



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1993

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL RESULTS IN UNCERTAINTY .....	1
PLANNING DEPARTMENT TO STEP UP PROSECUTION .....	2
GOVERNOR TO VISIT MACAU THIS EVENING .....	3
267 VM'S RETURNED HOME TODAY .....	3
CLOSURE OF UNAUTHORISED STRUCTURES .....	3
FRESH WATER CUT IN THE PEAK .....	4
HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS ..	4

PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL RESULTS IN UNCERTAINTY

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"THE PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL IS NOT THE ANSWER TO THE LOCALISATION PROBLEM," A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID IN RESPONSE TO PRESS ENQUIRIES ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE PUBLIC OFFICERS (VARIATION OF CONDITIONS OF SERVICE) (TEMPORARY PROVISION) BILL 1993 INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"GIVEN THE LEGAL ADVICE THAT THE OLD POLICY UNDER WHICH THE CONTRACT OF AN OVERSEAS OFFICER WILL NOT BE RENEWED IF A LOCAL REPLACEMENT IS AVAILABLE, IS IN BREACH OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS INSOFAR AS THE OVERSEAS OFFICER IS A PERMANENT RESIDENT, IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR US TO RETURN TO THE OLD POLICY," HE SAID.

"THE INTERIM MEASURE ANNOUNCED ON 30 JULY ALLOWS US TO RETAIN ON A SELECTIVE BASIS AND ON LOCAL TERMS THOSE OVERSEAS OFFICERS WHO ARE PERMANENT RESIDENTS AND HAVE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO MAKE."

THE SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT IF THE PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL WAS ENACTED, THERE COULD NOT BE ANY TRANSFER FROM OVERSEAS TO LOCAL TERMS.

TO COMPLY WITH THE BILL OF RIGHTS, HE SAID THE ONLY OPTION OPEN TO THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE TO EXTEND ON OVERSEAS TERMS THE CONTRACTS OF THOSE OFFICERS WHO ARE OR HAVE A CREDIBLE CLAIM TO BE PERMANENT RESIDENTS.

EXTENSIONS WOULD BE REQUIRED UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE BILL LAPSES AND IT BECOMES CLEAR WHETHER OR NOT THEY CAN PURSUE THEIR APPLICATIONS TO TRANSFER TO LOCAL TERMS.

"THIS WOULD BE A VERY UNDESIRABLE STATE OF AFFAIRS AS THE LOCALISATION POLICY WOULD IN EFFECT BE SUSPENDED FOR THE DURATION OF THE BILL WITH RESPECT TO A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF STAFF," THE SPOKESMAN CONTINUED.

"LOCAL OFFICERS' PROMOTION PROSPECTS ARE LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED TO A GREATER EXTENT THAN UNDER THE INTERIM MEASURE.

"FURTHERMORE THE ENACTMENT OF THE PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL WILL RESULT IN CONSIDERABLE UNCERTAINTY ALL ROUND. THIS APPLIES TO BOTH LOCAL AND OVERSEAS STAFF, AS WELL AS TO DEPARTMENTAL MANAGERMENTS WHO NEED TO BE ABLE TO PLAN AHEAD.

"WE HOPE THAT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS WILL CONSIDER THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE BILL THOROUGHLY BEFORE PROCEEDING ANY FURTHER.

"IN OUR VIEW, IT WOULD BE MORE PRODUCTIVE TO CONCENTRATE ON THE LONGER TERM EXERCISE OF AGREEING ON THE COMMON TERMS OF APPOINTMENT AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE, FOR WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAS JUST ISSUED A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT," HE ADDED.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT TO STEP UP PROSECUTION

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PEOPLE WHO CHANGE LAND USES OR UNDERTAKE DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN DEVELOPMENT PERMISSION AREAS (DPA) WITHOUT THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD'S PERMISSION WILL BE PROSECUTED WITHOUT PRIOR WARNING, THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, DR PETER PUN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT A PRESS CONFERENCE TO ANNOUNCE DETAILS, DR PUN NOTED THAT HIS STAFF HAD BEEN REDEPLOYED AND SPECIALLY TRAINED, AND A CENTRAL ENFORCEMENT AND PROSECUTION SECTION HAD JUST BEEN SET UP WITHIN HIS DEPARTMENT, TO PURSUE THE TASK.

THE DIRECTOR EXPLAINED THAT SINCE THE ENACTMENT OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE AND THE PUBLICATION OF DPA PLANS IN 1991, THE PLANNING AUTHORITY HAD BEEN UNDERTAKING ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS UNDER SECTION 23 OF THE ORDINANCE BY SERVING NOTICES ON PEOPLE CARRYING OUT UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENTS.

"ALLEGED OFFENDERS WERE GIVEN A CHANCE TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE NOTICES BY EITHER DISCONTINUING THE UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENTS OR OBTAINING PLANNING PERMISSION.

"UP TO NOW, PROSECUTION HAS ONLY BEEN INSTIGATED FOR NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE NOTICES," THE DIRECTOR SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT ONE OF THE REASONS FOR NOT TAKING IMMEDIATE PROSECUTION ACTIONS IN THE PAST WAS THE PUBLIC'S UNFAMILIARITY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS WHEN THE DPA SYSTEM WAS FIRST INTRODUCED.

"IT IS TIME TO TAKE TOUGHER ACTIONS NOW BY PROSECUTING OFFENDERS WITHOUT NECESSARILY GOING THROUGH THE PROCESS OF SERVING NOTICES.

"THE SYSTEM HAS NOW BEEN IN PLACE FOR OVER TWO YEARS AND PEOPLE CONCERNED SHOULD BE WELL AWARE OF THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS," THE DIRECTOR SAID.

UP TO SEPTEMBER 1993, THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT HAS INVESTIGATED 174 CASES OF SUSPECTED UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

SUCH DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDED STORAGE OF CONTAINERS AND TRAILERS, DUMPING AND SITE FORMATION WORK, STORAGE OF OTHER MATERIALS, CAR PARKING OR STRIPPING YARDS AND WORKSHOPS.

AFTER INVESTIGATION, A TOTAL OF 574 ENFORCEMENT NOTICES IN RESPECT OF 85 CASES, 20 STOP NOTICES IN RESPECT OF FOUR CASES AND FOUR REINSTATEMENT NOTICES IN RESPECT OF ONE CASE HAVE BEEN SERVED.

NINETEEN CASES HAVE BEEN DISCONTINUED AFTER THE ISSUE OF THE NOTICES.

UP TILL NOW, 30 DEFENDENTS IN NINE CASES HAVE BEEN PROSECUTED, AMONG WHOM 11 HAVE BEEN CONVICTED AND FINED FROM \$7,500 TO \$81,500, TWO ARE WAITING FOR THE COURT'S DECISION AND 17 WILL TAKE PLEA IN DUE COURSE.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1993

- 3 -

GOVERNOR TO VISIT MACAU THIS EVENING

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A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED THAT THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, AND MRS PATTEN WILL VISIT MACAU TODAY AT THE INVITATION OF THE GOVERNOR OF MACAU, GENERAL VASCO ROCHA VIEIRA.

MR AND MRS PATTEN WILL BE THE GUESTS OF THE GOVERNOR OF MACAU FOR DINNER AND AT A PERFORMANCE OF PUCCINI'S OPERA "TURANDOT".

MR AND MRS PATTEN WILL RETURN TO HONG KONG TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

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267 VM'S RETURNED HOME TODAY

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A GROUP OF 267 VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) RETURNED TO VIETNAM UNDER THE UNHCR'S VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION PROGRAMME.

COMPRISING 86 MEN, 77 WOMEN, 58 BOYS AND 46 GIRLS, THEY WERE THE 174TH BATCH TO GO BACK UNDER THE PROGRAMME.

THIS GROUP BROUGHT TO 8,547 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS WHO HAVE RETURNED VOLUNTARILY THIS YEAR, AND TO 34,859 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF RETURNEES SINCE THE PROGRAMME STARTED IN MARCH 1989.

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CLOSURE OF UNAUTHORISED STRUCTURES

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THE BUILDING AUTHORITY IS SEEKING TO CLOSE FOUR UNAUTHORISED STRUCTURES AT A BUILDING IN KWUN TONG SO THAT THEY CAN BE DEMOLISHED WITHOUT CAUSING DANGER TO THE OCCUPIERS AND THE PUBLIC.

