



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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SECTION 27 OF POO REPEALED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED A BILL TO REPEAL SECTION 27 OF THE PUBLIC ORDER ORDINANCE.

IN WINDING UP THE DEBATE ON THE PUBLIC ORDER (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, THE SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION, THE HON PETER TSAO, EXPLAINED THAT THE EXISTENCE OF SECTION 27 HAD CAUSED CONCERN TO THE PUBLIC OUT OF PROPORTION TO THE VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY OF KEEPING IT.

IN THANKING SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WHO SPOKE TODAY IN SUPPORT OF THE AMENDMENT BILL, MR TSAO SAID THAT VERY WIDE CONSULTATION WAS UNDERTAKEN THROUGH VISITS TO HIS OFFICE BY A VARIETY OF PEOPLE INCLUDING THE JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION, LAWYERS, PUBLISHERS AND OWNERS OF NEWSPAPERS.

"ALSO AN OUTGOING EFFORT WAS MADE WHEREBY WE WERE ABLE TO REACH OUT AND CONSULT A WIDE SECTION OF THE COMMUNITY," HE SAID.

IN REPLY TO COMMENTS BY THE HON STEPHEN CHEONG, MR TSAO SAID: "I WOULD LIKE TO ASSURE MR CHEONG THAT WHEN I REFERRED TO WATER HAVING GONE UNDER THE BRIDGE, THERE WAS NO INTENTION OF BEING COMPLACENT."

"THESE WERE EXPRESSIONS OF CONCILIATION, THAT I WAS HOPING ON THE REPEAL OF THIS SECTION, THE WOUNDS WOULD NOT BE OPENED," HE ADDED.

ON MR CHEONG'S QUESTION AS TO WHY SOME MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WHO SUPPORTED THE BILL WERE NOT CONSULTED, MR TSAO SAID: "SOME WERE CONSULTED, NOT ALL OF THEM, BUT THE PROCESS OF CONSULTATION WITH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FOLLOWED THE STANDARD AND ESTABLISHED PROCEDURE."

HE SAID A LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BRIEF WAS ISSUED TO MEMBERS ON NOVEMBER 30 WHICH MARKED THE PERIOD OF CONSULTATION.

MR TSAO SAID HE WAS STRUCK BY SOME OF THE REMARKS MADE BY MR CHEONG IN RELATION TO THE QUALITY OF THE PRESS.

"HE ASKED A FEW PERTINENT QUESTIONS. HE ASKED WHAT QUALITY CAN WE EXPECT OF THE PRESS? WHAT KIND OF TRAINING ARE THEY GOING TO GET, OR ARE GETTING? ARE THEY PAID ADEQUATELY? ARE WE GETTING A RIGHT CALIBRE OF JOURNALISTS AND REPORTERS?"

"THESE ARE THE VERY QUESTIONS THAT OCCURRED TO ME ALSO, FREQUENTLY, AND I WOULD LIKE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR RUNNING THE PRESS, WHO OWN THE PRESS, WHO DIRECT THE PRESS, TO ASK THESE SAME QUESTIONS.

"THEY SHOULD PONDER OVER THESE POINTS RAISED BY MR CHEONG AND SOME SOUL-SEARCHING ON THEIR PART WOULD NOT BE AMISS," MR TSAO SAID.

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GOVT SHOULD CONTINUE TO UPHOLD SPIRIT OF ACCOMMODATION

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THE SPIRIT OF ACCOMMODATION AND THE GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN ABOUT THE ANXIETY OF THE PUBLIC OVER SECTION 27 OF THE PUBLIC ORDER ORDINANCE MUST CONTINUE AND SHOULD HOPEFULLY REMAIN AS ONE OF THE PRINCIPLES IN THE CONDUCT OF FUTURE REVIEWS OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES.

THE HON STEPHEN CHEONG SAID THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN SUPPORTING THE PUBLIC ORDER (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR CHEONG NOTED HOWEVER THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND HIMSELF HAD WANTED SECTION 27 OF THE ORDINANCE SCRAPPED FOR DIFFERENT REASONS.

HE SAID THAT HIS CONCERN WAS THE NEED FOR SUFFICIENT SAFEGUARD FOR MEMBERS OF THE FOURTH ESTATE TO CARRY OUT THEIR RIGHTFUL DUTIES, IN THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE FORCED TO DISCLOSE THEIR SOURCES.

THE GOVERNMENT STILL BELIEVED IN THE MERIT OF THE LAW, BUT OUT OF RESPECT TO THE PUBLIC'S WISH AND CONCERN, HAD ACCEDDED TO THEIR WISH, MR CHEONG SAID.

NOTING THAT THE SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION HAD MADE AN EFFORT TO CONSULT THE MEDIA DURING THE REVIEW, MR CHEONG SAID THIS WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN, TO EXPLAIN AND TO DISCUSS MUST NOT STOP AT THIS ONE ISSUE BUT MUST CONTINUE IN ALL OTHER ASPECTS OF ADMINISTRATION.

