BE THE BASIS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.

"THEY VALUE THE GRADUAL APPROACH WHICH HAS CHARACTERISED DEVELOPMENT IN RECENT YEARS AND WHICH HAS BEEN SO IMPORTANT IN MAINTAINING PROSPERITY AND STABILITY," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID POINTED OUT THAT ANOTHER FACTOR WHICH WAS CLEARLY IN THE MINDS OF MANY WHEN CONSIDERING OPTIONS IN THE GREEN PAPER HAD BEEN THE IMPORTANCE OF ACHIEVING A SMOOTH TRANSITION ACROSS 1997, BY ENSURING THAT DEVELOPMENTS BEFORE THAT DATE WERE COMPATIBLE WITH THE FRAMEWORK TO BE ESTABLISHED IN THE BASIC LAW.

"THIS FACTOR HAS UNDOUBTEDLY LED MANY TO ADOPT A CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO CHANGE BEFORE THE BASIC LAW IS FINALISED," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID THE RESPONSE TO THE GREEN PAPER SHOWED OVERWHELMING SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE FOR INTRODUCING SOME DIRECTLY ELECTED MEMBERS INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WELL BEFORE 1997.

BUT THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT ALSO SHOWED THAT OPINION IN THE COMMUNITY WAS SHARPLY DIVIDED ON WHETHER DIRECT ELECTIONS SHOULD BE INTRODUCED IN 1988 OR LATER.

SIR DAVID NOTED THAT THE DIVISION OF VIEWS HAS BEEN CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED IN DEBATES IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, IN THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND IN THE DISTRICT BOARDS.

"WHILE SIGNATURE CAMPAIGNS, NOT SURPRISINGLY, WERE ONE-SIDED, SUBMISSIONS FROM GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS ALSO INDICATE SHARPLY DIVIDED VIEWS AND THE MUCH DISCUSSED PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS SHOW THAT VIEWS ARE FAR FROM UNANIMOUS ON THE QUESTION OF TIMING," HE SAID.

"IN THE LIGHT OF THIS DIVERSITY OF VIEWS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, THE GOVERNMENT HAS CONSIDERED VERY CAREFULLY WHETHER IT WOULD BE RIGHT TO GO AHEAD TO INTRODUCE DIRECT ELECTIONS IN 1988.

"THE INTRODUCTION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT IS A VERY SIGNIFICANT STEP.

"WHEN WE TAKE THIS STEP, WE MUST BE QUITE CERTAIN THAT WE CARRY WITH US THE WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE.

"WE BELIEVE THAT IF WE WERE TO PROCEED WITH DIRECT ELECTIONS IN 1988 WE WOULD HAVE NO SUCH ASSURANCE."

"BUT IF FOR THESE REASONS 1988 IS NOT THE RIGHT YEAR, THEN THERE SHOULD BE A CLEAR DECISION ON WHEN THIS IMPORTANT CHANGE IN OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM SHOULD BE MADE."

/SIR DAVID .....

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1988

- 4 -

SIR DAVID SAID THAT FURTHER CHANGE IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WOULD OF COURSE BE NECESSARY IN THE LONGER TERM.

THE LEGISLATURE OF THE FUTURE SAR WOULD BE FULLY ELECTED, AND WHEN POST-1997 CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS WERE CLEARER, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO TAKE SYSTEMATIC STEPS TO BRING THE COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL INTO LINE WITH THAT PROVIDED FOR IN THE BASIC LAW.

SIR DAVID SAID THAT IN DECIDING TO EXPAND THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY SYSTEM IN 1988, THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOTED THAT THE SYSTEM HAD WORKED WELL SINCE ITS INTRODUCTION IN 1985 AND THAT PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE GREEN PAPER SHOWED WIDE SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPING IT FURTHER.

THE WHITE PAPER PROPOSED NO FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE TO THE ROLE AND COMPOSITION OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS.

SIR DAVID SAID THE BOARDS HAD PROVED THEMSELVES AS A VALUABLE PART OF THE SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, WIDELY SUPPORTED BY THE PUBLIC WHO WOULD CLEARLY LIKE TO SEE THEIR ADVISORY ROLE STRENGTHENED.

HE NOTED THAT THERE WAS A STRONG CURRENT FEELING THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE URBAN DISTRICT BOARDS AND THE URBAN COUNCIL SHOULD BE IMPROVED.

"THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED THAT THIS COULD BEST BE ACHIEVED BY ENABLING EACH OF THE URBAN DISTRICT BOARDS TO ELECT ONE MEMBER ON TO THE URBAN COUNCIL IN 1989, WHEN THE TENURE OF THE PRESENT URBAN COUNCIL EXPIRES," HE SAID.

"AT THE SAME TIME, URBAN COUNCILLORS WILL CEASE TO BE EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DISTRICT BOARDS."

IN TAKING THIS DECISION, THE GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN VERY CAREFUL NOTE OF THE VIEWS OF URBAN COUNCILLORS.

IT BELIEVED THAT THIS WAS THE BEST WAY TO STRENGTHEN THE LINK BETWEEN THE URBAN DISTRICT BOARDS AND THE URBAN COUNCIL AND THAT IT WOULD IN TURN STRENGTHEN AND RATIONALISE THE LINKS BETWEEN THE THREE TIERS OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.

SIR DAVID POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD FOLLOWED A CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE SYSTEMS AND HAD ALSO BEEN VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO MAINTAIN CONFIDENCE BOTH LOCALLY AND OVERSEAS.

HE SAID THAT MAINTENANCE OF THAT CONFIDENCE WOULD BE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN THE CRUCIAL YEARS LEADING UP TO 1997.

"ONE OF THE WAYS IN WHICH CONFIDENCE WILL BE MAINTAINED IS TO ENSURE THAT THE SYSTEM CONTINUES TO EVOLVE IN A WAY WHICH NOT ONLY MEETS THE WISHES AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE HONG KONG PEOPLE, AND THAT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT, BUT ALSO IN WAYS WHICH ARE COMPATIBLE WITH THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SMOOTH TRANSITION," HE SAID.

/SIR DAVID .....

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1988

- 5 -

SIR DAVID SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S AIM MUST THEREFORE BE TO PROVIDE FOR THE GREATEST POSSIBLE CONTINUITY OF THE SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT BEFORE AND AFTER THE TRANSFER OF GOVERNMENT: A SYSTEM WHICH ENABLED THE HIGH DEGREE OF AUTONOMY THAT IT AT PRESENT ENJOYED TO BE CONTINUED UP TO AND BEYOND 1997 IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE JOINT DECLARATION.

"CERTAINLY, NOTHING WE DO BETWEEN NOW AND 1997 MUST RUN COUNTER TO THE NEED TO MAINTAIN THAT HIGH DEGREE OF AUTONOMY," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID IT WAS CLEAR THAT A SUBSTANTIAL MAJORITY OF HONG KONG PEOPLE WOULD REGARD THEMSELVES AS ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORTERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT.

"INDEED I WOULD COUNT MYSELF AMONGST THEM. BUT MANY ARE WARY OF MOVING TOO FAR TOO FAST ALONG A PATH TOWARDS A FULLY-FLEDGED WESTERN STYLE DEMOCRACY," HE SAID.

"THIS MAY BE DIFFICULT FOR SOME COMMENTATORS TO ACCEPT, PARTICULARLY WHEN THEY COME FROM COUNTRIES WHERE A WESTERN STYLE OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT IS NATURALLY ASSUMED TO BE THE IDEAL SYSTEM.

"SO MUCH SO, THAT IN THEIR EYES, ANYONE IN HONG KONG WHO IS NOT CRYING OUT FOR IMMEDIATE DIRECT ELECTIONS MUST BE EITHER MOTIVATED BY SELF-INTEREST OR SIMPLY ANXIOUS NOT TO DISPLEASE CHINA."

SIR DAVID SAID THE FACT WAS THAT MANY PEOPLE IN HONG KONG HAD A FIRM, REAL CONVICTION, BASED ON THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE HERE AND ON WHAT THEY HAD SEEN IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, AND THAT CHANGE IN HONG KONG'S POLITICAL SYSTEM SHOULD BE EVOLUTIONARY.

THEY FELT THAT THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH HAD SERVED THE COMMUNITY SO WELL SHOULD NOT BE CHANGED SIMPLY TO FIT INTO THE MOULD OF A WESTERN STYLE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM, WITHOUT ANY QUESTION AS TO WHETHER IT WAS NECESSARILY THE BEST SOLUTION FOR HONG KONG.

"IN KEEPING WITH THIS MOOD IN THE COMMUNITY, THE GOVERNMENT HAS FOR MANY YEARS PREACHED A GOSPEL OF CAUTIOUS, STEADY PROGRESS IN ALL ITS POLICY-MAKING; FINANCIAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL," HE SAID.

"THAT GOSPEL MAY NOT HAVE THE DRAMA OF GOOD HEADLINE, BUT IT HAS WORKED. IT HAS ENABLED HONG KONG TO CONTINUE TO BE SUCCESSFUL EVEN DURING PERIODS WHEN OTHER TERRITORIES FLOUNDERED.

"ABOVE ALL, IT HAS ENABLED THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG TO SHARE IN OUR CONTINUING PROSPERITY."

SIR DAVID SAID THAT FOR MANY YEARS, THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN COMMITTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MORE REPRESENTATIVE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT.

/ "IN SHAPING .....

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1988

- 6 -

"IN SHAPING THAT DEVELOPMENT, WE HAVE SOUGHT NOT MERELY TO COPY SYSTEMS WHICH WORK WELL IN OTHER PLACES, FOR HONG KONG IS NOT LIKE OTHER PLACES," HE SAID.

"INSTEAD, WE HAVE CONSCIOUSLY SOUGHT TO DEVELOP A SYSTEM WHICH IS SUITED TO HONG KONG'S OWN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND MEETS ITS OWN SPECIAL NEEDS: IN PARTICULAR THE NEED TO MAINTAIN CONTINUITY OF POLICIES TO ENABLE US TO DEAL WITH THE TREMENDOUS SOCIAL PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE FOLLOWED FROM THE VAST INCREASE IN OUR POPULATION OVER THE LAST FORTY YEARS."

SIR DAVID SAID THERE WERE THOSE WHO WERE FEARFUL THAT THE GROWTH OF MORE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEMS WOULD BRING DISSENSION WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, DISCONTINUITY IN THE POLICIES WHICH HAD PROVED SO SUCCESSFUL IN THE PAST.

"I DO NOT BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE AFRAID OF DISSENTING VOICES," HE SAID.

"RATHER WE MUST BUILD INSTITUTIONS WHICH, ON THE ONE HAND, ARE STRONG ENOUGH IN THEMSELVES TO ACCOMMODATE DIFFERING OPINIONS WITH TOLERANCE AND, ON THE OTHER, ALLOW FOR THE MAJORITY TO ENDORSE POLICIES WHICH, ALTHOUGH UNPOPULAR WITH SOME, ARE SEEN TO BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE."

SIR DAVID NOTED THAT EXPERIENCE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WOULD SUGGEST THAT, ALTHOUGH THERE WERE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION ON A WIDE RANGE OF TOPICS, THE MAIN THRUST OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES DID COMMAND THE SUPPORT OF A WIDE MAJORITY OF MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL AND INDEED OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE.

HE ADDED THAT HE COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT FUTURE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HOWEVER THEY WERE ELECTED, WOULD WISH TO PUT HONG KONG'S CONTINUING SUCCESS AT RISK BY EXPERIMENTING WITH VASTLY DIFFERENT POLICIES FROM THOSE WHICH HAD SO CLEARLY BENEFITTED THE COMMUNITY OVER RECENT DECADES.

SIR DAVID STRESSED IN HIS SPEECH THAT THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS HAD BEEN AT THE HEART OF HONG KONG'S SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT.

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ELECTORAL CHANGE DICTATED BY TIMING OF REVIEW

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THE GOVERNMENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT IN DECEMBER LAST YEAR THAT THE EXISTING PRACTICE WHEREBY URBAN COUNCILLORS ARE EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS OF DISTRICT BOARDS SHOULD CEASE IN 1989 WAS DICTATED BY THE TIMING OF THE REVIEW OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DAVID FORD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, SIR DAVID SAID THAT FOLLOWING THE PUBLICATION OF THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT, MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAD TO CONSIDER ALL THE ISSUES MOST CAREFULLY.

"THEY WERE NOT IN A POSITION TO MAKE DECISIONS ON THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE URBAN COUNCIL AND THE DISTRICT BOARDS UNTIL EARLY DECEMBER," HE SAID.

AS NOMINATIONS FOR THE DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS OPENED ON JANUARY 8, SIR DAVID SAID IT WAS THEREFORE NECESSARY TO MAKE THE ANNOUNCEMENT BEFORE THAT DATE SO THAT POTENTIAL CANDIDATES WHO MIGHT BE AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL COULD CONSIDER WHETHER TO STAND FOR ELECTION TO A DISTRICT BOARD, AND TO PLAN THEIR ELECTIONEERING ACTIVITIES IF THEY DECIDED TO DO SO.

"AND IT WAS NECESSARY TO INTRODUCE THE BILL INTO THE COUNCIL EARLY SO THAT ENACTMENT WOULD TAKE PLACE BEFORE THE DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID THIS TIMETABLE MIGHT HAVE CAUSED DIFFICULTIES FOR SOME URBAN COUNCILLORS WHO HAD TO MAKE A QUICK DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO STAND.

"BUT THE REASON WE INTRODUCED THE BILL WAS IN RESPONSE TO THE URBAN COUNCILLORS WHO WISHED TO KNOW WHERE THEY STOOD AND WHETHER THEY SHOULD STAND FOR ELECTION TO THE DISTRICT BOARD. AND IT WAS FOR THAT REASON THAT WE BROUGHT FORWARD THE BILL IN THE WAY AND IN THE TIMING THAT WE DID," HE SAID.