THE UNAUTHORISED SINGLE-STOREY STRUCTURES ARE LOCATED ON THE FIRST FLOOR, FLAT ROOF OF YEE CHEONG BUILDING AT 3-15 KA LOK STREET AND 18 SHUI NING STREET.

THESE STRUCTURES ARE USED EITHER FOR DWELLING OR STORAGE.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A CLOSURE ORDER FROM THE HONG KONG DISTRICT COURT UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE ON MARCH 2, 1994 WAS POSTED ON THE PREMISES TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

DEMOLITION OF THE UNAUTHORISED STRUCTURES WILL START AS SOON AS THE CLOSURE ORDERS ARE ISSUED.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1993

- 4 -

FRESH WATER CUT IN THE PEAK  
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FRESH AND SALT WATER SUPPLY TO SOME PREMISES IN THE PEAK WILL GO OFF FROM 11 PM ON FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 5) TO 6 AM THE FOLLOWING DAY TO FACILITATE WASTE DETECTION WORK ON WATERMAINS.

THE SUSPENSION WILL AFFECT ALL THE PREMISES AT WATFORD ROAD, MANSFIELD ROAD, GUILDFORD ROAD, COOMBE ROAD, MIDDLE GAP ROAD, MOUNT CAMERON ROAD, ROSMEAD ROAD, 21-50 MAGAZINE GAP ROAD, 1-3 BARKER ROAD AND 25-56 PEAK ROAD.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND  
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS  
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\$ MILLION  
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OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	2,890
REVERSAL OF LAF	+110
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	3,000
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	-25
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	2,975
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER TWI 113.3 *-0.1* 3.11.1993	

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS		EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS				
TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	2.82 PCT	13 MONTHS	2411	4.625	101.36	3.31
1 MONTH	2.81 PCT	16 MONTHS	2502	4.75	101.61	3.48
3 MONTHS	2.83 PCT	19 MONTHS	2505	3.75	99.99	3.79
6 MONTHS	2.97 PCT	22 MONTHS	2508	4.625	101.27	3.92
12 MONTHS	3.31 PCT	36 MONTHS	3610	4.20	99.49	4.43

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 21,625 MN

CLOSED 3 NOVEMBER 1993

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## SUPPLEMENT

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1993

### CONTENTS

### PAGE NO.

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL:

PROPOSED CENTRAL COMPENSATION FUND - A STEP BACKWARDS .....	1
LOCALISING STATE SECRETS-RELATED LAWS .....	3
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES .....	4
NEW STRATEGY TO SAFEGUARD MEDICAL RECORDS .....	5
LAW TO PREVENT TRANSMISSION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES ADEQUATE .	5
WATER QUALITY BEING CLOSELY MONITORED .....	6
LANGUAGE STANDARDS OF LOCAL STUDENTS NOT FALLING .....	7
FIRST JOINT ADMISSION SCHEME DUE FOR REVIEW .....	8
COMMUNITY ACCESS ONTO CABLE TV SYSTEM POSSIBLE .....	9
NO INTENTION TO MAKE ACCOUNTING RATES PUBLIC .....	10
NO PRIVACY INTERFERENCE IN PROPERTY OWNERSHIP SURVEY .....	11
NO REPORT OF CONTAINER COLLAPSE IN RECENT YEARS .....	11
CLASSIFICATION OF INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS TO BE REVIEWED .....	12
HUMAN RESOURCE DEMAND FOR CONSTRUCTION SITES STUDIED .....	13
ADEQUATE POLICE PRESENCE ON STREETS NEEDED: S FOR S .....	13
FIVE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS PRESENTED TO UN: SHA .....	14

/RECORDS ON .....

CONTENTS

PAGE NO.

RECORDS ON FORCED RECRUITMENT OF 'COMFORT WOMEN' UNAVAILABLE	14
OVERSEAS PUBLICITY FOR PHASED BN(O) REGISTRATION PROGRAMME ..	15
NO IMMEDIATE PLAN TO PUBLISH BOOKLET OF PERFORMANCE PLEDGES .	16
PRIORITY DISCS FOR ELDERLY PATIENTS UNDER REGULAR REVIEW ....	17
ACAN STUDIES WAYS TO HELP YOUNG DRUG ABUSERS .....	17
RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES FOR THE ELDERLY TO BE LICENSED .....	18
LEGCO ASKS GOVT TO SET UP CENTRAL COMPENSATION FUND .....	19

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1993

- 1 -

PROPOSED CENTRAL COMPENSATION FUND - A STEP BACKWARDS

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THE GOVERNMENT IS FAR FROM STANDING STILL WHEN IT COMES TO GIVING BETTER PROTECTION TO INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT VICTIMS, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID.

MR LEUNG POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN WORKING HARD TO MAKE SURE THAT EMPLOYEES' INTERESTS UNDER THE LAW WERE WELL PROTECTED.

RECENT EXAMPLES OF IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDE ENHANCEMENT OF THE MAXIMUM LEVELS OF EMPLOYEES COMPENSATION, IMPROVEMENT TO THE SCHEDULE FOR ASSESSMENT OF PERMANENT INCAPACITY, AND A NEW PROVISION TO ENABLE EMPLOYEES TO MAKE DIRECT CLAIMS AGAINST AN INSURER UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.

IN ADDITION, THE LIST OF COMPENSATORY OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES HAS BEEN EXPANDED, AND A LOAN SCHEME HAS BEEN SET UP BY THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO INJURED EMPLOYEES AND DEPENDENTS OF DECEASED EMPLOYEES WHO MAY BE IN HARDSHIP AS A RESULT OF WORK ACCIDENTS.

MR LEUNG WAS SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT DURING THE MOTION DEBATE ON EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

AT PRESENT, THE EMPLOYEES COMPENSATION SYSTEM IS UNDERPINNED BY TWO STATUTES: THE EMPLOYEES COMPENSATION ORDINANCE AND THE PNEUMOCONIOSIS COMPENSATION ORDINANCE.

THE FORMER OPERATES ON THE CONCEPT OF INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYER LIABILITY WHERE ALL EMPLOYERS ARE REQUIRED TO INSURE THEIR LIABILITIES WITH AUTHORISED INSURERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

BY CONTRAST, THE PNEUMOCONIOSIS COMPENSATION ORDINANCE OPERATES ON A COLLECTIVE LIABILITY BASIS WHERE COMPENSATION IS CHARGED TO A LEVY PAID BY THE QUARRYING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES.

WHILE AGREEING THAT THERE WAS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT UNDER THE PRESENT SYSTEM, THE SECRETARY SAID HE FAILED TO SEE HOW A CENTRAL COMPENSATION SYSTEM WOULD FUNCTION BETTER.

"WE MUST NOT MAKE THE MISTAKE OF RUSHING TO A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE TO THE SYSTEM, SIMPLY BECAUSE IT IS NOT PERFECT," MR LEUNG STATED. "SUCH A MISTAKE COULD HAVE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS AND COULD BE VERY EXPENSIVE TO MAKE GOOD LATER.

"UNLESS AND UNTIL THERE IS CLEAR PROOF THAT THE PRESENT SYSTEM FAILS TO ACHIEVE THE PURPOSE IT IS INTENDED, WHICH IS DEFINITELY NOT THE CASE AT PRESENT, THE ADMINISTRATION IS OF THE VIEW THAT WE SHOULD NOT TAKE SUCH A DRASTIC STEP AS PROPOSED IN THE MOTION."

DURING THE DEBATE, MEMBERS HAD POINTED TO A NUMBER OF DEFICIENCIES UNDER THE EXISTING SYSTEM, FOR WHICH THE SECRETARY ANSWERED POINT BY POINT:

/ON INSURANCE .....

ON INSURANCE COVER, MR LEUNG SAID EMPLOYERS WERE HELD LIABLE FOR ANY LIABILITIES UNDER THE EMPLOYEES COMPENSATION ORDINANCE AND AT COMMON LAW. IT IS IN THEIR OWN INTEREST TO TAKE OUT INSURANCE COVER FOR EMPLOYEES, FOR OTHERWISE THEY FACE THE LIABILITIES PERSONALLY.