HE CAUTIONED AGAINST AN ATTITUDE OF COMPLACENCY WHICH HE SAID HE DISCERNED IN THE SASI'S SPEECH WHEN HE INTRODUCED THE BILL TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR CHEONG SAID IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO HEAR FROM SASI WHAT LESSONS THE GOVERNMENT HAD LEARNT FROM THE EPISODE. FOR EXAMPLE, WHETHER PROBLEMS OF COMMUNICATION EXISTED BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY, WHAT PROBLEMS WERE THERE IN THE WAY CONSULTATIONS WERE CARRIED OUT, AND WHETHER LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS HAD BEEN CONSULTED ON HOW THE REVIEW OF THE ORDINANCE WAS CONDUCTED.

MR CHEONG SAID THAT WHILE SECTION 27 HAD BEEN DUBBED BY SOME CRITICS AS "A DRACONIAN SWORD ON THE NECK OF THE MEDIA", THE PUBLICATION OF FALSE NEWS, WITH OR WITHOUT MALICIOUS INTENT, MUST REMAIN EQUALLY HAUNTING TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND NEEDED TO BE DETERRED.

/HE SAID

HE SAID THAT, IN EXPLORING THIS QUESTION, IT WOULD BE FRUITFUL TO CONSIDER, AMONG OTHER THINGS, WHETHER THE CONSCIENCE AND ETHICS OF MEDIA PRACTITIONERS WAS ENOUGH SAFEGUARD AGAINST THE PUBLICATION OF FALSE NEWS AND WHETHER THERE WAS ANY NEED FOR SOME FORM OF SELF-REGULATORY DETERRENT.

FOR THE MEDIA, MR CHEONG MAINTAINED THAT SOME OF THE QUESTIONS HE POSED IN THE DEBATE TWO YEARS AGO WERE JUST AS LEGITIMATE TODAY.

THESE CONCERNED THE INHERENT WEAKNESSES OF THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY, THE BENEFIT OF HAVING BETTER-PAID AND BETTER-TRAINED REPORTERS, THE NEED FOR AN IN-TRADE WATCHDOG BODY FOR THE MEDIA IN HONG KONG AND THE NEED FOR SUFFICIENT CHANNELS FOR THE PUBLIC TO REFLECT MORE DIRECTLY THEIR VIEWS AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE BEHAVIOUR OF LOCAL MASS MEDIA.

MR CHEONG ALSO SAID THAT WHILE THERE ALREADY EXISTED VARIOUS FORUM WHERE PUBLISHERS, SENIOR JOURNALISTS AND REPORTERS DISCUSSED ISSUES OF THEIR RESPECTIVE INTERESTS, CONSIDERATION MIGHT BE GIVEN TO EXPANDING THESE FORUM TO TAKE A CROSS-SECTOR REVIEW OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED QUESTIONS OR TO MORE EFFECTIVELY IRON OUT DIFFERENCES OF OPINIONS.

HE SAID THAT HONG KONG WAS NOW AT A STAGE OF CHANGES WHEN IT NEEDED A BALANCED MEDIA TO FACILITATE THE FREE FLOW OF UNBIASED INFORMATION AND SERVE AS FORUM FOR THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS, AND TO CARRY THE RESPONSIBILITY AS THE GUARDIAN OF THE TRUTH.

"IT IS MY HOPE THAT THE REPEAL OF SECTION 27 WOULD NOT BE SEEN, ON THE PART OF THE MEDIA, AS A VICTORY TO BE SAVOURED, OR ON THE PART OF ADMINISTRATION, AS A SAGA TO BE FORGOTTEN," HE SAID.

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WISE DECISION TO REPEAL SECTION 27

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THE DECISION BY THE GOVERNMENT TO REPEAL SECTION 27 OF THE PUBLIC ORDER ORDINANCE IS A WISE ONE, THE HON JAMES MCGREGOR TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE PUBLIC ORDER (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, MR MCGREGOR SAID HE BELIEVED THAT THE PUBLIC OUTCRY OVER THE INCLUSION OF SECTION 27 IN THE ORDINANCE DEMONSTRATED IN THE CLEARST POSSIBLE WAY THAT DEMOCRACY WAS "ALIVE AND KICKING" IN HONG KONG.

/HE SAID

HE SAID THAT PUBLIC ANGER AND CONCERN OVER WHAT WAS SEEN AS A POSSIBLE POTENTIAL RESTRAINT ON THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION, THROUGH THE MEDIA AND IN OTHER WAYS, MUST SURELY BE REGARDED AS A HEALTHY AND HEARTENING SIGN THAT HONG KONG PEOPLE WANTED TO CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE UTMOST FREEDOM IN A SOCIETY THAT HAD PROVIDED ALMOST ALL THE FREEDOMS EXPECTED IN A DEMOCRATIC TERRITORY.