ON REMARKS BY SOME MEMBERS WHO MENTIONED THE AGB MCNAIR REPORT ON THE SUBJECT, SIR DAVID SAID HE HOPED THAT MEMBERS' ATTENTION WOULD ALSO BE DRAWN TO THE SUBMISSIONS WHICH WERE MADE TO THE SURVEY OFFICE AT THE TIME.

"THERE WERE INDEED 8,000 AT THAT TIME ON THIS PARTICULAR SUBJECT, OF WHOM 7,000 WISHED TO MAKE CHANGES BETWEEN THE PRESENT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL AND THE URBAN DISTRICT BOARDS," HE SAID.

"ONE THOUSAND WISHED IT TO REMAIN AS IT WAS, AND OF THE 116 DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS, 98 WISHED THERE TO BE A CHANGE."

SIR DAVID ADDED THAT OF THE DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS WHO WISHED TO SEE A CHANGE AND WHO HAD EXPRESSED A VIEW, NO LESS THAN 82 OF THEM WISHED TO EXPAND MEMBERSHIP OF THE URBAN COUNCIL TO INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES OF EACH DISTRICT BOARD ELECTED FROM AMONG BOARD MEMBERS.

CRITICS TAKING ISSUE WITH WRONG MATTER

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CRITICS OF THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 WERE READING MUCH MORE INTO THE BILL THAN IT ACTUALLY CONTAINED, AND THEREBY TAKING ISSUE WITH THE WRONG MATTER AT AN INAPPROPRIATE TIME, THE HON RITA FAN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL, MRS FAN SAID ITS MAIN EFFECT WAS TO ALLOW AN URBAN COUNCIL MEMBER TO HOLD AN ELECTED SEAT ON A DISTRICT BOARD IN THE URBAN COUNCIL AREA.

URBAN COUNCILLORS WHO WON SEATS IN THE FORTHCOMING DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS WOULD HOLD THEIR DISTRICT BOARD SEATS FOR THREE YEARS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT, REGARDLESS OF THEIR POSITION AS URBAN COUNCIL MEMBERS.

VICE VERSA, A DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER WHO WAS ELECTED TO THE URBAN COUNCIL IN THE URBAN COUNCIL ELECTIONS WOULD NOT HAVE TO GIVE UP HIS SEAT IN THE DISTRICT BOARD.

MRS FAN SAID THIS ARRANGEMENT SEEMED FAIR.

"IF A PERSON STANDS FOR TWO SEPARATE ELECTIONS AND AS A RESULT WIN TWO SEATS IN TWO DIFFERENT TIERS OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND HE IS CAPABLE OF FULFILLING THE OBLIGATIONS OF BOTH ROLES, THEN THERE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE ANY VALID REASON TO FORCE HIM TO RESIGN FROM ONE OF THE SEATS AND THEN PUT HIM BACK INTO THAT SEAT THROUGH ANOTHER PROCEDURE, BUT IN A DIFFERENT CAPACITY AS AN EX-OFFICIO MEMBER," SHE SAID.

SHE ADDED THAT THE BILL SOUGHT TO REMOVE A RESTRICTION WHICH WAS NOT REALLY NECESSARY.

MRS FAN ALSO SAID THAT REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE URBAN COUNCIL OPPOSED THIS BILL ON THE GROUND THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD INTRODUCED THE MEASURE ONLY BECAUSE IT INTENDED TO SEVER THE URBAN COUNCIL'S EX-OFFICIO LINK WITH THE DISTRICT BOARDS.

"WHILE IT IS TRUE TO SAY THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAS SUCH AN INTENTION, IT IS CERTAINLY NOT CORRECT TO ASSUME THAT SUPPORT OF THIS BILL BY MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL AUTOMATICALLY IMPLIES RUBBER STAMPING OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSALS, NOR DOES IT NECESSARILY COMMIT ANY MEMBERS TO SUPPORT THE REMOVAL OF THE EX-OFFICIO LINK," SHE SAID.

SHE ADDED THAT THE QUESTION OF THE EX-OFFICIO LINK, OR ANY FORM OF LINK, WOULD HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED BY FURTHER LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS, WHICH COULD ONLY BE FORMULATED IN THE LIGHT OF THE RESULTS OF DISCUSSION ON THE WHITE PAPER.

/SHE NOTED .....

SHE NOTED THAT THERE WAS A SCHOOL OF THOUGHT WHICH ADVOCATED NO LINK AT ALL BETWEEN THE URBAN COUNCIL AND DISTRICT BOARDS, AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WOULD NO DOUBT HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEBATE AT LENGTH THE PROS AND CONS.

SHE SAID THERE WAS NO REALLY VALID REASON TO BLOCK THE PASSAGE OF A BILL AIMING TO LIBERALISE.

IF AT THE END OF THE DAY, THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL REJECTED THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL, AND THE EX-OFFICIO LINK WAS RETAINED, THEN THE RESERVATIONS AND CONCERNS OF THOSE WHO OPPOSED THE BILL WOULD EVAPORATE, SHE SAID.

"IF THIS COUNCIL EVENTUALLY SUPPORTED THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSAL, THEN IT IS FAR BETTER TO HAVE THIS BILL TO ALLOW FLEXIBILITY FOR URBAN COUNCIL AND DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS, THAN TO HAVE NO BILL AT ALL," SHE ADDED.

MRS FAN CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT THE LACK OF TIME FOR URBAN COUNCILLORS TO PLAN FOR THEIR CANDIDACY IN DISTRICT BOARDS WAS NOTED WITH REGRET, AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD EXPLAIN PUBLICLY THE REASON FOR THE APPARENT LATENESS OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BILL.

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INTRODUCTION OF ELECTORAL PROVISIONS BILL 'ILL-TIMED'

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THE INTRODUCTION OF THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, UNDER WHICH A PERSON MAY SERVE BOTH AS AN ELECTED MEMBER OF THE URBAN COUNCIL AND AS AN ELECTED DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER IN THE URBAN COUNCIL AREA, IS CONSIDERED ILL-TIMED.

THE CONVENER OF THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP FORMED TO STUDY THE BILL, THE HON F.K. HU, SAID THIS IN THE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE MEASURE.

HOWEVER, HE SAID HE SUPPORTED THE BILL BECAUSE DEFERRING IT WOULD ONLY CAUSE MORE COMPLICATIONS.

MR HU SAID THE BILL HAD CAUSED MUCH CONTROVERSY, AND EVEN THOSE WHO FAVOURED THE MEASURE HAD BEEN UNABLE TO FIND A KIND WORD FOR ITS TIMING.

HE SAID HE WAS NOT CONVINCED THAT THERE WAS ANY URGENT NEED TO MAKE CHANGES AT THIS STAGE, JUST BEFORE A DECISION ON THE POLITICAL REVIEW WAS REACHED.

"THE PROPER PROCEDURE IS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION TO PUBLISH THE WHITE PAPER ON POLITICAL REFORM IN WHICH A COMPLETE PACKAGE OF THE FUTURE OF URBAN COUNCIL, URBAN DISTRICT BOARDS, THEIR RELATIONS AND LINKS ARE DESCRIBED IN FULL," HE SAID.

"WHEN THE CONTENTS ARE DEBATED AND FINALLY AGREED IN PRINCIPLE, INCLUDING A TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION, VARIOUS RELATED LEGISLATION CAN BE INTRODUCED BY STAGES IN THIS COUNCIL WITH FULL UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMPLETE PACKAGE.

"SUCH AN APPROACH IS FAR MORE ACCEPTABLE THAN PIECEMEAL INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION WITHOUT KNOWING THE CONTENT OF FUTURE RELATED LEGISLATION."

HE ADDED: "THERE IS AN OLD SAYING THAT THOSE WHO MARRY IN HASTE REPENT AT LEISURE, AND THIS IS A GOOD MOTTO FOR LEGISLATORS AS WELL."

MR HU SAID THE AD HOC GROUP HAD MET REPRESENTATIVES OF THE URBAN COUNCIL AND CHAIRMEN OF DISTRICT BOARDS IN THE URBAN AREA TO HEAR THEIR VIEWS ON THE CHANGES PROPOSED IN THE BILL.

IN GENERAL, THE BILL WAS RESENTED AND OPPOSED BY THE URBAN COUNCIL, WHILE THE RESPONSE FROM THE DISTRICT BOARDS WAS MORE FAVOURABLE, HE NOTED.

HOWEVER, THE AD HOC GROUP ACCEPTED THAT THE BILL WAS A SELF-CONTAINED MEASURE IN REMOVING A RESTRICTION IN THE EXISTING LAW WHICH WOULD NOT PREJUDICE THE CONTENT OF THE WHITE PAPER IN ANY MATERIAL WAY.

FURTHERMORE, HE SAID PASSAGE OF THE BILL WOULD NOT COMMIT MEMBERS TO SUPPORTING WHATEVER PROPOSALS WERE CONTAINED IN THE WHITE PAPER REGARDING ANY FUTURE LINKS BETWEEN THE URBAN COUNCIL AND DISTRICT BOARDS.

MR HU POINTED OUT THAT DURING DELIBERATION OF THE BILL, THE AD HOC GROUP HAD NOTED TWO LEGAL POINTS IN THE EXISTING LAW WHICH REQUIRED CLARIFICATION; AND HE SAID THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD PROPOSE COMMITTEE STAGE AMENDMENTS TO COVER THESE POINTS.

"THE FIRST POINT RAISED THE QUESTION OF WHETHER A DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER WOULD NEED TO RESIGN IMMEDIATELY UPON BEING DECLARED ELECTED TO ANOTHER DISTRICT BOARD EVEN THOUGH HIS TENURE OF OFFICE HAD NOT YET EXPIRED AS IT WOULD CREATE A TIME GAP OF NOT HOLDING ANY DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERSHIP BEFORE HE COULD PICK UP THE MEMBERSHIP IN ANOTHER DISTRICT BOARD," HE SAID.

"THE SECOND POINT SUGGESTED THAT AS THE PRESENT BILL WAS DRAFTED, THERE SEEMED TO BE NO PROVISION REQUIRING AN URBAN COUNCILLOR TO RESIGN HIS COUNCIL SEAT IF HE WAS ELECTED TO A DISTRICT BOARD IN THE REGIONAL COUNCIL AREA, OR A REGIONAL COUNCIL MEMBER TO RESIGN HIS COUNCIL SEAT IF HE WAS ELECTED TO AN URBAN DISTRICT BOARD."

IMPLICATIONS NOT BENEFICIAL TO URBCO, PUBLIC

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THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 IS POORLY TIMED AND THE FUTURE IMPLICATIONS ARE NOT AT ALL BENEFICIAL TO THE URBAN COUNCIL AND THE PUBLIC, THE HON HILTON CHEONG-LEEN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR CHEONG-LEEN SAID THE HASTY MANNER IN WHICH THE BILL HAD BEEN BROUGHT BEFORE THE COUNCIL HAD CAUSED MUCH CONTROVERSY AND MISUNDERSTANDING, AND DISTRESS AND EMBARRASSMENT TO URBAN COUNCILLORS.

IN ADDITION, HE SAID, THERE WERE CERTAIN FAR-REACHING IMPLICATIONS RELATED TO THE BILL WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION REFUSED TO DISCLOSE UNTIL THE PUBLICATION OF THE WHITE PAPER TODAY, AND WHICH HAD A SUBSTANTIAL EFFECT ON THE FUTURE COMPOSITION OF THE URBAN COUNCIL.

"IN SO PRE-EMPTING THE PUBLICATION OF THE WHITE PAPER, THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN VERY UNFAIR TO THE URBAN COUNCIL," HE SAID.

MR CHEONG-LEEN ALSO SAID THAT BECAUSE OF SUCH QUESTIONABLE HASTE IN INTRODUCING THE BILL, THE GOVERNMENT WAS UNABLE TO FULLY CONSULT THE URBAN COUNCIL AND THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT ON THE FINANCIAL COSTS AND THE TIME REQUIRED TO PROVIDE THE PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND THE SUPPORTING STAFF SERVICES TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP INDICATED IN THE WHITE PAPER.

HE SAID THAT IN THE AGB MCNAIR AND OTHER SURVEY REPORTS MENTIONED IN THE SURVEY OFFICE'S OFFICIAL REPORT, IT WAS MADE CLEAR THAT THE PUBLIC WAS GENERALLY QUITE HAPPY FOR URBAN COUNCILLORS TO CONTINUE WITH THEIR EX-OFFICIO DISTRICT BOARD SEATS.

THEREFORE, HE QUESTIONED WHY THERE WAS SUCH AN UNDUE HASTE IN RUSHING THROUGH THE BILL.

HE ALSO ASKED WHY THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT DECIDED ON THE WISER COURSE OF FIRST PUBLISHING THE WHITE PAPER BEFORE PUTTING INTO EFFECT ANY OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES.

"SURELY IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE TIMELY IF THE PROPOSED CHANGES, AS STATED BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY ON THE EX-OFFICIO MEMBERSHIP OF URBAN COUNCILLORS ON DISTRICT BOARDS, WERE TO TAKE PLACE IN 1991?"

MR CHEONG-LEEN ALSO SAID THAT URBAN COUNCILLORS COULD HARDLY OPPOSE REMOVAL OF THE EXISTING RESTRICTION ON URBAN COUNCILLORS FROM HOLDING AN ELECTED SEAT IN A DISTRICT BOARD, IN VIEW OF THE CHIEF SECRETARY'S STATEMENT THAT THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO DISCONTINUE THEIR EX-OFFICIO MEMBERSHIP ON DISTRICT BOARDS FROM 1989.

CONTRARY TO THE VIEWS OF DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS, THE PUBLIC WAS IN FAVOUR OF URBAN COUNCILLORS RETAINING THEIR EX-OFFICIO LINKS, HE SAID.