THE EMPLOYEES COMPENSATION ASSISTANCE SCHEME WILL PROVIDE COVERAGE FOR ACCIDENT VICTIMS IN CASES WHERE EMPLOYERS HAVE NOT SOUGHT INSURANCE COVER AND ARE UNABLE TO PAY.

TURNING TO THE WAITING TIME FOR INJURY ASSESSMENT AND COMPENSATION, MR LEUNG EXPLAINED THAT IN CASE OF SERIOUS ACCIDENTS, VICTIMS HAD TO BE GIVEN TIME TO RECOVER BEFORE THE EXTENT OF PERMANENT INJURY COULD BE ACCURATELY ASSESSED.

"THIS WILL HAVE TO BE THE CASE IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER THE INSURANCE SCHEME IS ADMINISTERED CENTRALLY OR BY PRIVATE COMPANIES," HE STATED.

"FOR THESE CASES, EMPLOYEES ARE ENTITLED TO PERIODIC PAYMENTS OF TWO-THIRDS OF THEIR MONTHLY SALARIES WHILE ON SICK LEAVE.

"WHERE EMPLOYERS FAIL TO MAKE SUCH PAYMENTS, THE SPECIAL LOAN FUND THAT WE HAVE SET UP EARLIER THIS YEAR WOULD CATER FOR THEIR SHORT-TERM NEEDS WHILE THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT TAKES ENFORCEMENT ACTION AGAINST THE EMPLOYERS."

FOR MINOR CASES INVOLVING NO PERMANENT INJURY AND WITH SICK LEAVE OF NOT MORE THAN SEVEN DAYS, THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY INTRODUCED A DIRECT SETTLEMENT SYSTEM LAST YEAR TO SPEED UP THE PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION.

MEMBERS ALSO MENTIONED EXCESSIVE PROFITS BY INSURANCE COMPANIES. IN THIS RESPECT, MR LEUNG NOTED, THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE WAS TO ENSURE THAT EMPLOYEES WHO WERE ENTITLED TO COMPENSATION UNDER THE LAW RECEIVED THE AMOUNTS THAT WERE DUE TO THEM, ON TIME AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LEGAL ENTITLEMENTS.

HE ALSO QUOTED STATISTICS TO CLARIFY THE MISCONCEPTION CONCERNING THE COMPENSATION PAY-OUT TO INSURANCE PREMIUM RATIO.

IN RESPONSE TO CLAIMS THAT INSURANCE COMPANIES HAVE NO REGARD TO THE INSURANCE RECORDS OF PARTICULAR TRADES OR PARTICULAR COMPANIES, MR LEUNG SAID IT WAS SIMPLY A MATTER OF MARKET LOGIC THAT INSURANCE COMPANIES WOULD SEEK TO MATCH THEIR INSURANCE PREMIUM WITH THEIR CLAIMS EXPERIENCE AND THE POTENTIAL RISKS THEY FACE FROM THEIR CLIENTS.

"INDEED, THE ACCIDENT INSURANCE ASSOCIATION COLLECTS INDUSTRY-WIDE CLAIMS STATISTICS AND ADVISES ITS MEMBERS ON A WIDE RANGE OF MATTERS, INCLUDING THE PROPER LEVEL OF PREMIUMS IN RESPECT OF EACH TYPE OF RISKS.

"IT MUST BE HIGHLY DOUBTFUL WHETHER A CENTRAL INSURANCE AGENCY WOULD BE ABLE TO PERFORM BETTER THAN THE MARKET IN THIS REGARD."

ON THE SUGGESTION TO GROUP ALL COMPENSATION SCHEMES UNDER ONE ROOF, MEMBERS WERE REMINDED THAT THE PRESENT TWO SYSTEMS OF COMPENSATION WERE BASED ON DIFFERENT CONCEPTS OF LIABILITY AND WERE OPERATED DIFFERENTLY.

THERE ARE NO PERCEIVABLE BENEFITS IN OPERATING AN INDIVIDUAL LIABILITY SYSTEM UNDER THE SAME ROOF, MR LEUNG SAID.

CONCLUDING, THE SECRETARY SAID HE SAW NO GOOD REASON, BUT INSTEAD A LOT OF DOWNSIDE RISKS, IN THE PROPOSAL TO SET UP A CENTRAL COMPENSATION FUND FOR EMPLOYEES WHICH WOULD "TURN A COMPETITIVE MARKET SYSTEM INTO A CENTRAL MONOPOLY".

"WHY SHOULD WE FOLLOW THE MUDDY FOOT-STEPS WHICH ARE BUSILY BEING ABANDONED ELSEWHERE?" HE ASKED.

"THIS IS NOT THE HONG KONG WAY. IT WOULD INDEED BE A SIGNIFICANT STEP BACKWARDS IF WE WERE TO ADOPT THE MOTION."

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LOCALISING STATE SECRETS-RELATED LAWS

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS A PROGRAMME FOR LOCALISING CERTAIN UNITED KINGDOM ENACTMENTS WHICH NOW APPLY TO HONG KONG AND WILL CONTINUE TO APPLY HERE, SUBJECT TO CHANGES, AFTER JUNE 30, 1997.

IT ALSO HAS A PROGRAMME TO ADAPT HONG KONG LAWS SO THAT THEY WILL BE CONSISTENT WITH THE BASIC LAW ON JULY 1, 1997, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

LOCAL LEGISLATION TO REPLACE THE UK OFFICIAL SECRETS ACTS HAS NOT YET BEEN, AND IS NOT YET BEING, DRAFTED, HE NOTED.

"HOWEVER, WE HAVE DONE SOME WORK ON THIS SUBJECT, AND I EXPECT TO PUT PROPOSALS TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS ALSO REVIEWING THE PROVISIONS IN THE CRIMES ORDINANCE RELATING TO TREASON AND OTHER OFFENCES AGAINST THE CROWN.

AGAIN, PROPOSALS WILL BE PUT TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.

"WE WILL WISH IN DUE COURSE TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS WITH THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT," MR ASPREY SAID.

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CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT  
CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES

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THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT IN DEVELOPING SCHOOL CURRICULA, NEW ELEMENTS ARISING DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD WOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TIK CHI-YUEN, MR LEUNG NOTED THAT A NEW SUBJECT, GENERAL STUDIES, WAS BEING DEVELOPED FOR INTRODUCTION AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL IN 1996.

"IT EMBODIES BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHINESE POLITICAL SYSTEM AS WELL AS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHINA AND THE FUTURE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION," HE SAID.

AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL, TWO SUBJECTS - ECONOMIC AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS - ARE CURRENTLY BEING REVIEWED SO AS TO PUT MORE EMPHASIS ON THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HONG KONG AND CHINA.

THE SUBJECT OF LIBERAL STUDIES AT THE ADVANCED SUPPLEMENTARY LEVEL WAS ALSO INTRODUCED LAST YEAR. IT ADDRESSES CURRENT ISSUES ON CHINA, INCLUDING PHILOSOPHIES THAT CHARACTERISE GOVERNMENTS IN CHINA AND HONG KONG, CHINA'S MODERNISATION POLICY AND HER LEGAL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT SYSTEMS.

MR LEUNG SAID SCHOOLS WERE ENCOURAGED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO ORGANISE EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES TO EXPAND STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE ON CURRENT ISSUES, ENHANCE THEIR GENERAL AWARENESS AND ENABLE THEM TO FORM BALANCED VIEWS.

IN ADDITION, TEACHING KITS ON CIVIC EDUCATION, THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION AND THE BASIC LAW HAVE BEEN PROVIDED TO ASSIST TEACHERS IN COVERING THESE IMPORTANT TOPICS.

TURNING TO ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION, MR LEUNG SAID THE RESPONSIBILITY WAS CURRENTLY VESTED IN SOME TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS WHICH WERE ABLE TO DISCHARGE IT ON THEIR OWN, AND IN OTHERS WITH THE HELP OF THE HONG KONG COUNCIL FOR ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION.

"LIKE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION IS A CONTINUOUS PROCESS WHICH TAKES INTO ACCOUNT CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES.

"THERE IS, AS FAR AS WE CAN SEE, NO SPECIFIC REQUIREMENT ARISING FROM THE TRANSITION TO BE ADDRESSED IN POLICY AND PRACTICAL TERMS," HE ADDED.