IN VIEW OF THIS, HE SAID, THE EX-OFFICIO LINK SHOULD STILL BE KEPT EVEN AFTER 1989 FOR ALL URBAN COUNCILLORS WHO CHOSE NOT TO RUN OR WHO FAILED TO GET ELECTED TO DISTRICT BOARDS.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1988

- 12 -

IMPLEMENTATION OF BILL SHOULD BE DEFERRED

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 SHOULD BE DEFERRED SO THAT URBAN COUNCILLORS WOULD BE ABLE TO RETAIN THEIR EX-OFFICIO MEMBERSHIP OF URBAN DISTRICT BOARDS UNTIL 1991, THE HON DESMOND LEE SUGGESTED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SAYING THAT THE BILL WAS AT BEST "A RIGHT THING WHICH IS DONE AT THE WRONG TIME AND IN THE WRONG MANNER", MR LEE ABSTAINED FROM VOTING ON IT.

MR LEE SAID MEMBERS OF ALL THE THREE TIERS OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT HAD FOUND THEMSELVES UNFAIRLY TREATED BY THE BILL.

THIS WAS BECAUSE MEMBERS OF THE URBAN COUNCIL WERE RUNNING FOR DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS AT LESS THAN THREE WEEKS' NOTICE AND SEVERAL DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS AND CANDIDATES WERE SUDDENLY CONFRONTED WITH A FEW "SUPERIOR" OPPONENTS.

"RELATIONSHIPS HAVE WORSENERD BETWEEN MEMBERS OF DISTRICT BOARDS AND THE URBAN COUNCIL BECAUSE SOME OF THEM ARE NOW RUNNING AGAINST ONE ANOTHER," MR LEE NOTED.

HE FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT LEGCO MEMBERS WERE PRESENTED WITH A BILL WHICH PUT INTO EFFECT A CHANGE PROPOSED BY THE WHITE PAPER, WITHOUT BEING INFORMED OF THE REMAINDER OF THE CONTENTS AND RELATED CHANGES.

"REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IS A FULL SYSTEM, IN WHICH NEW CHANGES MUST BE CONSIDERED ALTOGETHER AND NOT IN A PIECEMEAL MANNER," HE SAID.

"AS THIS BILL PROPOSES A SINGLE CHANGE IN CROSS MEMBERSHIP BETWEEN DISTRICT BOARDS AND THE URBAN COUNCIL, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR ME TO JUDGE WHETHER OR NOT IT IS RIGHT WITHOUT KNOWING OTHER RELATED DEVELOPMENTS."

MR LEE REFERRED TO THE PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS IN THE SURVEY REPORT, AND "PIECEMEAL CHANGES" WHICH WERE PROPOSED BY THIS BILL AND THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987.

"PEOPLE WILL BE LED TO BELIEVE THAT WINDOW DRESSING MEASURES ARE BEING INTRODUCED AT DISTRICT AND MUNICIPAL LEVELS TO DIVERT ATTENTION FROM THE LACK OF SUBSTANTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE CENTRAL LEVEL," HE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1988

- 13 -

DELAY CHANGES IN DB SEATS UNTIL 1991

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SUPPORT FOR THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, INsofar AS IT IMPROVED THE LINK BETWEEN THE URBAN COUNCIL AND URBAN DISTRICT BOARDS, WAS EXPRESSED BY THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

BUT HE VOICED RESERVATIONS CONCERNING THE INTENTION TO DISCONTINUE URBAN COUNCILLORS' EX-OFFICIO MEMBERSHIP OF URBAN DISTRICT BOARDS IN 1989.

MR CHEUNG SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT GIVEN ANY CONVINCING REASONS AS TO WHY THE CHANGES PROPOSED IN THE BILL WERE NECESSARY.

ALSO, HE SAID, THE TIMING FOR INTRODUCING THESE CHANGES WAS BAD.

"WITH LESS THAN THREE WEEKS GIVEN TO URBAN COUNCILLORS TO DECIDE WHETHER TO STAND FOR ELECTION IN THE COMING DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS, THE PERSONAL HARDSHIP SUFFERED BY THE COUNCILLORS IS ONLY TOO APPARENT," HE SAID.

MR CHEUNG NOTED THAT MANY OF THE URBAN COUNCILLORS HAD ALREADY GIVEN SUPPORT TO CANDIDATES RUNNING IN THEIR CONSTITUENCIES.

THEY WERE BEING PUT IN A DIFFICULT SITUATION OF WHETHER TO HONOUR THEIR PROMISE, THEREBY LOSING THE CHANCE TO WIN A DISTRICT BOARD SEAT, OR TO BREAK THEIR PROMISE AND STAND AS A CANDIDATE, KNOWING WELL BY DOING SO THEY WOULD LOSE MANY GOOD FRIENDS.

THEY WOULD ALSO RUN THE RISK OF SPLITTING THE COMMUNITY INTO DIFFERENT CAMPS.

STATING THAT IMPORTANT CHANGES MUST BE MADE GRADUALLY AND AS PAINLESSLY AS POSSIBLE, MR CHEUNG SAID THE MOVETO DISCONTINUE URBAN COUNCILLORS' EX-OFFICIO MEMBERSHIP OF THE URBAN DISTRICT BOARDS SHOULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED UNTIL 1991.

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WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED ON COMPANIES LAW AMENDMENTS

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WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS ON A NUMBER OF TECHNICAL POINTS IN THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE ACCOUNTANCY PROFESSION AND OTHERS, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

WINDING UP THE DEBATE ON THE BILL, MR JACOBS SAID THE AMENDMENTS WHICH HE WAS GOING TO MOVE HAD BEEN EXAMINED AND ENDORSED BY THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP SET UP TO STUDY THE BILL.

/AS TO .....

AS TO THE AMENDMENTS, HE SAID THAT CLAUSE 3 OF THE BILL WOULD AMEND SECTION 161B OF THE ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE A LIMITED EXEMPTION TO AUTHORISED FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS FROM THE REQUIREMENT TO GIVE PARTICULARS OF LOANS TO DIRECTORS AND OTHERS IN THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION THAT THIS EXEMPTION SHOULD NOT APPLY TO LOANS THAT WERE BOTH SIGNIFICANT AND CONCESSIONARY.

"BEARING IN MIND THAT A REGISTERED DEPOSIT TAKING COMPANY IS REQUIRED UNDER THE BANKING ORDINANCE TO HAVE A MINIMUM PAID UP CAPITAL OF \$10 MILLION AND A LICENSED DEPOSIT TAKING COMPANY OF \$75 MILLION, IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT FOR SUCH COMPANIES, LOANS BELOW \$10 MILLION MAY BE SIGNIFICANT," MR JACOBS SAID.

HE THEREFORE PROPOSED THAT ALL CONCESSIONARY LOANS WHICH EXCEEDED THE LOWER OF \$10 MILLION OR 10 PER CENT OF THE PAID UP CAPITAL AND RESERVES OF THE COMPANY SHOULD BE REPORTED IN THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS.

"BANKS WILL NOT BE AFFECTED BY THIS NEW FORMULA BECAUSE 10 PER CENT OF THEIR MINIMUM PAID UP CAPITAL AND RESERVES WILL ALWAYS EXCEED \$10 MILLION," HE ADDED.

AS FOR OTHER AMENDMENTS TO CLAUSE 3, MR JACOBS SAID THEY WERE REQUIRED TO CORRECT A MINOR DRAFTING ERROR.

THEY WERE ALSO REQUIRED TO CLARIFY, FIRSTLY, THAT THE DISCLOSURE PROVISIONS OF THE ORDINANCE COVERED COMPANIES INCORPORATED BY SPECIFIC ORDINANCES AND, SECONDLY, THAT THE MAXIMUM AGGREGATE IN NEW SECTION 161B(4B) WOULD MEAN THE MAXIMUM BALANCE ON ALL RELEVANT LOANS ON AN AGGREGATE BASIS CALCULATED DAILY.

"IT IS THE MAXIMUM BALANCE AT ANY ONE TIME WHICH IS OF INTEREST, NOT THE TOTAL AMOUNT LENT IN THE COURSE OF THE YEAR," HE ADDED.

TURNING TO CLAUSE 4 OF THE BILL, MR JACOBS SAID IT INSERTED A NEW SECTION 161BA REQUIRING AUTHORISED FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR HOLDING COMPANIES TO MAINTAIN A REGISTER OF TRANSACTIONS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 161B.

HE SAID IT ALSO REQUIRED A STATEMENT OF THE PARTICULARS OF SUCH TRANSACTIONS TO BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION FOR A CERTAIN PERIOD.

"IT IS OUR INTENTION THAT THE GENERAL PUBLIC SHOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THIS RIGHT OF INSPECTION OF THE REGISTER," HE SAID.

/HOWEVER, MR JACOBS .....

HOWEVER, MR JACOBS NOTED THAT AUTHORISED FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS WHICH WERE EITHER PRIVATE COMPANIES OR UNLISTED PUBLIC COMPANIES WERE NOT REQUIRED TO GIVE PUBLIC NOTICE OF THE DATES OF THEIR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS.

IN VIEW OF THIS, HE SAID HE THEREFORE PROPOSED THAT ALL AUTHORISED FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO GIVE AT LEAST FOUR WEEKS' NOTICE OF THE DATES OF THEIR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS IN AN APPROVED CHINESE LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER AND AN APPROVED ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER.

A FURTHER MINOR AMENDMENT WAS NEEDED TO CLAUSE 4 TO REQUIRE A 'NIL' STATEMENT TO BE PREPARED BY AN INSTITUTION WHERE NO RELEVANT LOAN EXISTED SO THAT THE AUDITOR, WHERE APPROPRIATE, MIGHT BE ABLE TO INCLUDE IN HIS REPORT PARTICULARS OF LOANS OMITTED FROM THE 'NIL' STATEMENT, MR JACOBS ADDED.

DURING THE RESUMPTION OF THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR JACOBS THANKED THE HON PETER POON, AND THE HON HELMUT SOHMEN FOR THEIR SUPPORT, AND THE HON F.K. HU AND THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE.

HE SAID THAT AS MR POON HAD POINTED OUT, CONCERN HAD BEEN EXPRESSED THAT AUDITORS MIGHT ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTIES IN DETERMINING WHETHER A LOAN WAS CONCESSIONARY OR NOT.

IN PARTICULAR IT WAS FEARED THAT THE SUBJECTIVITY REQUIRED OF AUDITORS WOULD LEAD TO DIFFERENT TREATMENT OF EQUIVALENT LOANS IN THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS, MR JACOBS NOTED.

HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS CONCERN BUT DID NOT EXPECT THAT THERE WOULD BE INSUPERABLE DIFFICULTIES.

"LOANS FALLING INTO THIS CATEGORY ARE LIKELY TO BE FEW IN NUMBER AND WHERE THEY DO OCCUR, THE CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD IN MOST CASES BE CLEAR CUT," HE ADDED.

"THERE WILL ALWAYS BE MARGINAL CASES WHERE AUDITORS WILL HAVE TO EXERCISE THEIR JUDGEMENT."

HE POINTED OUT THAT AUDITORS WERE NOT UNUSED TO THIS TASK WHEN APPLYING THE PROVISIONS OF THE ORDINANCE, AND THE WORDING OF THE BILL MADE IT CLEAR THAT A TEST OF REASONABLENESS WOULD BE INVOLVED.

ALTHOUGH NOT CONVINCED THAT ANY CHANGE TO THE PRESENT PROPOSALS IN THIS REGARD WOULD BE WARRANTED AT THIS STAGE, MR JACOBS SAID HE WAS PREPARED, HOWEVER, TO RECONSIDER THE MATTER IN THE LIGHT OF EXPERIENCE.

COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL SUPPORTED

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THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, WHICH SEEKS TO RELAX CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS INTRODUCED IN 1984 FOR FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS TO DISCLOSE THEIR LOANS TO DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS, WAS SUPPORTED BY THE HON PETER POON IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL, MR POON NOTED THAT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS HAD FOUND SUCH DISCLOSURE IN THEIR ANNUAL ACCOUNTS TO BE CUMBERSOME AND UNDESIRABLE IN VIEW OF THE NATURE OF THEIR BUSINESS.

THE BILL, WHICH MAINLY ADDRESSED THE APPLICATION OF SECTION 161B OF THE PRESENT COMPANIES ORDINANCE, RESTRICTED THE DISCLOSURE IN THEIR ANNUAL ACCOUNTS OF LOANS TO DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS OF AUTHORISED FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS OR THEIR HOLDING COMPANIES TO THOSE WHICH WERE BOTH CONCESSIONARY AND OVER \$10 MILLION.

HOWEVER, A REGISTER OF ALL TRANSACTIONS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 161B CONTAINING THE RELEVANT PARTICULARS MUST BE MAINTAINED AND AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION FOR A PERIOD OF 14 DAYS PRECEDING THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SEVEN DAYS THEREAFTER.

"THE AD HOC GROUP STUDYING THE BILL RECEIVED REPRESENTATIONS FROM A LEADING FIRM OF ACCOUNTANTS AND THE HONG KONG SOCIETY OF ACCOUNTANTS. MOST OF THEIR HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED RESULTING IN THE PROPOSED COMMITTEE STAGE AMENDMENTS," MR POON SAID.

"THE ONE OUTSTANDING POINT WHICH WAS BROUGHT UP IS THE DIFFICULTY IN DETERMINING WHETHER THE LOAN IS CONCESSIONARY.

"THE TERM 'CONCESSIONARY' IS NOT USED IN THE PRESENT BILL AND THE WORDING CONVEYING THE MEANING OF CONCESSIONARY ALREADY EXISTS IN THE PRESENT SECTION 157H OF THE ORDINANCE.

"THE AD HOC GROUP NOTES THERE MIGHT BE DIFFICULTIES IN INTERPRETATION BUT IN VIEW OF THE RARITY OF SUCH LOANS BEING OVER \$10 MILLION, THE PROBLEM WOULD NOT OFTEN ARISE."