AS REGARDS THE RECOGNITION IN HONG KONG OF PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (PRC) ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS, THE SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS ALREADY A MECHANISM UNDER WHICH HOLDERS OF PRC OR OTHER OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS MIGHT BE ASSESSED FOR SUITABILITY TO TAKE UP TEACHING AT THE NON-GRADUATE LEVEL.

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TEACHER EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS WILL BE LOOKING INTO THE POSITION OF GRADUATE TEACHING POSTS, MR LEUNG SAID.

## NEW STRATEGY TO SAFEGUARD MEDICAL RECORDS

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THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY IS DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY WHICH SAFEGUARDS THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF MEDICAL RECORDS WHILE IMPROVING QUALITY AND CONTINUITY OF PATIENT CARE, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HOWARD YOUNG, MRS WONG SAID MEDICAL RECORDS CONTAINED PRIVILEGED INFORMATION WHICH COULD ATTRACT CLAIMS OF CONFIDENTIALITY.

"NO INFORMATION CAN BE RELEASED WITHOUT THE EXPLICIT CONSENT OF THE PATIENT; OR THE INFORMATION IS REQUIRED BY LAW," SHE STATED.

MEANWHILE, MRS WONG ADDED, A TERRITORY-WIDE SYSTEM OF COMPUTERISED PATIENT MASTER INDEX WAS BEING FULLY DEVELOPED BASED ON IDENTITY CARD NUMBERS.

"THIS INDEX WILL PROVIDE ACCESS TO BASIC PERSONAL PARTICULARS, DEMOGRAPHIC DATA AND BRIEF MEDICAL HISTORIES OF PATIENTS FOR DOCTORS IN ALL PUBLIC HOSPITALS," SHE SAID.

"IN THE LONG TERM, IT WILL BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE THE CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS OF PATIENTS AND TYPES OF TREATMENT PERFORMED.

"THIS WILL BE ACHIEVED INITIALLY THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MEDICAL RECORDS ABSTRACTING SYSTEM, CURRENTLY BEING PILOTED IN THREE HOSPITALS."

MRS WONG SAID THE SYSTEM WOULD BE SUPPLEMENTED BY A COMPUTERISED LABORATORY MANAGEMENT/REPORTING SYSTEM IN NINE MAJOR HOSPITALS BY 1997 TO PROVIDE CLINICAL DATA ON LABORATORY INVESTIGATION.

A PHARMACY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM WILL ALSO BE INTRODUCED TO ONE HOSPITAL IN 1994/95 PROVIDING DATA ON DRUG PRESCRIPTION, SHE ADDED.

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## LAW TO PREVENT TRANSMISSION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES ADEQUATE

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THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH IS EMPOWERED UNDER THE QUARANTINE AND PREVENTION OF DISEASES ORDINANCE TO ENTER ANY PREMISES SUSPECTED TO BE THE SEAT OF TRANSMISSION OF ANY INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

HE MAY ALSO ORDER DISINFECTION OF THE SAME TO HIS SATISFACTION AND, AS NECESSARY, CLOSE THE PREMISES.

"WE DO NOT CONSIDER FURTHER LEGISLATION TO BE REQUIRED," THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HUANG CHEN-YA IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

DR HUANG HAD ASKED THAT IN VIEW OF THE LIKELY INFECTION OF HEPATITIS AND HIV VIRUSES THROUGH TATTOOS, WHETHER MEASURES HAD BEEN TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT EQUIPMENT USED IN THE TATTOO TRADE WAS SAFE AND HYGIENIC.

/MRS WONG .....

MRS WONG SAID THE "GUIDELINES ON THE PREVENTION OF TRANSMISSION OF BLOOD-BORNE DISEASES" PUBLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, WERE DISTRIBUTED TO ALL OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF TATTOO PARLOURS IN HONG KONG.

"THE GUIDELINES FOCUS PARTICULARLY ON THE RISKS OF HEPATITIS-B AND HIV TRANSMISSION.

"THEY ALSO GIVE CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS ON MAINTENANCE OF HYGIENIC STANDARD, DISINFECTION OF EQUIPMENT AND DISPOSAL OF SHARPS FOR THESE ESTABLISHMENTS," SHE SAID.

IN ADDITION, THE DEPARTMENT CONDUCTS REGULAR HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMME ON PREVENTION OF HEPATITIS-B AND HIV INFECTIONS.

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WATER QUALITY BEING CLOSELY MONITORED  
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THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN CLOSELY MONITORING THE QUALITY OF TREATED WATER IN THEIR SUPPLY SYSTEM TO ENSURE THE WHOLESOMENESS OF WATER SUPPLIED TO CONSUMERS, THE SECRETARY FOR WORKS, MR JAMES BLAKE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TANG SIU-TONG, MR BLAKE SAID THE QUALITY OF WATER IN GOVERNMENT DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IN TUEN MUN AND YUEN LONG AREAS WERE NORMAL AND SATISFACTORY.

HE SAID WSD STAFF TOOK 274 WATER SAMPLES FOR TEST FROM NINE GOVERNMENT HOUSING ESTATES AND TWO PRIVATE ESTATES IN AUGUST.

THE TEST RESULTS REVEALED THAT ALL SAMPLES TAKEN FROM THE GOVERNMENT DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM JUST OUTSIDE THE ESTATES WERE CLEAR AND SATISFACTORY.

FOR THE WATER SAMPLES TAKEN INSIDE THE ESTATES, 92 PER CENT WERE FOUND TO BE VISUALLY CLEAR AND SATISFACTORY, AND THE REMAINING SAMPLES WERE FOUND TO BE SLIGHTLY TURBID DUE TO HIGH IRON CONTENT, BUT WERE IN GENERAL BACTERIOLOGICALLY SATISFACTORY, HE SAID.

MR BLAKE SAID THE PROBLEM OF DISCOLOURED TAP WATER WAS BASICALLY DUE TO CORROSION OF THE INTERNAL SURFACE OF THE GALVANISED STEEL PIPES COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE "INSIDE SERVICE" WITHIN THE CONSUMERS' PREMISES.

AS A RESULT, EXCESSIVE AMOUNT OF FINE IRON PARTICLES REMAIN IN SUSPENSION IN THE WATER, HE SAID.

THE PROBLEM IS PARTICULARLY ACUTE WHEN THE WATER HAS BEEN STANDING IDLE FOR SOME TIME, OR WHEN IT IS FIRST DRAWN OUT TAP IN THE MORNING.

UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCE, THE WATER SHOULD BECOME CLEAR AFTER THE TAP HAS BEEN TURNED ON FOR A WHILE.

/IN ORDER .....

IN ORDER TO AVOID THE PROBLEM IN THE LONGER TERM, MR BLAKE SAID, BOTH THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT AND THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT ARE NOW ACTIVELY CONSIDERING THE POSSIBLE USE OF ALTERNATIVE NON-FERROUS PIPE MATERIALS WHICH WILL NOT BE SUSCEPTIBLE TO RUSTING.

MEANWHILE, FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS, REGULAR MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME WILL CONTINUE TO BE CARRIED OUT TO ENSURE THAT STORAGE TANKS AND WATER SYSTEMS IN ALL HOUSING ESTATES ARE KEPT CLEAN, AND THAT WHERE THE EXISTING PIPES NEED TO BE RENEWED, THEY WILL BE REPLACED BY PIPES MADE OF NON-FERROUS MATERIALS, HE SAID.

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#### LANGUAGE STANDARDS OF LOCAL STUDENTS NOT FALLING

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THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE OVERALL STANDARD IN CHINESE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES FOR SECONDARY FIVE STUDENTS IN RECENT YEARS, ACCORDING TO THE RESULTS OF THE HONG KONG CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION EXAMINATION.

THE HONG KONG ATTAINMENT TESTS OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS ALSO INDICATED THAT THE STANDARDS OF PRIMARY ONE TO SECONDARY THREE STUDENTS IN THE TWO SUBJECTS HAD EITHER RISEN GRADUALLY OR REMAINED THE SAME.

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

MR LEUNG OBSERVED THAT THE DEMAND FOR THOSE WHO WERE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WELL IN CHINESE AND ENGLISH HAD INCREASED TREMENDOUSLY AS HONG KONG'S POSITION AS A LEADING INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL AND SERVICE CENTRE BECAME MORE PROMINENT.