MR POON ADDED THAT IF IT WERE FOUND IN PRACTICE THAT THERE WERE INSUPERABLE DIFFICULTIES, FUTURE AMENDMENTS IN THAT RESPECT COULD BE CONSIDERED IN THE LIGHT OF EXPERIENCE.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1988

- 17 -

COMPANIES LAW AMENDMENTS BASED ON COMMON SENSE

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THE AMENDMENTS INTRODUCED TO THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE ARE BASED ON COMMON SENSE AND CAN BE SEEN AS A PRACTICAL SOLUTION TO A MATTER THAT WAS OF CONCERN TO HONG KONG'S FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

DR THE HON HELMUT SOHMEN SAID THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN SUPPORTING THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE BILL EXEMPTED AUTHORISED FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR HOLDING COMPANIES FROM THE REQUIREMENT TO DISCLOSE DETAILS OF LOANS TO EVERY DIRECTOR AND OFFICER IN THEIR ANNUAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS, EXCEPT FOR LOANS IN EXCESS OF \$10 MILLION MADE ON CONCESSIONARY TERMS.

"WHAT WILL INSTEAD BE REQUIRED ARE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS GIVING AGGREGATE FIGURES ONLY."

ACCORDING TO DR SOHMEN, THIS DID NOT MEAN THAT LOANS TO DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS WHICH WERE OF INTEREST TO SHAREHOLDERS AND DEPOSITORS ALIKE, WOULD BE HIDDEN FROM THEM.

"THE BILL FOR THIS REASON REQUIRES AUTHORISED FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS TO KEEP A REGISTER OF DETAILS OF ALL LOANS TO DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS TO BE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION, BY THE PUBLIC, FOR A PERIOD OF 14 DAYS BEFORE AND SEVEN DAYS AFTER THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING," HE SAID.

HE ALSO SAID THE AMENDMENTS TODAY WERE THE RESULT OF MUCH CONSULTATION BY THE GOVERNMENT WITH MANY INTERESTED ORGANISATIONS INCLUDING THE HONG KONG GENERAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, THE LAW SOCIETY, THE HONG KONG SOCIETY OF ACCOUNTANTS, THE INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED SECRETARIES AND ADMINISTRATORS.

MORE IMPORTANTLY, THEY WERE THE RESULT OF CONSULTATION WITH THE HONG KONG DEPOSIT TAKING COMPANIES ASSOCIATION AND THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION OF BANKS.

HE SAID THE HONG KONG SOCIETY OF ACCOUNTANTS HAD MADE DETAILED REPRESENTATIONS WHICH HAD BEEN NOTED AND TO SOME EXTENT WERE INCORPORATED IN THE FINAL REVISION.

THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION OF BANKS, WHICH HAD BEEN PRESSING FOR AMENDMENTS TO SECTION 161B OF THE EXISTING ORDINANCE, HAD REVIEWED THESE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS AND ALL OTHER REPRESENTATIONS, AND WELCOMED AND ENDORSED THE AMENDMENTS TO THE BILL, HE SAID.

DR SOHMEN ADDED THAT THE VIEWS HE PRESENTED ON THE BILL WOULD HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE HON DAVID K.P. LI HAD HE BEEN ABLE TO BE PRESENT IN THE COUNCIL TODAY. NEVERTHELESS, HE FULLY AGREED WITH THESE VIEWS.

BACKGROUND TO DISTRICT BOARDS (AMENDMENT) BILL EXPLAINED

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THE SIX-MONTH PERIOD PROVIDED IN SECTION 14(EA) OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS ORDINANCE, STIPULATING THE PERIOD OF NON-ATTENDANCE AT DISTRICT BOARD MEETINGS RESULTING IN THE OFFICE OF A MEMBER BEING DECLARED VACANT, WAS MADE IN 1984 BASED ON THE FREQUENCY OF DISTRICT BOARD MEETINGS.

THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DURING DEBATE ON THE DISTRICT BOARDS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 WHICH SEEKS TO FURTHER IMPROVE THE OPERATION OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS AND TO PROVIDE A CLEAR DEFINITION FOR A DISTRICT BOARD MEETING.

MR LIAO EXPLAINED THAT THE WORKING PATTERN OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS WAS THAT THE FULL BOARD MEETINGS WERE HELD EVERY TWO MONTHS AND THAT THEIR COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS MET IN BETWEEN THE FULL DISTRICT BOARD MEETINGS.

"WHEN NECESSARY, ADDITIONAL FULL BOARD MEETINGS ARE CONVENED," HE SAID.

"THIS WORKING ARRANGEMENT HAS BEEN FUNCTIONING WELL AND HENCE IT IS NOT PROPOSED IN THE PRESENT BILL TO MAKE ANY CHANGES."

HOWEVER, THE POSITION COULD BE REVIEWED IF THERE WAS A NEED TO DO SO IN FUTURE.

ACCORDING TO THE PRESENT DISTRICT BOARDS ORDINANCE, THE OFFICE OF A DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER SHOULD BECOME VACANT IF HE FAILS THROUGHOUT A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS TO ATTEND ANY MEETING OF THE BOARD UNLESS SUCH FAILURE IS DUE TO SOME REASONS APPROVED BY THE BOARD.

THE ORDINANCE DOES NOT, HOWEVER, REQUIRE THE MEMBER TO SEEK AND OBTAIN THE APPROVAL OF THE BOARD BEFORE THE COMMENCEMENT OF SUCH ABSENCE.

ONE OF THE AMENDMENTS THE BILL INTRODUCED IS TO REQUIRE A DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER TO OBTAIN THE APPROVAL OF HIS BOARD PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF HIS ABSENCE EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF PROLONGED ILLNESS.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1988

- 19 -

DISTRICT BOARDS (AMENDMENT) BILL SUPPORTED

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THE DISTRICT BOARDS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 WAS SUPPORTED BY MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, PROF THE HON C.K. POON SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL IN THE COUNCIL, PROF POON NOTED THAT THE BILL STIPULATED THAT A DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM THE BOARD AUTOMATICALLY IF HE FAILED, WITHOUT THE PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE BOARD, TO ATTEND MEETINGS OF THE BOARD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX CONSECUTIVE MONTHS, EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF PROLONGED ILLNESS.

"THE OPPORTUNITY HAS ALSO BEEN TAKEN TO DEFINE MORE CLEARLY WHAT IS MEANT BY A DISTRICT BOARD MEETING AND TO INCLUDE SOME OTHER TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.

"WE UNDERSTAND THAT MEMBERS OF THE 19 DISTRICT BOARDS WERE CONSULTED ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS," HE SAID.

PROF POON CONCEDED THAT UNDER THE PRESENT DISTRICT BOARDS ORDINANCE, A DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER COULD BE ABSENT FROM MEETINGS OF THE BOARD FOR SIX CONSECUTIVE MONTHS WITHOUT OBTAINING THE APPROVAL OF THE BOARD BEFORE THE COMMENCEMENT OF SUCH ABSENCE.

"HE CAN OBTAIN THE APPROVAL OF THE BOARD RETROSPECTIVELY. WE AGREE THAT ABSENCE OF THIS NATURE COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE OPERATION OF THE BOARD," HE SAID.

PROF POON, HOWEVER, POINTED OUT TWO AREAS IN THE BILL WHICH THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP FORMED TO STUDY IT HAD CONSIDERED TO BE UNCLEAR.

"SINCE THE COMMENCEMENT DATE OF THE SIX-MONTH ABSENCE PERIOD IS NOT CLEARLY SPELT OUT IN THE BILL, IT IS ENVISAGED THAT UNNECESSARY LEGAL ARGUMENTS MAY ARISE AT A LATER DATE," HE SAID.

"THE BILL, AS IT STANDS NOW, PERMITS A PERSON TO APPLY FOR LEAVE, BY REASON OF PROLONGED ILLNESS, WITHIN A REASONABLE PERIOD OF HIS HAVING RECOVERED OR SUBSTANTIVELY RECOVERED FROM ILLNESS.

"THE USE OF THE WORD 'REASONABLE' IS RATHER LOOSE AND IT IS ENVISAGED THAT IN APPLYING THIS RULE DIFFERENT BOARDS MAY ADOPT DIFFERENT STANDARDS AND AS A RESULT THE SITUATION COULD BECOME QUITE CONFUSING," HE ADDED.

TO RECTIFY THE ABOVE PROBLEMS, HE SAID MEMBERS OF THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP HAD PROPOSED THAT THE COMMENCEMENT DATE OF THE LEAVE PERIOD SHOULD START ON THE DAY NEXT FOLLOWING THE DATE OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD AT WHICH THE BOARD MEMBER WAS FIRST ABSENT.

/THE GROUP .....

- 20 -

THE GROUP ALSO PROPOSED TO SUBSTITUTE 'REASONABLE TIME' BY A PERIOD OF 'ONE MONTH'.

"WE CONSIDER ONE MONTH TO BE A REASONABLE TIME, HAVING TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THAT IN ACTUAL PRACTICE, THE BOARD MEMBER IS NOT REQUIRED TO BRING HIMSELF TO A BOARD MEETING, BUT JUST TO SEEK APPROVAL, AND THIS CONCEIVABLY CAN BE DONE BY WAY OF A WRITTEN APPLICATION," HE EXPLAINED.

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CHANGES IN TOBACCO DUTY STRUCTURE FORMALISED

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THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 SOUGHT TO FORMALISE CHANGES TO THE TOBACCO DUTY STRUCTURE WHICH WERE EFFECTED BY A PUBLIC PROTECTION ORDER ON NOVEMBER 25 LAST YEAR, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, MR JACOBS SAID CLAUSE 2 OF THE BILL SOUGHT TO REPEAL SECTION 66 OF THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE WHICH STIPULATED THE PROCEDURE FOR THE CALCULATION OF THE WEIGHT OF TOBACCO. THIS PROVISION WAS RENDERED OBSOLETE BY THE PER STICK DUTY STRUCTURE.

IN ADDITION, CLAUSE 3 OF THE BILL SOUGHT TO AMEND THE SCHEDULE TO THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE WHICH STIPULATED THE RATES OF DUTY PAYABLE ON VARIOUS TOBACCO PRODUCTS.

TO MAINTAIN THE CURRENT LEVEL OF REVENUE YIELD, MR JACOBS SAID A UNIFORM DUTY RATES OF \$165 PER 1,000 CIGARETTES FOR LOCAL AND IMPORTED BRANDS WAS PROPOSED.

DUTIES ON OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS, THAT IS CIGARS, SMOKING TOBACCO AND CHINESE PREPARED TOBACCO, WOULD CONTINUE TO BE LEVIED ACCORDING TO WEIGHT, HE ADDED.

MR JACOBS NOTED THAT THE NEW DUTY STRUCTURE WAS NOW IN OPERATION AND LARGELY ACCEPTED, ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN SOME MILDLY CRITICAL COMMENTS BY SECTORS OF THE INDUSTRY.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1988

- 21 -

STEADY PROGRESS MADE IN IMPROVING MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC FUNDS  
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MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE ARE ENCOURAGED BY THE STEADY PROGRESS MADE OVER THE YEARS IN IMPROVING THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC FUNDS.

THEY ARE ALSO ENCOURAGED BY THE CONSTRUCTIVE AND CO-OPERATIVE APPROACH OF THE CONTROLLING OFFICERS AND OTHER OFFICIALS WHO HAVE APPEARED BEFORE THE COMMITTEE.

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE, THE HON ALLEN LEE, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN TABLING THE COMMITTEE'S 10TH REPORT.

THE REPORT WAS COMPILED FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATIONS INTO MATTERS RAISED IN THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT'S REPORT ON THE ACCOUNTS OF THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31 LAST YEAR AND THE RESULTS OF VALUE FOR MONEY AUDITS.

"THIS YEAR, AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS, THE COMMITTEE HAVE COME ACROSS CASES WHERE MATTERS MIGHT HAVE BEEN HANDLED DIFFERENTLY, BUT THEY ARE CONFIDENT THAT SOLUTIONS WILL BE FOUND AND THAT THEY WILL BE IMPLEMENTED WITH THE NECESSARY VIGOUR," HE SAID.

MR LEE NOTED THAT THE REPORT WAS THE FIRST OF TWO COMMITTEE REPORTS TO BE LAID BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN THE CURRENT SESSION.

IT WAS PLANNED THAT A SECOND REPORT WOULD BE ISSUED BEFORE THE END OF THE SESSION FOLLOWING A FURTHER REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT ON HIS VALUE FOR MONEY AUDITS.

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CITY POLYTECHNIC ANNUAL REPORT Tabled  
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THE ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL REPORT OF THE CITY POLYTECHNIC OF HONG KONG FOR 1986-87 WAS Tabled IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE HON CHENG HON-KWAN, WHO IS ALSO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CITY POLYTECHNIC COUNCIL.

MR CHENG SAID THE REPORT CHRONICLED THE CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION OF THE CITY POLYTECHNIC.

/DURING THE .....

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1988

- 22 -

DURING THE PERIOD COVERED BY THE REPORT (JULY 1986 - JUNE 1987), THE OVERALL STUDENT NUMBER HAD INCREASED BY ABOUT 50 PER CENT, AND FIVE DEGREE COURSES WERE SUCCESSFULLY VALIDATED TO ACCEPT STUDENTS IN OCTOBER LAST YEAR, JOINING THE TWO DEGREE COURSES ALREADY IN OPERATION.

THE YEAR ALSO SAW THE POLYTECHNIC HOLD ITS FIRST ACADEMIC AWARDS CEREMONY AT WHICH MORE THAN 100 AWARDS WERE CONFERRED. A SPECIAL HONORARY AWARD OF HONORARY FOUNDING FELLOW WAS CONFERRED TO SIR SZE-YUEN CHUNG IN RECOGNITION OF THE PIVOTAL PART HE PLAYED IN BRINGING THE POLYTECHNIC INTO BEING.

MR CHENG SAID THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PERMANENT CAMPUS IN KOWLOON TONG HAD PROCEEDED AT A GREAT PACE DURING THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW, WHICH AT ITS BEGINNING SAW THE GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY AND AT THE END, IN JUNE 1987, THE LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION STONE AT WHICH THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, OFFICIATED.

HE ADDED: "THE FIRST HALF OF THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE CONSTRUCTION IS DUE TO BE COMPLETED IN SEPTEMBER, ENABLING THE POLYTECHNIC TO MOVE SOME OF ITS ACTIVITIES INTO THE PERMANENT CAMPUS IN THE 1988-89 ACADEMIC YEAR.

"THE COMPLETION OF THE INITIAL PHASE WILL NOT BE ACHIEVED UNTIL A FURTHER 12 MONTHS HAS ELAPSED, BUT THE POLYTECHNIC IS FULLY EXPECTING TO COMPLETE ITS MOVE TO KOWLOON TONG IN THE SUMMER OF 1989."

MR CHENG SAID THE REPORT DESCRIBED A YOUNG BUT THRIVING INSTITUTION, ALREADY WELL ON THE WAY TO MATURITY AND MAKING A SIGNIFICANT, AND INCREASING, CONTRIBUTION TO THE EDUCATION OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE IN HONG KONG.

HE ALSO PAID TRIBUTE TO MR S.L. CHEN WHO WAS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CITY POLYTECHNIC COUNCIL UNTIL THE END OF 1987.

"HIS CLOSE INVOLVEMENT WITH THE WORK OF THE CITY POLYTECHNIC SINCE THE FORMATION OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HAS HELPED TO ENSURE THAT FIRM FOUNDATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS INSTITUTION WERE ALREADY IN PLACE WHEN I SUCCEEDED TO THE CHAIRMANSHIP AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR," MR CHENG SAID.

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OVERALL REVIEW OF BUILDING REGULATIONS URGED

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THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CARRY OUT A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE BUILDING (PLANNING) REGULATIONS RATHER THAN AMEND THEM IN A SPORADIC MANNER, THE HON EDWARD HO SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR HO WAS MOVING A RESOLUTION TO FURTHER AMEND REGULATION 3(1), TO MAKE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR PROTECTIVE BARRIERS APPLICABLE TO BALCONIES AND VERANDAHS.

THE AMENDING REGULATIONS IMPROVED THE SAFETY STANDARDS OF BUILDINGS, UPDATED MEASURES TO SUIT MODERN BUILDING TECHNOLOGY, AND ALLOWED GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN PLANNING.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, IN THE COURSE OF EXAMINING THE REGULATIONS, THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP CONCERNED HAD IDENTIFIED AMBIGUOUS AREAS BOTH IN THE PRINCIPAL REGULATIONS AS WELL AS IN THE AMENDING REGULATIONS TABLED IN THE COUNCIL FOUR WEEKS AGO.

THESE WERE AREAS THAT MIGHT GIVE RISE TO PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES IN IMPLEMENTATION AND THEREFORE WARRANTED CLARIFICATION BY THE ADMINISTRATION.

ONE EXAMPLE WAS THE DEFINITION OF "CLEAR HEIGHT" IN THE AMENDED REGULATION 3(3).

MR HO SAID THE ADMINISTRATION HAD ADVISED THAT THE TERM SHOULD BE INTERPRETED AS HEIGHT MEASURED FROM STRUCTURAL FINISH TO STRUCTURAL FINISH, INSTEAD OF ITS LITERAL MEANING.

THE AD HOC GROUP FELT THAT THE TERM "CLEAR HEIGHT" HAD NEITHER BEEN CONSISTENTLY USED NOR CONSISTENTLY INTERPRETED THROUGHOUT THE REGULATION.

THEREFORE IT PROPOSED THAT THE TERM SHOULD BE REPLACED BY A TERM THAT MEAN EXACTLY WHAT THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD INTERPRET IT TO BE.

SIMILARLY, ALTHOUGH REGULATION 24 HAD BEEN AMENDED TO STANDARDISE MINIMUM CEILING HEIGHTS, THE APPLICATION OF THE REGULATION TO THE HEIGHT MEASURED FROM BELOW PERIPHERAL BEAMS WAS UNCLEAR.

THE AD HOC GROUP HAD SUGGESTED FURTHER AMENDMENTS TO AVOID UNCERTAINTY IN INTERPRETATION, MR HO SAID.

"HOWEVER, THE ADMINISTRATION MAINTAINS THAT NO AMENDMENTS SHOULD BE INTRODUCED UNTIL A DETAILED STUDY OF THEIR IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER REGULATIONS HAS BEEN MADE," HE SAID.

/"INSTEAD, THE .....

"INSTEAD, THE ADMINISTRATION HAS UNDERTAKEN TO PUT THESE TO THE BUILDING AUTHORITY FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION AND TO CONSULT THE PROFESSIONS, WITH A VIEW TO INCLUSION IN THE NEXT PACKAGE OF AMENDMENTS ."

MR HO ALSO NOTED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD INDICATED THAT A PRACTICAL NOTE FOR AUTHORISED PERSONS WOULD BE PREPARED TO DEAL WITH THE MEASUREMENT OF HEIGHTS AND THE INTERPRETATION ON PERIPHERAL BEAMS.

HE URGED THAT, FOR THOSE INTERPRETATIVE DETAILS THAT HAD ALREADY BEEN ESTABLISHED FOR A CONSIDERABLE LENGTH OF TIME IN PRACTICE NOTES, THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD CONSIDER INCORPORATING THEM INTO THE BUILDING REGULATIONS TO GIVE THEM PROPER LEGAL EFFECT.

MR HO ADDED THAT A CASE IN POINT WAS THE EXISTING PRACTICE NOTE WHICH SET OUT THE TYPES OF ROOMS AND AREAS THAT WERE CONSIDERED TO BE NON-ACCOUNTABLE FLOOR AREAS FOR THE PURPOSE OF CALCULATING PLOT RATIO UNDER REGULATION 23(3).

THE RESOLUTION WAS PASSED.

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TRIBUTES PAID TO DAVID JEAFFRESON

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THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, AND THE SENIOR MEMBER, THE HON LYDIA DUNN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PAID TRIBUTE TO THE OUTGOING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR DAVID JEAFFRESON, WHO HAS SERVED ON THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FOR NEARLY 10 AND A HALF YEARS.

MR JEAFFRESON, WHO WAS ATTENDING HIS LAST COUNCIL MEETING AS A MEMBER, JOINED THE GOVERNMENT IN 1961. HE HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL SINCE 1976 EXCEPT FOR A BREAK IN THE 1985-86 SESSION.

IN HIS VALEDICTORY SPEECH, SIR DAVID NOTED THAT MR JEAFFRESON'S RESPONSIBILITIES HAD COVERED A WIDE RANGE OF PROBLEMS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO HONG KONG.

IN QUANTIFYING HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORK OF LEGCO, THE GOVERNOR POINTED OUT THAT AS DEPUTY FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MR JEAFFRESON WORKED WITH MEMBERS ON MANY ISSUES WHICH HAD CONTRIBUTED TO HONG KONG'S PRESENT ECONOMIC SUCCESS.

MR JEAFFRESON WOULD ALSO BE REMEMBERED FOR HIS WORK AS SECRETARY FOR SECURITY WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE NATIONALITY ISSUE AND FOR VIETNAMESE REFUGEES - TOPICS WHICH RANKED NEAR OR AT THE TOP OF THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES - IN ADDITION TO OTHER SUBJECTS OF GREAT CONCERN SUCH AS LAW AND ORDER, SECURITY AND NARCOTICS.

/ "WHATEVER THE .....

"WHATEVER THE ISSUE, DAVID JEAFFRESON HAS BROUGHT TO IT UNSHAKABLE COMMITMENT TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG, SINGLE-MINDED DETERMINATION, TIRELESS ENERGY AND, ABOVE ALL, PERHAPS, A SENSE OF HUMOUR," SIR DAVID SAID.

"IT IS REASSURING TO ALL OF US THAT HIS IMMENSE EXPERIENCE, WISDOM AND ENERGY WILL NOT BE LOST TO THE COMMUNITY," HE SAID, AND EXTENDED GOOD WISHES TO MR JEAFFRESON WHO WILL SOON BE TAKING OVER THE POST OF COMMISSIONER OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION.

IN HER VALEDICTORY SPEECH, MISS DUNN ALSO NOTED THAT MR JEAFFRESON'S WIDE RANGE OF RESPONSIBILITIES AS SECRETARY FOR SECURITY HAD MADE HIM ONE OF THE MOST PUT-UPON MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

"IN AN ATTEMPT TO SATISFY OUR ALMOST UNSATIABLE CURIOSITY ABOUT ARSON, BLACKMAIL, ROBBERY AND OTHER SUBJECTS, HE HAS HAD TO ANSWER MORE QUESTIONS LAST SESSION AND SO FAR THIS SESSION THAN ANY OTHER OFFICIAL MEMBER.

"AND HE HAS SUCCESSFULLY STEERED THROUGH THE COUNCIL NUMEROUS COMPLEX PIECES OF LEGISLATION ON IMMIGRATION POLICY AND PENAL REFORM," MISS DUNN SAID.

SHE ADDED THAT IN A FIELD WHERE THE DECISIONS AND EXPLANATIONS THAT HAD TO BE MADE WERE OFTEN DIFFICULT AND PAINFUL, MR JEAFFRESON HAD SHOWN SINCERITY, SENSITIVITY AND HUMANENESS.

IN HIS FREQUENT MEETINGS WITH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AD HOC GROUPS AND THE SECURITY PANEL HE HAD BEEN UNFAILINGLY PATIENT, UNDERSTANDING AND FORTHCOMING, SHE SAID.

MISS DUNN ALSO SAID MR JEAFFRESON WOULD TAKE WITH HIM TO THE ICAC THE WISDOM AND GOOD SENSE THAT HAD DISTINGUISHED HIS WORK IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND IN THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT.

SHE WISHED MR JEAFFRESON AND HIS WIFE ELISABETH THE GREATEST HAPPINESS AND SUCCESS IN THE FUTURE.

CO-ORDINATED ACTION AGAINST HEPATITIS A

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IN ADDITION TO MEASURES TAKEN BY THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO CONTROL THE FURTHER SPREAD OF HEPATITIS A, AND TO PREVENT THE DISEASE, THE MUNICIPAL SERVICES BRANCH AND THE URBAN AND REGIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENTS HAVE ALL STEPPED UP INSPECTION OF FOOD PREMISES AND CONTROL OF UNLICENSED FOOD HAWKERS.

THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON CONRAD LAM.

MR CHAMBERS SAID A SPECIAL INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE, CONSISTING OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE MUNICIPAL SERVICES BRANCH AND THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT, HAD BEEN SET UP TO MONITOR THE SITUATION AND TO CO-ORDINATE CONTROL MEASURES.

NOTING THAT THE DISEASE WAS TRANSMITTED THROUGH THE CONSUMPTION OF CONTAMINATED FOOD OR DRINK, HE SAID THE BEST WAY TO PREVENT IT WOULD BE TO OBSERVE GOOD PERSONAL, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE.

MR CHAMBERS SAID THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT HAD UNDERTAKEN MEASURES IN THE AREA OF HEALTH EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY BY ISSUING A PRESS RELEASE ON FEBRUARY 2 WARNING THE PUBLIC TO TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS OVER FOOD, PERSONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE.

"IN PARTICULAR, PEOPLE TRAVELLING DURING THE LUNAR NEW YEAR PERIOD TO NEARBY COUNTRIES WHERE HEPATITIS A IS ENDEMIC WERE SPECIALLY ADVISED TO TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS," HE ADDED.

HE SAID TWO PRESS CONFERENCES WERE HELD ON FEBRUARY 2 AND 8 TO PROVIDE THE PUBLIC WITH BASIC INFORMATION ON THE DISEASE ITSELF, ITS MODE OF TRANSMISSION AND METHODS OF PREVENTION.

ON THE OTHER HAND, TELEVISION, RADIO AND PRESS INTERVIEWS BY APPROPRIATE OFFICERS OF THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT HAD KEPT THE PUBLIC INFORMED OF THE SITUATION AND HAD ONCE AGAIN EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE OF HYGIENE, MR CHAMBERS SAID.

"AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF PUBLIC INTEREST ON THE PREVENTION OF HEPATITIS A IS CURRENTLY BEING PREPARED FOR USE ON TELEVISION AND RADIO," HE ADDED.

HE SAID THAT LEAFLETS AND POSTERS HAD BEEN STRATEGICALLY PLACED AT ALL POINTS OF ENTRY AND EXIT IN HONG KONG TO REMIND TRAVELLERS OF THE NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS.

THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT'S CENTRAL HEALTH EDUCATION UNIT HAD INTENSIFIED HEPATITIS-RELATED HEALTH EDUCATION ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THE DISTRIBUTION OF LEAFLETS TO SCHOOLS, PORT HEALTH OFFICES AND CLINICS, AS WELL AS GIVING HEALTH TALKS TO FACTORIES AND SCHOOLS.

FURTHERMORE, HE SAID THAT A 24-HOUR TELEPHONE SERVICE GIVING INFORMATION ON HEPATITIS HAD BEEN SET UP, AND A VIDEO ON THE PREVENTION OF THE DISEASE WAS BEING SHOWN AT GENERAL OUT-PATIENT CLINICS.

DISPARITIES REFLECT DIFFERENT CHARACTERISTICS

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THERE ARE BOUND TO BE DISPARITIES IN FRINGE BENEFITS BOTH AMONG THE SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS AND IN COMPARISON WITH THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HUI YIN-FAT, MR JACOBS SAID NO COMPREHENSIVE STUDY HAD BEEN CONDUCTED TO EVALUATE THE DISPARITIES WHICH WERE LARGELY A REFLECTION OF THE DIFFERENT CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS OF THE VARIOUS ORGANISATIONS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS COVERED A WIDE SPECTRUM OF SERVICES, INCLUDING EDUCATION, WELFARE, MEDICAL SERVICES, TRADE, INDUSTRY AND A HOST OF OTHER MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

"THEY OFFER A WIDE VARIETY OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT (INCLUDING FRINGE BENEFITS) TO SUIT THEIR PARTICULAR NEEDS," HE SAID.