"THIS DEVELOPMENT HAS LED TO THE GENERAL BELIEF THAT LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY, PARTICULARLY IN ENGLISH, HAS FALLEN," HE SAID.

"WE HAVE BEEN ADVISED THAT SOME OF THE MORE EFFECTIVE WAYS TO IMPROVE LANGUAGE STANDARDS ARE TO EXPOSE STUDENTS TO MORE LANGUAGE USAGE AND TO IMPROVE THE SKILLS OF THE LANGUAGE TEACHERS.

"ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WILL BE NEEDED TO INITIATE THESE IMPROVEMENTS AND TO TEST NEW METHODOLOGIES," HE ADDED.

NOTING THAT A SUBSTANTIAL PROPORTION OF THE RECURRENT BUDGET FOR SCHOOL AND TEACHER TRAINING WAS SPENT ON LANGUAGE EDUCATION, MR LEUNG SAID SPECIFIC MEASURES WERE ALSO INTRODUCED OVER THE PAST FIVE SCHOOLS YEARS (1988/89 TO 1992/93) TO IMPROVE LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

OF THE \$485 MILLION SPENT IN THIS RESPECT, MOST HAD BEEN USED IN PROVIDING ADDITIONAL CHINESE LANGUAGE TEACHERS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS (INVOLVING 359 TEACHERS AND \$308 MILLION) AND ADDITIONAL ENGLISH TEACHERS FOR SCHOOLS WHICH USE CHINESE AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION (INVOLVING 139 TEACHERS AND \$107 MILLION).

THE GOVERNMENT ALSO INTENDS TO SET UP A COMMITTEE TO ADVISE THE ADMINISTRATION ON THE MOST EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE USE OF THE \$300 MILLION LANGUAGE FUND PROPOSED IN THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS.

THE SECRETARY BELIEVED THAT THE FUND WOULD ENABLE NEW INITIATIVES TO BE TAKEN, PROBLEM AREAS TO BE STUDIED AND TEMPORARY GAPS IN FUNDING TO BE FILLED.

"IT WILL ADD IMPETUS TO THE EFFORTS NOW BEING MADE IN SCHOOLS AND BY THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE TO RAISE LANGUAGE STANDARDS.

"THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WILL MONITOR THE APPROVED PROGRAMMES TO ENSURE THAT RESOURCES ARE PROPERLY USED AND THAT THE QUALITY OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SCHOOLS IS ENHANCED."

ON THE PROVISION OF QUALIFIED CHINESE AND ENGLISH TEACHERS, MR LEUNG SAID THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TEACHER EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS WAS REVIEWING THE CASE AND PRACTICALITIES FOR INCREASING THE PROPORTION OF SUCH SUBJECT-TRAINED TEACHERS.

THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION IS ALSO REVIEWING ITS PROGRAMME FOR TRAINING LANGUAGE TEACHERS, AS PART OF THE OVERALL EXERCISE TO UPGRADE THE PREPARATION AND IN-SERVICE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS.

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#### FIRST JOINT ADMISSION SCHEME DUE FOR REVIEW

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THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT OF THE JOINT ADMISSION SCHEME OF THE POLYTECHNICS, TECHNICAL INSTITUTES AND COLLEGES (JASPIC) IS TO UNDERTAKE A REVIEW OF THE FIRST YEAR OPERATION OF THE SCHEME TO SEE HOW IT MAY BE IMPROVED.

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

MR LEUNG SAID SOME 30 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE SCHEME HAD BEEN RECEIVED SO FAR.

"ALL THESE COMPLAINTS HAVE BEEN RESOLVED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE APPLICANTS."

"MOST OF THEM CONCERNED THE OFFER OF PLACES BY THE PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS DURING THE ADMISSION PROCESS," HE SAID.

"THESE OCCURRED LARGELY DURING THE CLEARING PERIOD AND REFLECTED A LEARNING PROCESS FOR BOTH THE APPLICANTS AND THE PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS."

IN HIS REPLY, MR LEUNG ALSO REVEALED THAT IN 1993/94, THE TWO POLYTECHNICS PROVIDED A TOTAL OF 2,621 FIRST YEAR SUB-DEGREE PLACES WHILE THE TECHNICAL COLLEGES PROVIDED 1,400 PLACES.

CURRENT REGISTRATION FIGURES SHOW THAT THESE INSTITUTIONS HAVE OVER-ENROLLED BY ABOUT THREE TO FIVE PER CENT.

THE TWO POLYTECHNICS ALSO OFFER THREE DIPLOMA AND 31 HIGHER DIPLOMA COURSES WHILE THE TECHNICAL INSTITUTES AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES OFFER A TOTAL OF 56 DIPLOMA COURSES AND 30 HIGHER DIPLOMA COURSES.

OF ALL THE COURSES OFFERED, ONE COURSE BY THE POLYTECHNICS IS UNDER-ENROLLED BY FIVE PLACES, AND TWO COURSES BY THE TECHNICAL COLLEGES ARE UNDER-ENROLLED BY FIVE AND EIGHT PLACES RESPECTIVELY.

MR LEUNG EXPLAINED THAT THE UNDER-ENROLMENT IN THE TECHNICAL INSTITUTES OCCURRED MAINLY IN CERTAIN DISCIPLINES, NAMELY MECHANICAL AND MANUFACTURING ENGINEERING, TEXTILES AND CLOTHING, PRINTING AND HOTEL STUDIES.

"THE REASONS FOR THE UNDER-ENROLMENT ARE COMPLEX INVOLVING CHOICE OF PARENTS AND STUDENTS BUT CERTAIN OBJECTIVE FACTORS ARE ALSO RELEVANT.

"THESE INCLUDE THE INCREASED PROVISION OF POST-SECONDARY FIVE PLACES IN GENERAL EDUCATION; A REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF SECONDARY FIVE STUDENTS MEETING THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR DIPLOMA COURSES; AND CHANGES IN THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF HONG KONG RESULTING IN CHANGES IN EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATES OF SOME COURSES."

HE SAID THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL WOULD CONTINUE TO EXAMINE THE OVERALL PROVISION OF COURSES IN THE LIGHT OF PROJECTED MANPOWER REQUIREMENTS AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT SURVEYS.

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COMMUNITY ACCESS ONTO CABLE TV SYSTEM POSSIBLE

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THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT SOME AIR-TIME ON THE GOVERNMENT CHANNELS ON THE WHARF CABLE TV SYSTEM MIGHT BE MADE AVAILABLE TO COMMUNITY GROUPS, THE SECRETARY FOR RECREATION AND CULTURE, MR JAMES SO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MRS PEGGY LAM, MR SO SAID THIS WAS A COMPLEX MATTER AND MUCH CAREFUL THOUGHT NEEDED TO BE GIVEN BEFORE A FIRM POLICY COULD BE DRAWN UP.

UNDER WHARF CABLE'S LICENCE, IT IS REQUIRED TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT, FREE OF CHARGE AND EXPENSE, THE USE OF NOT MORE THAN THREE CHANNELS WHEN REQUESTED IN WRITING BY THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY.

THIS IS TO ENSURE THAT PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND EDUCATION PROGRAMMES, WHICH ARE NORMALLY NOT COMMERCIALY ATTRACTIVE TO COMMERCIAL BROADCASTERS, MAY HAVE A BROADCAST AVENUE.

"OUR PRESENT THINKING IS FOR THESE PROGRAMMES TO BE PRODUCED BY RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG," SAID MR SO.

"BUT IT IS UNLIKELY TO HAVE SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO PRODUCE ENOUGH PROGRAMMES TO FILL THE AIR-TIME FOR ALL THREE GOVERNMENT CHANNELS.

"IT IS THEREFORE POSSIBLE THAT SOME AIR-TIME MIGHT BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR ACCESS BY COMMUNITY GROUPS."

THE GOVERNMENT IS SEEKING MORE INFORMATION OVERSEAS TO SEE HOW OTHER AUTHORITIES DEAL WITH COMMUNITY ACCESS ONTO CABLE TV SYSTEMS.

LEGCO'S RECREATION AND CULTURE PANEL WILL BE CONSULTED BEFORE ANY POLICY ON COMMUNITY ACCESS ONTO THE WHARF CABLE TV SYSTEM IS FINALISED.