THERE WERE, THEREFORE, BOUND TO BE DISPARITIES.

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WIDE RANGE OF PROGRAMMES PROMOTE CIVIC EDUCATION

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CIVIC EDUCATION IS PROMOTED THROUGH A VERY WIDE RANGE OF EDUCATIONAL, BROADCASTING AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMMES, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON DOMINIC WONG, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON RITA FAN, MR WONG SAID CIVIC EDUCATION WAS OFTEN PROMOTED AS AN ELEMENT OF A PROGRAMME WHICH ALSO HAD OTHER EDUCATIONAL, ENTERTAINMENT OR PUBLICITY AIMS.

"IT IS THEREFORE DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY SPECIFICALLY EVERY ITEM OF EXPENDITURE RELATING TO CIVIC EDUCATION," HE SAID.

INSIDE THE SCHOOL SYSTEM, A TOTAL EXPENDITURE OF ABOUT \$3.3 MILLION, COULD BE IDENTIFIED.

THIS COVERED STAFF IN THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ADVISORY INSPECTORATE, GRANTS FOR COMMUNITY YOUTH CLUB ACTIVITIES, RUNNING COSTS OF THE CIVIC EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTRE, DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHING MATERIALS, AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING COURSES FOR TEACHERS.

IN ADDITION, THERE WERE SUBSTANTIAL COSTS NOT SEPARATELY IDENTIFIABLE.

THESE RELATED TO THE TRAINING AND INSPECTION OF TEACHERS OF ALL SUBJECTS IN ORDER TO ASSIST THEM IN INCORPORATING ELEMENTS OF CIVIC EDUCATION INTO THEIR LESSONS; AND TO THE PRODUCTION OF EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION PROGRAMMES.

THESE PROGRAMMES INCLUDED BOTH CIVIC EDUCATION SPECIALS AND ELEMENTS OF CIVIC EDUCATION IN LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAMMES.

"EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ALSO PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN PROMOTING CIVIC EDUCATION," MR WONG SAID.

"SINCE 1983, EACH STANDARD-SIZE SECONDARY SCHOOL IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR HAS BEEN PROVIDED WITH AN EXTRA GRADUATE TEACHER IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN SUCH ACTIVITIES IN THE SCHOOL."

OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL SYSTEM, MR WONG SAID, CIVIC EDUCATION WAS PROMOTED BY THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION, RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG, THE INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT, THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION AND THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

"THEIR EFFORTS AND ACTIVITIES ARE MONITORED AND CO-ORDINATED BY THE COMMITTEE ON THE PROMOTION OF CIVIC EDUCATION, CHAIRED BY MRS FAN," HE SAID.

"THE TOTAL EXPENDITURE INCURRED BY ALL THESE ORGANISATIONS IS ESTIMATED AT ABOUT \$22 MILLION IN THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR."

MR WONG SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT FOR 1988-89, THE VARIOUS ORGANISATIONS CONCERNED WITH PROMOTING CIVIL EDUCATION HAD SOUGHT INCREASED FUNDS FOR CIVIC EDUCATION-RELATED PROGRAMMES.

"DETAILS WILL BECOME KNOWN WHEN THE DRAFT ESTIMATES ARE LAID BEFORE THIS COUNCIL ON MARCH 2," HE ADDED.

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#### MEASURES IN HAND FOR CONTAINER VEHICLE PARKING

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THE GOVERNMENT IS TAKING BOTH IMMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM MEASURES TO CATER FOR THE PARKING NEEDS OF THE CONTAINER TRUCKING INDUSTRY, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON RICHARD LAI, MR LEUNG SAID THAT IN GENERAL, THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON CONTAINER TRUCK PARKING WAS THAT CONTAINER VEHICLES SHOULD BE PARKED OFF-STREET.

THIS SHOULD BEST BE ACHIEVED THROUGH ADEQUATE LAND BEING PROVIDED FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO OPERATE CONTAINER PARKING FACILITIES.

/SUCH FACILITIES .....

SUCH FACILITIES HAD SO FAR BEEN PROVIDED THROUGH THE ALLOCATION OF LAND ON SHORT-TERM TENANCIES.

OWING TO THE RAPID GROWTH IN THE CONTAINER TRADE IN RECENT YEARS AND THE COMPETING DEMAND FOR LAND NEAR THE CONTAINER PORT BY OTHER BACK-UP FACILITIES, IT HAD NOT BEEN POSSIBLE TO MEET FULLY THE DEMAND FOR CONTAINER PARKING SPACES.

ALTHOUGH THE MAJORITY OF THE EXISTING PARKING SPACES WERE IN THE TSUEN WAN-KWAI TSING AREAS, SOME WERE SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY.

IN VIEW OF THE SHORTAGE OF LAND AROUND THE CONTAINER PORT, SOME SITES WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE AVAILABLE ELSEWHERE.

HE SAID THE SITUATION SHOULD IMPROVE WHEN ADDITIONAL LAND BECAME AVAILABLE UPON THE COMPLETION OF THE RECLAMATION OF BACK-UP AREAS ADJOINING TERMINALS 6 AND 7, IN STAGES STARTING FROM THE THIRD QUARTER OF NEXT YEAR.

IN THE MEANTIME, SHORT-TERM TENANCY SITES FOR CONTAINER TRUCK PARKING WOULD CONTINUE TO BE PUT OUT TO TENDER TO EASE THE SITUATION.

IN ADDITION, A WORKING GROUP UNDER THE KWAI TSING DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HAD BEEN FORMED TO LOOK INTO THE IMMEDIATE PARKING NEEDS OF THE CONTAINER TRUCKING INDUSTRY IN THE CONTAINER PORT AREA AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS WITHIN THE NEXT THREE MONTHS.

IN THE LONGER TERM, A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF CONTAINER PORT BACK-UP FACILITIES (INCLUDING PARKING) WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN AS PART OF THE PORT AND AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY STUDY.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THIS PART OF THE STUDY SHOULD BE READY BY THE MIDDLE OF THIS YEAR.

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#### STEPS TAKEN TO PROTECT WILD LIFE

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ALL REPORTS OF THE PROHIBITED USE OF ENDANGERED WILD LIFE FOR FOOD ARE INVESTIGATED AS THEY OCCUR, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, MR CHAMBERS SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE OF RECENT ALLEGATIONS CARRIED IN THE PRESS, BOTH IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND LOCALLY, THAT CERTAIN TYPES OF ENDANGERED SPECIES WERE BEING EATEN IN HONG KONG.

/"IT IS .....

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"IT IS AN OFFENCE UNDER THE ANIMALS AND PLANTS (PROTECTION OF ENDANGERED SPECIES) ORDINANCE TO POSSESS - FOR CONSUMPTION AS FOOD OR OTHERWISE - ANY SCHEDULED SPECIES WITHOUT A LICENCE," HE EXPLAINED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT LICENCES WERE ISSUED ONLY TO PROMOTE THE CONSERVATION OF SPECIES AND NOT THEIR CONSUMPTION AS FOOD.

STAFF OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT DID CONDUCT CHECKS AT LOCAL RESTAURANTS AND MARKETS TO ENSURE THAT NO PROTECTED ANIMALS WERE OFFERED FOR SALE AS FOOD, HE ADDED.

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MERITS OF NEW CONSUMER SAFETY LAWS UNDER STUDY

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AN INTER-DEPARTMENTAL WORKING COMMITTEE HAS BEEN SET UP TO EXAMINE THE MERITS OF INTRODUCING MORE COMPREHENSIVE LEGISLATION ON CONSUMER SAFETY, THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, THE HON HAMISH MACLEOD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID THE WORKING COMMITTEE WOULD HOLD ITS FIRST MEETING LATER THIS MONTH.

MR MACLEOD WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON SELINA CHOW ON WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT PLANNED TO INTRODUCE COMPREHENSIVE LEGISLATIVE CONTROL OVER THE SALE OF UNSAFE PRODUCTS WHICH DID NOT FALL UNDER CATEGORIES CONTROLLED BY EXISTING LEGISLATION.

"MY INITIAL VIEW IS THAT THE AIM SHOULD BE TO COMPLEMENT EXISTING LEGISLATION BY PROVIDING A WAY OF DEALING WITH PRODUCTS NOT ALREADY COVERED BY SPECIFIC REGULATIONS.

"THE POTENTIAL ADVANTAGE OF SUCH LEGISLATION WOULD BE THAT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO REACT MORE QUICKLY TO ANY NEW THREAT TO SAFETY," HE SAID.

"AT THE SAME TIME I SHOULD WARN THAT THIS IS A COMPLICATED MATTER THAT DOES NEED CAREFUL STUDY BEFORE WE CAN SAY DEFINITELY THAT SUCH LEGISLATION SHOULD BE INTRODUCED, AND IF SO IN WHAT FORM."

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EXISTING LAW PROTECTS SUB-CONTRACTOR'S WORKERS

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WORKERS EMPLOYED BY A SUB-CONTRACTOR ARE ENTITLED TO FULL PROTECTION UNDER EXISTING LABOUR LEGISLATION, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON DOMINIC WONG, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG, MR WONG SAID THAT EMPLOYERS WHO WERE SUB-CONTRACTORS MUST ALSO COMPLY WITH ALL THEIR OBLIGATIONS AS EMPLOYERS UNDER THE LEGISLATION.

HE POINTED OUT THAT SUB-CONTRACTING WAS MOST COMMON IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY WHERE IT WAS IN FACT THE NORM RATHER THAN THE EXCEPTION.

MR WONG SAID THAT IN 1977, IN RESPONSE TO EVIDENT PROBLEMS OF NON-PAYMENT OF WAGES BY SUB-CONTRACTORS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, A NEW PART WAS ADDED TO THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE.

THIS STIPULATED THAT PRINCIPAL CONTRACTORS AND SUB-CONTRACTORS IN THAT INDUSTRY WERE VICARIOUSLY LIABLE FOR THE UNPAID WAGES OF AN EMPLOYEE EMPLOYED BY A SUB-CONTRACTOR.

"THERE APPEARS TO BE NO NEED AT PRESENT TO EXTEND THESE PROVISIONS TO OTHER INDUSTRIES OR OCCUPATIONS," HE SAID.

UNDER THE EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION ORDINANCE, A PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR IN ANY INDUSTRY WAS LIABLE TO PAY COMPENSATION FOR INJURIES ARISING FROM WORK DONE ON HIS BEHALF BY THE EMPLOYEES OF A SUB-CONTRACTOR, MR WONG SAID.

HE ALSO SAID WHEN AN EMPLOYER, WHETHER OR NOT HE WAS A SUB-CONTRACTOR, BECAME INSOLVENT, HIS EMPLOYEES COULD APPLY FOR EX-GRATIA PAYMENTS FROM THE PROTECTION OF WAGES ON INSOLVENCY FUND.

HOWEVER, WHERE THE WAGES OWED TOTALLED LESS THAN \$5,000, IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE UNDER THE BANKRUPTCY ORDINANCE TO INSTITUTE PROCEEDINGS FOR INSOLVENCY AND HENCE TO MAKE PAYMENTS FROM THE FUND.

"AN AMENDMENT TO THE FUND ORDINANCE WILL BE PUT TO THIS COUNCIL SHORTLY TO ENABLE EX-GRATIA PAYMENTS TO BE MADE IN CASES WHERE TOTAL CLAIMS ARE BELOW \$5,000," MR WONG SAID.

"I AM SURE THAT THIS AMENDMENT, IF PASSED, WILL BENEFIT EMPLOYEES OF SMALL EMPLOYERS, INCLUDING SUB-CONTRACTORS," HE SAID.

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NO DECISION YET ON UPGRADING VOLTAGE

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NO DECISION HAS YET BEEN TAKEN ON WHETHER HONG KONG'S ELECTRICITY VOLTAGE SHOULD BE UPGRADED TO 220 VOLTS, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY PROFESSOR THE HON POON CHUNG-KWONG, MR JACOBS SAID THIS PROPOSAL HAD IMPLICATIONS BOTH FOR THE POWER COMPANIES AND FOR CONSUMERS.

"THE GOVERNMENT IS STUDYING THIS ISSUE WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF ITS CONSULTANTS AS PART OF AN OVERALL EXAMINATION OF THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF SYSTEM PLANNING BY THE TWO POWER COMPANIES," HE SAID.

HE EXPLAINED THAT BEFORE RECOMMENDATIONS COULD BE PUT TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO CONSULT ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

"I HOPE THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE FURTHER PROGRESS IN THE COURSE OF THIS YEAR," HE ADDED.

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PLANS TO IMPROVE URBAN FRINGE, RURAL AREAS

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WORK WILL START IN JUNE ON A PILOT PROJECT COSTING \$11 MILLION FOR UPGRADING OF ROADS AND CONSTRUCTION OF SEWERAGE FACILITIES IN THE SAN HING TSUEN AREA NORTH OF TUEN MUN.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TAI CHIN-WAH.

"THIS WILL, IF SUCCESSFUL, BECOME THE PATTERN FOR SIMILAR SCHEMES IN LAU FAU SHAN (WHICH WOULD COST ABOUT \$96 MILLION), PING SHAN (\$42 MILLION) AND THE WHOLE OF YUEN LONG-TUEN MUN CORRIDOR (ABOUT \$192 MILLION)," HE SAID.

"BUT NONE OF THESE LATTER SCHEMES WOULD START IN THE EARLY 1990'S."