MR SO ALSO NOTED THAT THE THREE CHANNELS WERE ONLY REQUIRED TO BE MADE AVAILABLE AFTER JANUARY 1, 1995 AND WERE SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FREQUENCY SPECTRUM.

HOWEVER, HE DID NOT EXPECT WHARF CABLE TO BE ABLE TO MEET THIS REQUIREMENT UNTIL ITS SYSTEM WAS SWITCHED OVER TO OPTIC FIBRE IN THREE YEARS' TIME.

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NO INTENTION TO MAKE ACCOUNTING RATES PUBLIC  
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THE INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE SERVICES' ACCOUNTING RATES WILL NOT BE DISCLOSED, AND THE PUBLIC ARE PROTECTED BY THE HONG KONG TELECOMMUNICATION ORDINANCE AND THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY (TA).

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MR GORDON SIU, IN A REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LAU CHIN-SHEK IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID DISCLOSING PUBLIC ACCOUNTING RATES WOULD WEAKEN HONG KONG TELECOM INTERNATIONAL'S (HKTI) NEGOTIATING POSITION, ADDING THAT THIS WOULD LEAD TO A POORER OUTCOME FOR HONG KONG AND HIGHER TARIFFS FOR CONSUMERS.

TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC, MR SIU SAID THE TA HAD FULL DETAILS OF ALL ACCOUNTING RATE AGREEMENTS ENTERED INTO BY THE COMPANY AND THE PROFITABILITY OF THE IDD SERVICE ON A ROUTE-BY-ROUTE BASIS.

UNDER THE TELECOMMUNICATION ORDINANCE, THE TA IS EMPOWERED TO DETERMINE THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF NETWORK INTERCONNECTION AND TO PREVENT ANY DISCRIMINATORY PRICING BY HKTI IN RELATION TO THE SERVICES IT OFFERS TO OTHER OPERATORS, HE SAID.

INTRODUCED IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY, THE ACCOUNTING RATE IS A CHARGE BY OVERSEAS TELEPHONE COMPANIES TO DELIVER CALLS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES.

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NO PRIVACY INTERFERENCE IN PROPERTY OWNERSHIP SURVEY  
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THE RECENT SURVEY BY THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT ON THE EXTENT OF PROPERTY OWNERSHIP AMONG PUBLIC RENTAL HOUSING TENANTS DID NOT CONSTITUTE ANY INTERFERENCE WITH PRIVACY, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON EMILY LAU WAI-HING, MR EASON SAID THE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED BY MATCHING THE DEPARTMENT'S RECORDS WITH THE IDENTITY OF PROPERTY OWNERS REGISTERED AT THE LAND REGISTRY.

"AS THE REGISTERS IN THE LAND REGISTRY ARE OPEN TO PUBLIC INSPECTION, THE QUESTION OF INTERFERENCE WITH PRIVACY DOES NOT ARISE," HE SAID.

MR EASON SAID THE SURVEY WAS A FACT-FINDING EXERCISE AND THE RESULTS WERE ANALYSED IN BROAD TERMS FOR USE AS REFERENCE ONLY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING POLICIES.

IN THE COURSE OF THE SURVEY, THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT HAD ENSURED THAT THE COLLECTED DATA WAS HANDLED WITH CARE AND ITS USE RESTRICTED TO THE GENERAL ANALYSIS OF OWNERSHIP OF DOMESTIC PROPERTIES BY PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS.

THE SURVEY FINDINGS WERE PUBLISHED IN THE AGGREGATE, AND NO INFORMATION ON INDIVIDUAL RECORDS OR TENANTS' IDENTITIES WERE RELEASED.

UNDER ESTABLISHED PRACTICE, THE RAW DATA OF THE SURVEY WAS DESTROYED AFTER PROCESSING.

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1017 NO REPORT OF CONTAINER COLLAPSE IN RECENT YEARS  
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT RECEIVED ANY REPORT OF CONTAINER COLLAPSE IN THE NEW TERRITORIES IN RECENT YEARS OR ANY REQUEST FOR REHOUSING FROM ANYONE PERCEIVING THEMSELVES AS BEING AT RISK UNDER THE CONTAINER STACKS.

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

MR EASON SAID NEVERTHELESS THE GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE OF THE LIMITED RISK POSED BY STACKS OF CONTAINERS AND A NUMBER OF PREVENTIVE MEASURES HAD ALREADY BEEN TAKEN BY THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

THE MEASURES INCLUDED THE PUBLICATION OF A BOOKLET ENTITLED "SAFE PRACTICES FOR CONTAINER HANDLING", AMENDMENTS TO THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKING ORDINANCE IN JULY 1992 TO EXTEND ITS COVERAGE TO CONTAINER STORAGE DEPOTS AND YARDS, AND THE INCORPORATION OF CONTAINER HANDLING SAFETY PROVISIONS IN THE NEW FACTORIES INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (CARGO AND CONTAINER HANDLING) REGULATIONS.

MR EASON SAID THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT, IN ADDITION TO THE ROUTINE INSPECTIONS, CONDUCTED 118 SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT INSPECTIONS AT CONTAINER YARDS LAST YEAR.

ONE SUMMON HAS BEEN ISSUED IN CONNECTION WITH THE NEW CONTAINER SAFETY REQUIREMENTS SINCE THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE NEW REGULATIONS.

ON THE LAND-USE PLANNING SIDE, WHERE PLANNING PERMISSION FROM THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD IS REQUIRED, THE BOARD CAN ALSO IMPOSE CONDITIONS TO ENSURE THAT APPROPRIATE SAFETY MEASURES ARE IN PLACE.

HOWEVER, SINCE MOST CONTAINER STORAGE YARDS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES ARE LOCATED ON PRIVATE LAND, ANY CONCERNS ABOUT SAFETY SHOULD BE TAKEN UP WITH THE OWNERS OR OPERATORS OF THE YARDS IN QUESTION.

THEREFORE, THE QUESTION OF PRIORITY FOR REHOUSING DOES NOT ARISE.

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#### CLASSIFICATION OF INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS TO BE REVIEWED

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THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT IS PLANNING TO REVIEW ITS SYSTEM OF ACCIDENT STATISTICS TOWARDS THE END OF THIS YEAR, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID.

ANY FACTORS THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO EFFECTIVE MONITORING OF ACCIDENT SITUATIONS WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, HE ADDED.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HENRY TANG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR LEUNG SAID THE CURRENT CLASSIFICATION OF INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS WAS BASED ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION.

THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT DOES NOT CLASSIFY INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS ACCORDING TO WHETHER THEY ARE CAUSED BY HUMAN FACTORS OR NON-HUMAN FACTORS.

MR LEUNG SAID: "EXPERIENCE INDICATES THAT MOST ACCIDENTS MAY BE ATTRIBUTABLE TO HUMAN FAILING OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER.

"FOR EXAMPLE, IF A MACHINE FAILS, THE CAUSE CAN USUALLY BE TRACED TO ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING CAUSES, E.G. DEFECTIVE DESIGN, IMPROPER MANUFACTURE, INCORRECT INSTALLATION, POOR MAINTENANCE, INADEQUATE TRAINING OF OPERATORS, FAILURE TO FOLLOW PROPER OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES, ETC."

MR LEUNG ALSO NOTED THAT THE ACCIDENT RATE IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY LAST YEAR WAS 302.34 ACCIDENTS PER 1,000 WORKERS EMPLOYED.

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HUMAN RESOURCE DEMAND FOR CONSTRUCTION SITES STUDIED

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THE WORKS BRANCH IS CONDUCTING A STUDY WITH A VIEW TO DEVELOP A MEDIUM TO LONG TERM FORECAST MODEL FOR ASSESSING THE DEMAND FOR HUMAN RESOURCE, INCLUDING PROFESSIONALS AND SKILLED LABOURS, AT CONSTRUCTION SITES, THE SECRETARY FOR WORKS, MR JAMES BLAKE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN HIS WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON RONALD ARCULLI, MR BLAKE SAID THE STUDY WOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT OF THE DEMAND REQUIRED BY NORMAL CONSTRUCTION WORKS IN HONG KONG, BOTH IN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS, THE AIRPORT CORE PROJECTS INCLUDING THE NEW AIRPORT ITSELF.