MR BARNES ALSO SAID THAT THE ALLOCATION OF \$17 MILLION FOR LOCAL PUBLIC WORKS AND \$18 MILLION FOR URBAN FRINGE IMPROVEMENTS IN 1988-89 WAS FOR A PROGRAMME OF ONLY FAIRLY SMALL-SCALE WORKS WHICH WERE RELATIVELY EASY TO IMPLEMENT AND NOT INVOLVING MAJOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE OR LAND ACQUISITION.

"IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THIS PROGRAMME WAS ESTABLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME ONLY THIS YEAR, THE AMOUNT PROVIDED IS PROBABLY REALISTIC UNTIL WE SEE WHAT SORT OF PROGRESS WE CAN MAKE WITH IT," HE ADDED.

HE CONCEDED THAT THESE MINOR WORKS WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH ON THEIR OWN TO ACHIEVE THE GENERALLY DESIRED WIDE-SCALE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE RURAL AREAS.

MR BARNES ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOW PLANNING THE POLICIES, MACHINERY AND PROGRAMMES NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE A PROPER RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND AIMED TO PRODUCE PROPOSALS FOR CONSOLIDATION BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

"BUT AS LITTLE WILL BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT MUCH MORE SUBSTANTIAL USE OF PRIVATE LAND THAN AT PRESENT, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE EXPENDITURE REQUIRED WILL BE SUBSTANTIALLY MORE THAN THE PRESENT PROVISION," HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT THE MAIN LIMITATIONS ON EXPENDITURE WERE STAFF BOTH FOR CONSTRUCTION AND FOR THE NECESSARY MINOR RESUMPTIONS, THE PROCEDURE FOR WHICH TOOK ABOUT NINE MONTHS FROM START TO FINISH.

"IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT LAND POLICY, INCLUDING RESUMPTION POLICY AND THE MACHINERY FOR CARRYING OUT IMPROVEMENTS ASSUME SUCH AN IMPORTANT PART IN THE PLANS NOW BEING FORMULATED TO BUILD A RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE," HE ADDED.

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FIRE FIGHTING ARRANGEMENTS ADEQUATE

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EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS ARE ADEQUATE TO TACKLE FIRES IN HIGH RISE BUILDINGS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON POON CHI-FAI, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE HIGHEST "AERIAL EQUIPMENT" THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT HAD IN USE WAS THREE 50-METRE TURNTABLE LADDERS WHICH COULD REACH TO ABOUT THE 15TH FLOOR OF A BUILDING.

/ "THIS EQUIPMENT .....

"THIS EQUIPMENT IS AMONG THE MOST ADVANCED OF ITS TYPE AVAILABLE," HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT EQUIPMENT CAPABLE OF GOING HIGHER THAN 50 METRES WAS BEING DEVELOPED BY A MANUFACTURER OVERSEAS.

"THE DEPARTMENT WILL KEEP ABREAST OF DEVELOPMENTS AND WILL EVALUATE THE PERFORMANCE OF NEW EQUIPMENT AS IT BECOMES AVAILABLE," HE SAID.

"IN PARTICULAR THE DEPARTMENT WILL NEED TO BE SATISFIED THAT EVEN LONGER EQUIPMENT WILL NOT INVOLVE TOO MANY TECHNICAL PROBLEMS."

HOWEVER, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF "AERIAL EQUIPMENT" COULD NOT BE EXPECTED EVER TO MATCH THE HEIGHT OF HIGH RISE DEVELOPMENT.

FOR THIS REASON, THE APPROACH THAT FIRE SERVICES ADOPTED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD WAS, ABOVE THE APPROPRIATE HEIGHT, TO RELY ON ENHANCED BUILT-IN FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS, HE SAID.

THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT EXAMINED PLANS FOR ALL NEW BUILDINGS TO ENSURE THAT APPROPRIATE ANTI-FIRE INSTALLATIONS WERE INCLUDED.

DEPENDING ON WHAT THE BUILDING WAS TO BE USED FOR, THE DEPARTMENT MIGHT REQUIRE IT TO HAVE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

FIRE HYDRANT HOSE REEL; AUTOMATIC WET SPRINKLER SYSTEM; SMOKE AND HEAT DETECTORS; SMOKE EXTRACTION SYSTEM; PRESSURISATION OF STAIRCASES; FIREMEN'S LIFTS; EMERGENCY GENERATORS; OR HALON GAS FLOODING SYSTEM.

IN ADDITION, MR JEAFFRESON STATED THAT AN OCCUPATION PERMIT FOR A BUILDING WOULD NOT BE GRANTED UNTIL THE PRESCRIBED EQUIPMENT HAD BEEN INSTALLED.

"THEREAFTER A REGISTERED CONTRACTOR MUST INSPECT THE EQUIPMENT EACH YEAR AND CERTIFY TO THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES THAT IT IS IN GOOD WORKING ORDER," HE EXPLAINED.

"IF A FIRE TAKES PLACE IN THE UPPER FLOORS BEFORE A BUILDING IS COMPLETED AND BEFORE THE ANTI-FIRE EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN INSTALLED, TO REACH THE FLOORS ABOVE THE 15TH FLOOR THE DEPARTMENT WOULD HAVE TO LAY HOSES IN ORDER TO EXTINGUISH THE FIRE."

AS REGARDS THE REAR BLOCKS OF DEVELOPMENTS, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THEY MUST BE SO PLANNED THAT FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT EQUIPMENT COULD GET WITHIN 30 METRES OF DOMESTIC BLOCKS AND RIGHT UP TO INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL BLOCKS.

/MR JEAFFRESON .....

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1988

- 35 -

MR JEAFFRESON TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT THE GOVERNMENT REGULARLY PUBLICISED FIRE PREVENTION MESSAGES TO THE PUBLIC THROUGH TELEVISION, RADIO, POSTERS AND FIRE PREVENTION CAMPAIGNS.

NOTICES IN THE FORM OF STICKERS REMINDING OCCUPANTS OF HIGH RISE BUILDINGS NOT TO USE LIFTS IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE, NOT TO OBSTRUCT MEANS OF ESCAPE, AND NOT TO LOCK EXIT DOORS INDISCRIMINATELY HAD BEEN WIDELY CIRCULATED.

IN ADDITION, THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT ASSISTED BUILDING MANAGEMENT TO DRAW UP EVACUATION PLANS AND TO CONDUCT FIRE DRILLS ON REQUEST, HE ADDED.

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TRAINING PROVIDED TO OFFICERS HANDLING PLACEMENT OF DISABLED

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THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT PROVIDES IN SERVICE TRAINING COURSES OF TWO WEEKS' DURATION ON A REGULAR BASIS FOR OFFICERS HANDLING PLACEMENT OF DISABLED PERSONS, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON DOMINIC WONG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HUI YIN-FAT, MR WONG SAID THESE COURSES AIMED TO PROVIDE OFFICERS WITH A BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF DISABILITY AND KNOWLEDGE OF COUNSELLING AND PLACEMENT TECHNIQUES.

"VISITS TO ORGANISATION PROVIDING SERVICES TO DISABLED PERSONS ARE ARRANGED," HE SAID, ADDING THAT OFFICERS ALSO ATTENDED TRAINING COURSES ON SIGN LANGUAGE ORGANISED BY THE SOCIETY FOR THE DEAF.

SINCE THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT TOOK OVER THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PLACEMENT OF DISABLED PERSONS IN 1980, 90 OFFICERS HAD ATTENDED THESE LOCAL COURSES WHICH HAD PROVED VERY USEFUL.

MEANWHILE, 19 OFFICERS HAD ALSO ATTENDED TRAINING COURSES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, GERMANY, THE UNITED STATES, CANADA, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND ON COUNSELLING, ASSESSMENT AND PLACEMENT OF DISABLED PERSONS.

"THESE TRAINING COURSES RANGED FROM TWO WEEKS TO 10 MONTHS, THE MAJORITY BEING BETWEEN FOUR AND EIGHT WEEKS," MR WONG SAID.

/TURNING TO .....

- 36 -

TURNING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT'S SELECTIVE PLACEMENT DIVISION, HE SAID THE DIVISION HAD ONE SENIOR LABOUR OFFICER, SEVEN LABOUR OFFICERS AND 19 ASSISTANT LABOUR OFFICERS.

"THEY ARE ALL SUBJECT TO POSTING FROM TIME TO TIME IN THE INTEREST OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT.

"THE SENIOR LABOUR OFFICER IS POSTED TO THE DIVISION NORMALLY FOR A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF YEARS.

"THE AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY FOR A LABOUR OFFICER IS ABOUT THREE YEARS AND THAT FOR AN ASSISTANT LABOUR OFFICER IS ABOUT TWO YEARS," MR WONG ADDED.

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BRIEFINGS ON CERTAIN JLG MATTERS POSSIBLE

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THE SECRETARY (GENERAL DUTIES) IS QUITE PREPARED TO BRIEF MEMBERS ON THE WORK OF THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP FROM TIME TO TIME, AS MAY BE NECESSARY, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DAVID FORD, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, SIR DAVID SAID THE DESIRE OF MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO BE INFORMED, IN AS COMPREHENSIVE A WAY AS POSSIBLE, OF PROGRESS BEING MADE BY THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP WAS FULLY APPRECIATED.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, "ANY SUCH BRIEFINGS WOULD BE SOMEWHAT RESTRICTED IN THEIR SCOPE.

"IN VIEW OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE JOINT DECLARATION, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO RESTRICT THE BRIEFINGS TO MATTERS WHICH THE TWO SIDES HAVE ALREADY AGREED NEED NOT REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL."

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FIVE BILLS PASSED

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FIVE BILLS WERE PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THESE WERE THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, THE DISTRICT BOARDS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 AND THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT (POWERS OF ARREST) BILL 1988.

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SIR DAVID: DECISIONS BASED ON VIEWS OF PEOPLE

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THE DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT HAVE ESSENTIALLY BEEN BASED ON THE VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG AS THEY WERE EXPRESSED DURING THE REVIEW PROCESS, THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, SAID THIS EVENING.

HE SAID THOSE VIEWS SHOWED QUITE CLEARLY THAT THERE WAS ENORMOUS INTEREST IN THE WHOLE ISSUE, THAT THE COMMUNITY WANTED DIRECT ELECTIONS AND THEY WANTED THEM BEFORE 1997.

THEY ALSO SHOWED THAT THE COMMUNITY WAS SPLIT SHARPLY ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER DIRECT ELECTIONS SHOULD BE INTRODUCED IN 1988.

"AND IT WAS ON THAT BASIS, AND ON THAT BASIS ALONE THAT THE GOVERNMENT TOOK ITS DECISIONS," SIR DAVID SAID IN RESPONSE TO A PRESS QUESTION WHY THERE WAS TO BE NO DIRECT ELECTION THIS YEAR AND WHETHER THAT DECISION WAS INFLUENCED BY THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT.

THE GOVERNOR WENT ON TO SAY: "THIS IS AN IMPORTANT DAY FOR US HERE IN HONG KONG. WE NOW HAVE A CLEAR DECISION THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME A DIRECTLY ELECTED ELEMENT WILL BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN 1991.

"THIS MEANS THAT IN THE SHORT SPACE OF SIX YEARS, FROM 1985 TO 1991, WE WILL HAVE MOVED FROM A SITUATION WHERE ALL MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WERE APPOINTED, TO ONE IN WHICH FOR THE FIRST TIME WE HAVE SOME MEMBERS WHO ARE DIRECTLY ELECTED.

"IT'S THE END OF A LONG PROCESS OF CONSULTATION AND DISCUSSION, DURING WHICH DIFFERENT VIEWS HAVE BEEN PUT FORWARD.

"NOW THAT THE DECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN, I HOPE THAT THE WHOLE COMMUNITY WILL DEVOTE THEIR EFFORTS TO ENSURING THAT THESE ARRANGEMENTS WORK AND WORK IN A WAY WHICH IS TO THE REAL BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNITY OF HONG KONG," SIR DAVID SAID.

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FREE COPIES OF WHITE PAPER AVAILABLE

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THE WHITE PAPER ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT WAS PUBLISHED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

FREE COPIES OF THE 28-PAGE PUBLICATION WILL BE AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC FROM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT ALL DISTRICT OFFICES; THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS SALES CENTRE AT THE GENERAL POST OFFICE BUILDING; AND THE MARKETING OFFICE OF THE INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT, 1 BATTERY PATH, CENTRAL.

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## KWUN TONG CANDIDATES TO MEET THE PUBLIC

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THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF ELECTION FORUMS ORGANISED FOR KWUN TONG DISTRICT BOARD CANDIDATES TO MEET THE PUBLIC WILL START TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE FORUMS ARE ORGANISED BY THE KWUN TONG DISTRICT OFFICE TO ENABLE LOCAL RESIDENTS TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE 44 CANDIDATES CONTESTING THE 24 ELECTED SEATS IN THE DISTRICT BOARD.

"CANDIDATES WILL PRESENT THEIR ELECTION PLATFORMS AND ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR IN 13 FORUMS TO BE HELD BETWEEN TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AND MARCH 6," A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DISTRICT OFFICE SAID.

"FORUMS WILL STILL BE HELD IN THE THREE CONSTITUENCIES OF SAU MAU PING SOUTH, LAM TIN SOUTH AND NGAU TAU KOK NORTH, ALTHOUGH THE CANDIDATES THERE ARE RETURNED UNOPPOSED," THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

## DETAILS OF THE FORUMS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

DATE -----	TIME -----	CONSTITUENCY -----	VENUE -----
FEBRUARY 11 (THURSDAY)	8:30 PM	SAU MAU PING SOUTH	SAU MAU PING (SOUTH) ESTATE COMMUNITY CENTRE, HIU KWONG STREET
FEBRUARY 12 (FRIDAY)	8:30 PM	LAM TIN NORTH	LAM TIN (EAST) ESTATE COMMUNITY CENTRE, PING TIN STREET
FEBRUARY 27 (SATURDAY)	8:30 PM	LAM TIN SOUTH	LAM TIN (WEST) ESTATE COMMUNITY CENTRE, KAI TIN ROAD
	8:30 PM	TSUI PING	KWUN TONG COMMUNITY CENTRE, 17 TSUI PING ROAD
	8:30 PM	NGAU TAU KOK WEST	TELFORD GARDENS COMMUNITY HALL
FEBRUARY 28 (SUNDAY)	8 PM	TING HONG	KWUN TONG GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL, NGAU TAU KOK ROAD
MARCH 1 (TUESDAY)	8 PM	YAU TONG & SZE SHAN	HO CHING PRIMARY SCHOOL, YAN WING STREET, YAU TONG ESTATE
	8:30 PM	SAU MAU PING NORTH	BISHOP HALL PREVOCATIONAL SCHOOL, HIU KWONG STREET

/MARCH 2 .....

MARCH 2 (WEDNESDAY)	8:30 PM	SHUN LEE AREA	SHUN LEE ESTATE COMMUNITY CENTRE, 2 SHUN CHI STREET
MARCH 3 (THURSDAY)	8:30 PM	NGAU TAU KOK NORTH	NGAU TAU KOK CARITAS SOCIAL CENTRE, 1 ON TAK ROAD
MARCH 4 (FRIDAY)	8:30 PM	NGAU TAU KOK EAST	LOK WAH ESTATE COMMUNITY CENTRE, CHUN WAH ROAD
	8 PM	KWUN TONG TOWN & INDUSTRIAL AREA	DELIA MEMORIAL SCHOOL, 19 YUET WAH STREET
MARCH 6 (SUNDAY)	8:30 PM	PING SHEK & KAI YIP	KAI YIP COMMUNITY HALL, KAI YIP ESTATE

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE WELCOME TO COVER THE 13 ELECTION FORUMS TO BE HELD IN THE KWUN TONG DISTRICT BETWEEN TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AND MARCH 6.

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FESTIVE LIGHTS READY IN SHA TIN

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FESTIVE LIGHTING DECORATIONS IN SHA TIN, HERALDING THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON, WILL BE SWITCHED ON BY THE SENIOR MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, SIR S.Y. CHUNG, ON FRIDAY (FEBRUARY 12) EVENING.

THE DECORATIONS ARE CONCENTRATED AROUND SHING MUN RIVER, LIGHTING UP THE SAND MARTIN BRIDGE, BANYAN BRIDGE AND RIVERSIDE PROMENADES.

MOST PROMINENT IS A PICTURE OF A ROARING DRAGON, AMIDST CLOUDS, THAT IS INTENDED TO BLESS ALL RESIDENTS DURING THE NEW YEAR.

THE PICTURE, ABOUT 100 METRES LONG AND SEVEN METRES HIGH, IS ON SAND MARTIN BRIDGE.

ADDING TO THE ATMOSPHERE WILL BE 20 SETS OF BUNTING WITH COLOURFUL LIGHTS ON YUEN WO ROAD AND 14 SETS ON TAI CHUNG KIU ROAD. THERE WILL ALSO BE NEW YEAR GREETINGS ON THE BANYAN BRIDGE.

THE LIGHTS WILL BE SWITCHED ON EVERY EVENING FROM 5.30 PM TO MIDNIGHT UNTIL MARCH 2. HOWEVER, ON LUNAR NEW YEAR EVE (FEBRUARY 16) UNTIL FEBRUARY 19 AND AGAIN ON MARCH 2, THE LIGHTS WILL REMAIN ON UNTIL 5 AM THE NEXT DAY.

/THE FESTIVE .....

THE FESTIVE DECORATIONS ARE FUNDED FROM A \$271,210 BUDGET PROVIDED BY THE DISTRICT BOARD. OF THIS SUM, \$174,230 HAS BEEN USED FOR THE LUNAR NEW YEAR DECORATIONS AND THE REST WENT TOWARDS CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE SWITCHING-ON OF THE LUNAR NEW YEAR LIGHTING IN SHA TIN AT 6 PM ON FRIDAY (FEBRUARY 12) AT THE ROOFTOP GARDEN, SHA TIN TOWN HALL, NEAR SHA TIN KCR STATION. SENIOR MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, SIR S.Y. CHUNG, WILL OFFICIATE.

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BOE MEMBERS VISIT OLD URBAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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FIVE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOE) TODAY (WEDNESDAY) VISITED THE CHIU SHEUNG SCHOOL IN POK FU LAM ROAD TO LOOK AT THE GENERAL SETTING AND FACILITIES OF AN OLD URBAN PRIMARY SCHOOL WHICH SHARES ITS PREMISES WITH A SECONDARY SCHOOL OF THE SAME SPONSORING BODY.

THE MEMBERS - MR ANDREW SO KWOK-WING, MR TIMOTHY HA, MR ERIC LI, MISS BOW SUI-MAY AND MR DAVID CHEUNG - WERE ACCOMPANIED BY THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION (SCHOOLS), MR WONG SHEK-WAH, ON THE VISIT.

THE HEADMASTER OF THE SCHOOL, MR LEE TAT-YU, REVEALED THAT THERE WERE 926 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN 25 CLASSES, INCLUDING A REVISED RESOURCE CLASS, OF THE SCHOOL IN ITS MORNING SESSION.

THE VISITORS WERE TOLD THAT UNDER THE REPROVISIONING SCHEME, CHIU SHEUNG SCHOOL (SECONDARY) WOULD BE MOVED TO A NEW ESTATE SECONDARY SCHOOL PREMISES IN MA ON SHAN IN SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR, LEAVING THE CLASSROOM AND SPECIAL ROOM BLOCK IT NOW OCCUPIED TO BE CONVERTED FOR USE BY THE PRIMARY SCHOOL.

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DB COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS LION ROCK TUNNEL TRIAL SCHEMES

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THE TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE OF THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT BOARD WILL DISCUSS THE EXPERIMENT IN MERGING THE TIDAL FLOW AND SIGNAL-CONTROLLED SCHEMES AT THE LION ROCK TUNNEL AT A MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

ACCORDING TO STATISTICS, THE COMBINED EFFECT OF THE TWO SCHEMES HAS RESULTED IN A FIVE PER CENT INCREASE IN TRAFFIC CAPACITY.

MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO GIVE COMMENTS ON THE SCHEMES AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WILL ATTEND THE MEETING TO LISTEN TO THEIR VIEWS.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT BOARD'S TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE DISTRICT OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM, 141 KAU PUI LUNG ROAD, TO KWA WAN. THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 2.15 PM.

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KEEP CLEAN CARNIVAL IN TYPHOON SHELTER

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A KEEP CLEAN CAMPAIGN CARNIVAL WILL BE HELD IN THE CHEUNG CHAU TYPHOON SHELTER TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO TIE IN WITH THE YEAR-END CLEAN-UPS CARRIED OUT BY MANY BOAT DWELLERS TO PREPARE FOR THE LUNAR NEW YEAR.

A BOAT WILL BE HIRED TO BROADCAST KEEP CLEAN MESSAGES AND DISTRIBUTE "FAI CHUN" (SPRING SCROLLS) TO THE BOAT DWELLERS.

THE CARNIVAL IS ORGANISED BY THE ISLANDS DISTRICT KEEP HONG KONG CLEAN CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE. AN OPENING CEREMONY WILL BE HELD AT THE HONG KONG FISH MARKETING ORGANISATION CHEUNG CHAU DEPOT AT 10 AM.

DURING THE CEREMONY, THE FINALISTS OF THE "CLEANEST DWELLING BOAT" COMPETITION WILL LINE UP FOR INSPECTION BY A PANEL OF JUDGES COMPRISING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ISLANDS DISTRICT BOARD; THE DISTRICT OFFICE; THE MARINE AND THE REGIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENTS; AND FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE KEEP CLEAN CAMPAIGN CARNIVAL TO BE HELD AT THE HONG KONG FISH MARKETING ORGANISATION CHEUNG CHAU DEPOT AT 10 AM TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1988

- 42 -

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 LEE SUET-FONG ON MAY 14, 1986, SHOULD BE COMMUTED TO A SENTENCE OF 15 YEARS' IMPRISONMENT.

LEE WAS FOUND GUILTY OF THE MURDER OF LAU SHING-LUNG.

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GOVERNMENT SITE TO LET

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THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR A SITE IN TUEN MUN TO BE LET ON SHORT-TERM TENANCY.

MEASURING ABOUT 10,500 SQUARE METRES, THE SITE IS LOCATED AT AREA 40 NEAR PILLAR POINT, TUEN MUN. HALF OF THE AREA CAN BE USED FOR COVERED STORAGE PURPOSES.

THE INITIAL TENANCY IS FOR TWO YEARS, RENEWABLE QUARTERLY AFTERWARDS.

TENDER FORM, TENDER NOTICE AND CONDITIONS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE OF TUEN MUN; THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT, 14TH FLOOR, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG; AND THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICES OF KOWLOON, YAU MA TEI CAR PARK BUILDING, 10TH FLOOR, 250 SHANGHAI STREET.

THE CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMITTING TENDERS IS NOON ON FEBRUARY 26.

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/43 .....

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1988

- 43 -

KWUN TONG ILLEGAL STRUCTURES FACE DEMOLITION  
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THE BUILDING AUTHORITY IS SEEKING CLOSURE OF ILLEGAL STRUCTURES IN A BUILDING AT 305 -325A, NGAU TAU KOK ROAD, KWUN TONG, SO THAT DEMOLITION CAN BE CARRIED OUT WITHOUT DANGER TO THE OCCUPIERS OR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

THE STRUCTURES ARE ON THE ROOF OF THE BUILDING.

THE CLOSURE IS NECESSARY AS THE OWNERS FAILED TO COMPLY WITH ORDERS ISSUED UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE IN JUNE, 1986 AND LAST MONTH REQUIRING THE REMOVAL OF THE STRUCTURES.

NOTICES OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR CLOSURE ORDERS FROM SHA TIN DISTRICT COURT AT 9.30 AM ON APRIL 7 WERE POSTED ON THE STRUCTURES TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

DEMOLITION WORK WILL BE CARRIED OUT ONCE CLOSURE ORDERS ARE OBTAINED.

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PROHIBITION ZONES AT TAI PO KCR STATION  
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THE TRAFFIC LANE ADJOINING THE TAI PO KCR STATION BUS TERMINUS WILL BE DESIGNATED A 24-HOUR DAILY PROHIBITED ZONE FROM 5 AM ON SUNDAY (FEBRUARY 14). NO VEHICLES, EXCEPT TAXIS, WILL BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE ZONE.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE BUS TERMINUS WILL BE DESIGNATED A 24-HOUR DAILY PROHIBITED ZONE FOR ALL VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES.

MEANWHILE, THE PARKING METERS IN SHEUNG SHUI INSTALLED ALONG FU HING STREET, SAN FAT STREET, SAN HONG STREET, SAN KUNG STREET, TSUN FU STREET AND SAN SHING AVENUE WILL BECOME OPERATIONAL FROM FRIDAY (FEBRUARY 12).

THE TWO-HOUR PARKING METERS WILL OPERATE BETWEEN 8 AM AND 8 PM DAILY, EXCEPT ON SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS. THE PARKING FEE WILL BE \$1 PER 30 MINUTES.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1988

- 44 -

SPECIAL TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN YAU MA TEI

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SPECIAL TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE VICINITY OF YAU MA TEI FRUIT MARKET FROM 2 PM ON FRIDAY (FEBRUARY 12) TO 6 PM ON TUESDAY (FEBRUARY 16) IN ANTICIPATION OF A LARGE NUMBER OF VISITORS TO THE MARKET.

RECLAMATION STREET NORTHBOUND BETWEEN THE UNNAMED ROAD SOUTH OF SHEK LUNG STREET AND WATERLOO ROAD AND WATERLOO ROAD WESTBOUND BETWEEN RECLAMATION STREET AND FERRY STREET WILL BE REDUCED FROM THREE-LANE TO TWO-LANE TRAFFIC.

THE UNNAMED ROAD SOUTH OF SHEK LUNG STREET WILL BE RE-ROUTED FROM TWO-WAY TO ONE-WAY WESTBOUND WHILE CHING PING STREET WILL BE RE-ROUTED ONE-WAY SOUTHBOUND. LEFT-TURNING FROM RECLAMATION STREET NORTHBOUND ON TO TUNG KUN STREET WESTBOUND WILL BE BANNED.

THE SECTION OF SHEK LUNG STREET BETWEEN RECLAMATION STREET AND SHANGHAI STREET WILL BE TEMPORARILY CLOSED TO ALL TRAFFIC AND WILL BE CONVERTED INTO A PEDESTRIAN PRECINCT.

THE METERED PARKING SPACES IN CANTON ROAD BETWEEN PUBLIC SQUARE STREET AND THE UNNAMED ROAD SOUTH OF SHEK LUNG STREET WILL BE TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED.

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RESTRICTED ZONES IN NORTH POINT

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THE FOLLOWING ROAD SECTIONS IN NORTH POINT WILL BE DESIGNATED PEAK HOUR (7 - 10 AM AND 4 - 7 PM) DAILY RESTRICTED ZONES FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (FEBRUARY 13):

- \* WHARF ROAD FROM A POINT ABOUT 21 METRES EAST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH NORTH POINT ROAD TO A POINT ABOUT 32 METRES WEST OF THAT JUNCTION; AND
- \* THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF NORTH POINT ROAD FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH WHARF ROAD TO A POINT ABOUT SIX METRES SOUTH OF THAT JUNCTION.

NO VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS THERE.

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TAXI RESTRICTION ZONE ON CHATHAM ROAD SOUTH RESCINDED

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FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (FEBRUARY 13), THE EXISTING 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY TAXI RESTRICTED ZONE DESIGNATED ON THE SECTION OF CHATHAM ROAD SOUTH NORTHBOUND, BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH OBSERVATORY ROAD AND A POINT ABOUT 20 METRES NORTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION, WILL BE RESCINDED.

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