HE SAID HONG KONG INVESTMENTS AND INVESTMENTS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES USING PROFESSIONALS FROM HONG KONG COMPANIES ENGAGED IN CONSTRUCTION AND RELATED ACTIVITIES IN CHINA WOULD ALSO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

AS THE CURRENT STUDY IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND, MR BLAKE SAID THE METHODOLOGY HAD HAD TO BE STRUCTURED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE LIMITED AND FREQUENTLY UNTESTED STATISTICAL INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

INSOFAR AS GOVERNMENT PROJECTS ARE CONCERNED, MR BLAKE SAID, THE DEMAND SIDE INFORMATION FROM THE RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENTS OR AUTHORITY WILL BE TAKEN INTO THE MODEL.

FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR, HOWEVER, GATHERING RELIABLE INFORMATION FOR THE MODEL WILL BE INDIRECT AND HENCE LESS RELIABLE, HE SAID.

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ADEQUATE POLICE PRESENCE ON STREETS NEEDED: S FOR S

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THE TOTAL STRENGTH OF POLICE FORCE IS SOME THREE PER CENT ABOVE THE ESTABLISHMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LEE WING-TAT, MR ASPREY SAID THIS HAD BEEN ACHIEVED OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS, AS A RESULT OF SUCCESSFUL RECRUITMENT, LOW WASTAGE, AND THE REDEPLOYMENT OF MANY OFFICERS BACK TO NORMAL OPERATIONAL DUTIES.

IN ADDITION TO REGULAR POLICE OFFICERS, AUXILIARY POLICE AND THE POLICE TACTICAL UNITS HAVE ALSO BEEN DEPLOYED TO AUGMENT OPERATIONS AND STRENGTHEN PATROLLING.

"THE INCREASED POLICE PRESENCE ON THE STREETS HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN LOWERING THE OVERALL CRIME RATE AND THE RATE OF VIOLENT CRIME," HE ADDED.

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FIVE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS PRESENTED TO UN : SHA

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THE UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT WILL PRESENT FIVE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS ON HONG KONG TO THE UNITED NATIONS BETWEEN NOW AND 1997, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON LAU CHIN-SHEK, MR SUEN SAID ALL THE REPORTS WILL BE TABLED BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND WILL BE MADE PUBLIC AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED TO THE UNITED NATIONS BY THE UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT.

THE FIVE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS ARE:

- \* INITIAL REPORT UNDER THE CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT;
- \* THIRTEENTH PERIODIC REPORT UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION;
- \* FOURTH PERIODIC REPORT UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS;
- \* THIRD PERIODIC REPORT UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT - ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS;
- \* FOURTEENTH PERIODIC REPORT UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION.

MR SUEN ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT DOES NOT INTEND TO FORMALLY CONSULT OTHER PARTIES DURING THE PREPARATION OF THESE REPORTS.

BUT THIS DOES NOT PRECLUDE INTERESTED PARTIES FROM EXPRESSING THEIR VIEWS ON THESE ISSUES TO THE GOVERNMENT.

"THEY ARE ALSO FREE TO PRESENT THEIR VIEWS TO THE UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT OR THE RELEVANT UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE DIRECT," HE SAID.

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RECORDS ON FORCED RECRUITMENT OF 'COMFORT WOMEN' UNAVAILABLE

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THE GOVERNMENT FINDS NO RECORD BOTH HERE AND IN LONDON THAT CONTAIN ANY REFERENCE TO THE FORCIBLE RECRUITMENT OF "COMFORT WOMEN" DURING THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION IN HONG KONG, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"NOR DO THEY MENTION ANY INVESTIGATIONS INTO THIS SUBJECT IMMEDIATELY AFTER WORLD WAR II, NOR REPRESENTATIONS TO THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT AT THAT TIME," MR ASPREY SAID, WHEN REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON J D MCGREGOR IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

/HE SAID .....

HE SAID IT HAD NOT BEEN POSSIBLE, IN THE TIME AVAILABLE, TO MAKE A THOROUGH SEARCH OF THE ARCHIVES RELATING TO THIS PERIOD.

HE SAID THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT HAD ADVISED THAT THEY HAD NOT RECEIVED ANY APPROACHES ON THIS SUBJECT FROM HONG KONG RESIDENTS OR ASSOCIATIONS.

"WE DO NOT KNOW HOW MANY WOMEN SUFFERED IN THIS WAY, NOR HOW MANY, IF ANY, ARE STILL ALIVE. NONE HAS APPROACHED US FOR ASSISTANCE, NOR OTHERWISE BECOME KNOWN TO US.

HE SAID IF ANY SUCH CASES DID BECOME KNOWN TO THE GOVERNMENT, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER SYMPATHETICALLY HOW IT COULD ASSIST THEM.

"BUT THE SCOPE FOR LEGAL REDRESS IS CONSTRAINED BY THE SAN FRANCISCO PEACE TREATY OF 1951," HE ADDED.

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OVERSEAS PUBLICITY FOR PHASED BN(O) REGISTRATION PROGRAMME

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS ARRANGED DIFFERENT WAYS TO PUBLICISE OVERSEAS THE PHASED BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) (BN(O)) REGISTRATION PROGRAMME, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON EDWARD HO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR ASPREY SAID THESE ARRANGEMENTS ARE:

- \* REGULAR ADVERTISEMENTS ON THE TIMETABLE FOR REGISTRATION AND REMINDERS FOR EACH PHASE ARE PLACED IN NINE OVERSEAS CHINESE NEWSPAPERS AND IN THREE HONG KONG MAGAZINES WHICH ARE VERY POPULAR AMONG OVERSEAS HONG KONG RESIDENTS;
- \* INFORMATION LEAFLETS ON THE PHASED REGISTRATION PROGRAMME HAVE BEEN SENT TO OVERSEAS BRITISH POSTS, UK PASSPORT OFFICES, THE UK IMMIGRATION SERVICE AND HONG KONG GOVERNMENT OVERSEAS OFFICES FOR DISSEMINATION TO HONG KONG BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORY CITIZENS (BDTCS) ABROAD.
- \* THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT OFFICES IN LONDON, GENEVA, WASHINGTON, NEW YORK, SAN FRANCISCO, TORONTO AND TOKYO HAVE BEEN EMPHASISING THE PHASED REGISTRATION PROGRAMME IN THEIR CONTACTS WITH THE OVERSEAS HONG KONG COMMUNITIES;
- \* RADIO TAPES ON THE PHASED REGISTRATION PROGRAMME HAVE BEEN SENT TO OVERSEAS CHINESE RADIO STATIONS FOR BROADCASTING; AND
- \* ANNOUNCEMENTS ARE BROADCAST THROUGH TELEVISION AND RADIO STATIONS IN HONG KONG APPEALING TO LOCAL PEOPLE SPECIFICALLY TO INFORM THEIR FRIENDS OR RELATIVES ABROAD OF THE PHASED REGISTRATION PROGRAMME.

THE SECRETARY SAID THE GOVERNMENT MAINTAINED CLOSE CONTACT WITH OVERSEAS OFFICES AND WITH OVERSEAS BRITISH POSTS.

AS FOR THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED, MR ASPREY SAID IN THE FIRST MONTH OR SO OF THE PHASED REGISTRATION PROGRAMME, SOME BRITISH POSTS EXPERIENCED TEETHING PROBLEMS WITH THE NEW PROCEDURES INVOLVING IN ISSUING BN(O) PASSPORTS.

"ONE OF WHICH WAS THE DISTRIBUTION OF APPLICATION FORMS TO APPLICANTS WHO DID NOT RESIDE IN THE VICINITY OF THE POST.

"WE HAVE ASSISTED TO OVERCOME THESE PROBLEMS, AND WE BELIEVE, TO REDUCE TO A MINIMUM INCONVENIENCE TO BDTCS ABROAD," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY POINTED OUT THAT APPLICATION FORMS FOR OVERSEAS APPLICANTS WERE AVAILABLE AT THE OVERSEAS OFFICES AND AT BRITISH POSTS WHICH DID NOT HAVE PASSPORT ISSUING FUNCTIONS.

"WE ARE NOW ALSO ARRANGING FOR FORMS TO BE MADE AVAILABLE IN HONG KONG FOR PEOPLE WHO WISH TO ASSIST THEIR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS OVERSEAS IN OBTAINING THE FORMS," HE ADDED.

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NO IMMEDIATE PLAN TO PUBLISH BOOKLET OF PERFORMANCE PLEDGES

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL KEEP UNDER REVIEW THE POSSIBILITY OF PUBLISHING A BOOKLET OF ALL PERFORMANCE PLEDGES IN LIGHT OF DEVELOPMENTS.

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

IN THE MEANTIME, FOR THOSE WHO HAVE A BROADER INTEREST, COMPLETE SETS OF PUBLISHED PLEDGES ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE EFFICIENCY UNIT IN THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT, SIR DAVID SAID.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT AT THIS STAGE INTEND TO PUBLISH SUCH A BOOKLET.

"THIS IS BECAUSE OUR CUSTOMERS CAN OBTAIN COPIES OF PLEDGES FROM THE DEPARTMENTS THEY VISIT, AND NOTICES OF STANDARDS AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES SHOULD NORMALLY BE DISPLAYED AT THE POINT OF SERVICE."

HE SAID IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO KEEP A BOOKLET UP TO DATE, TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF CHANGES TO SERVICES AND PERSONNEL IN THE 50-ODD DEPARTMENTS WHICH WOULD HAVE MADE PERFORMANCE PLEDGES BY MID NEXT YEAR.

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PRIORITY DISCS FOR ELDERLY PATIENTS UNDER REGULAR REVIEW

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THE NUMBERS OF PRIORITY DISCS SET ASIDE DAILY FOR ELDERLY PATIENTS AT GOVERNMENT OUT-PATIENT CLINICS ARE REVIEWED REGULARLY AND ARE ADJUSTED AS NECESSARY TO MEET SERVICE NEEDS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ZACHARY WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MRS WONG SAID THE NUMBERS WERE DETERMINED ON THE BASIS OF DEMAND AND SUPPLY OF SERVICES, HAVING REGARD TO A NUMBER OF FACTORS.

"THESE INCLUDE THE SIZE AND AGE PROFILE OF THE POPULATION IN THE CATCHMENT AREA; THE DEMAND FOR AND UTILISATION PATTERN OF CLINIC SERVICES BY DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS; THE CAPACITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL CLINIC CONCERNED; AND THE AVAILABILITY OF CLINIC SERVICES PROVIDED BY BOTH THE PUBLIC AND THE PRIVATE SECTORS IN THE VICINITY," SHE SAID.

AS REGARDS ELDERLY PATIENTS WITH CHRONIC DISEASES WHO REQUIRED REGULAR FOLLOW-UP AT CLINICS, THEY WERE GIVEN ADVANCED APPOINTMENTS.

THEY DO NOT REQUIRE A DISC FOR ATTENDANCE AND THEIR NUMBERS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO QUOTA, SAID MRS WONG.

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ACAN STUDIES WAYS TO HELP YOUNG DRUG ABUSERS

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THE ACTION COMMITTEE AGAINST NARCOTICS (ACAN) IS CONSIDERING A PROPOSAL TO SET UP A THREE-YEAR PILOT SCHEME FOR A TREATMENT CENTRE FOR YOUNG DRUG ABUSERS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE PROPOSAL WAS RECEIVED FROM THE SOCIETY FOR THE AID AND REHABILITATION OF DRUG ABUSERS.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON CONRAD LAM, MR ASPREY SAID MEASURES LIKE LAW ENFORCEMENT, PREVENTIVE EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY, AND TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION HAD BEEN TAKEN TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF INCREASED YOUNG DRUG ABUSERS UNDER THE AGE OF 21.

A TOTAL OF 928 YOUNG DRUG ABUSERS AGED UNDER 21 WERE REPORTED TO THE GOVERNMENT'S CENTRAL REGISTRY OF DRUG ABUSE IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF THIS YEAR.

THIS REPRESENTS A 68.4 PER CENT INCREASE OVER THE NUMBER REPORTED IN THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD LAST YEAR.

"WE ARE NOT CLEAR AS TO THE REASONS FOR THE INCREASE, BUT THE NUMBER OF REPORTS ON YOUNG PEOPLE AGED UNDER 21 COME FROM A WIDE RANGE OF REPORTING AGENCIES, COVERING LAW ENFORCEMENT, TREATMENT AND WELFARE ORGANISATIONS."

BUT HE ADDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE INCREASE AND WITH THE HELP FROM ACAN'S RESEARCH SUB-COMMITTEE, IT WAS TRYING TO DETERMINE THE UNDERLYING CAUSES.

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RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES FOR THE ELDERLY TO BE LICENSED

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ANY PREMISES AT WHICH MORE THAN FIVE ELDERLY PERSONS ARE HABITUALLY RECEIVED FOR CARE WILL COME UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES (ELDERLY PERSONS) BILL IF IT IS PASSED INTO LAW.

IN OTHER WORDS, ALL SUBVENTED, NON-PROFIT-MAKING AND PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES WILL BE COVERED.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID THE CONTROL WOULD BE IN THE FORM OF A LICENSING SYSTEM TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE.

"IT WILL BE AN OFFENCE TO OPERATE A RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME WITHOUT A LICENCE OR A CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION, AND TO OPERATE A RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME IN CONTRAVENTION OF THE CONDITIONS OF A LICENCE OR A CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION.

"ANY PERSON WHO PROVIDES FALSE INFORMATION IN AN APPLICATION, OR OBSTRUCTS INSPECTION ALSO COMMITS AN OFFENCE," SHE ADDED.

UNDER THE BILL, THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE MAY ISSUE OR RENEW A CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION WHEREBY THE HOMES WILL HAVE TO COMPLY WITH CERTAIN BASIC REQUIREMENTS.

THE DIRECTOR MAY ALSO IMPOSE CONDITIONS ON A CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION WHICH WILL BE REVOKED IF THE CONDITIONS ARE NOT FULFILLED WITHIN A SPECIFIED PERIOD.

MRS WONG POINTED OUT THAT TO ENSURE THE PROPER MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES, THE BILL SPECIFIED REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE REGISTRATION OF HEALTH WORKERS, THE DUTIES OF OPERATORS, THE DUTIES OF HOME MANAGERS, SPACE AND STAFFING, LOCATION AND DESIGN, AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES.

"WE CONSIDER THAT THE STANDARDS TO BE IMPOSED ARE THE MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS AND WE EXPECT THAT MOST OF THE EXISTING HOMES WILL BE ABLE TO COMPLY WITH THE CONDITIONS IMPOSED UNDER THE LAW," SAID MRS WONG.

"HOWEVER, SHOULD IT BE NECESSARY, THE ADMINISTRATION WILL PUT IN PLACE ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ALL RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY CLOSURE OF SUBSTANDARD HOMES.

"THE BOUGHT PLACE SCHEME WILL BE EXPANDED FOR THIS PURPOSE," SHE SAID.

THE LEGISLATION WHEN ENACTED WILL PROHIBIT NEW HOMES WHICH CANNOT MEET THE LICENSING STANDARDS FROM ENTERING THE MARKET.

PROVISIONS FOR APPEALS, HOWEVER, ARE AVAILABLE UNDER THE DRAFT RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES (ELDERLY PERSONS) (APPEAL BOARD) REGULATION.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1993

- 19 -

LEGCO ASKS GOVT TO SET UP CENTRAL COMPENSATION FUND

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS EVENING PASSED A MOTION TO URGE THE GOVERNMENT TO SET UP A CENTRAL COMPENSATION FUND FOR EMPLOYEES, TO GIVE BETTER PROTECTION TO INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT VICTIMS.

THIRTEEN MEMBERS DEBATED FOR ALMOST TWO HOURS ON THE MOTION, MOVED BY THE HON LAU CHIN-SHEK. THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT.

SEVEN OTHER MOTIONS WERE ALSO PASSED.

ONE WAS MOVED BY THE HON LEE WING-TAT, UNDER THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES ORDINANCE, TWO WERE MOVED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, UNDER THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE, FOUR WERE MOVED BY THE SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES, TWO UNDER THE BANKRUPTCY ORDINANCES AND TWO UNDER THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE.

IN ADDITION, TWO BILLS - SEWAGE TUNNELS (STATUTORY EASEMENTS) BILL AND COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1993 WERE BOTH PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS.

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