NOT THE LEAST OF THESE HAD BEEN THE RIGHT OF THE MEDIA AND OTHERS TO ISSUE INFORMATION ON MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST WITHOUT FEAR OF PROSECUTION, MR MCGREGOR ADDED.

MR MCGREGOR NOTED THAT NOT EVERY TERRITORY IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC ENJOYED THE WIDE FREEDOM WHICH EXISTED IN HONG KONG TO PUBLISH, TO PRINT AND TO DISCUSS PUBLIC ISSUES, PARTICULARLY POLITICAL ISSUES OR THOSE HAVING SOME BEARING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM.

HE STRESSED THAT IN THESE CHANGING TIMES, IT WAS MANIFESTLY IMPORTANT THAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO NOTHING TO ENDANGER, OR TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF ENDANGERING, THE FREEDOM AND THEM RIGHT OF PEOPLE AND THE MEDIA TO DISCUSS AND TO REPORT.

FINALLY, HE SAID THAT A FREE PRESS WAS VITAL TO A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT AND THAT THOSE WHO WERE SHAPING HONG KONG'S FUTURE WOULD BE WISE TO LEARN THAT FREEDOMS IN A FREE SOCIETY WERE WORTH MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO RETAIN.

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CONSTANT REVIEW OF LAW TO SAFEGUARD HUMAN RIGHTS

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THE REPEAL OF SECTION 27 OF THE PUBLIC ORDER ORDINANCE CAN ONLY BE TAKEN AS THE END OF THE BEGINNING OF HONG KONG PEOPLE'S REPULSION AGAINST PROVISIONS THAT UNDERMINED THEIR BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS, DR THE HON LEONG CHE-HUNG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE PUBLIC ORDER (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, DR LEONG SAID WHETHER WE LIKED IT OR NOT, HONG KONG WAS TO COME ACROSS MORE PUBLIC SENTIMENTS RELATING TO THE CHANGING POLITICAL SITUATIONS AND CONSERVATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DURING THE RUN-UP TO 1997.

HE THEREFORE URGED THE GOVERNMENT AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO BE ALERT ENOUGH AND TO MAKE CONSTANT REVIEWS ON GREY AREAS IN EXISTING LEGISLATION THAT MIGHT INFRINGE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS.

/IN SUPPORT

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IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL, DR LEONG SAID HE WAS PLEASED TO SEE THAT THE "DRACONIAN PROVISION" HAD BEEN PROVED TO BE UNNECESSARY IN HONG KONG.

HOWEVER, DR LEONG FOUND IT MISLEADING THAT THE ADMINISTRATION REPEALED THE PUBLIC ORDER AMENDMENT ORDINANCE AND STILL THOUGHT THAT THE FACTORS SUPPORTING RETENTION OF THE CONTROVERSIAL PROVISION WERE "AS VALID TODAY AS THEY WERE NEARLY TWO YEARS AGO".

"IT GIVES AN IMPRESSION THAT THE REPEAL WAS MADE TO TRY TO AVOID TROUBLES AND TO PLEASE THE PUBLIC FOR THE SAKE OF PLEASING THEM. THERE NEEDS TO BE A MORE CONVINCING REASON," HE SAID.

"THE FACT REMAINS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS WRONG IN THE FIRST PLACE TO INTRODUCE THE AMENDMENT BILL WHICH HAS WIDEN RATHER THAN NARROWED THE CONTROL OVER THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION," HE ADDED.

"NONETHELESS, LATE CORRECTIONS ARE BETTER THAN NO CORRECTIONS," DR LEONG CONCLUDED.

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PUBLIC ORDER (AMENDMENT) BILL BACKED WITH RESERVATIONS
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THE DELETION OF SECTION 27 FROM THE PUBLIC ORDER ORDINANCE WAS SUPPORTED WITH SOME RESERVATIONS BY THE HON KINGSLEY SIT TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE PUBLIC ORDER (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR SIT WONDERED IF THERE WAS STILL A NEED TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC FROM THE POTENTIAL RISKS OF FALSE NEWS REPORTING AS THE ADMINISTRATION HAD ARGUED TWO YEARS AGO.

"WHAT HAS CHANGED IN THE MEANTIME TO ENCOURAGE THE ADMINISTRATION'S CHANGE OF HEART NOW?"

"IF THERE IS STILL A NEED FOR LEGAL PROTECTION FOR THE COMMUNITY AGAINST THE DANGER OF FALSE NEWS REPORTING, ARE OTHER EXISTING LAWS ADEQUATE TO DO SO?" HE ASKED.

HE SAID THE PUBLIC OF HONG KONG SHOULD BE GIVEN AN ASSURANCE EITHER WAY.

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BILL A FIRST STEP IN LOCALISATION OF LAWS PROGRAMME

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THE SUPREME COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 IS A FIRST STEP FORWARD IN THE LOCALISATION OF LAWS PROGRAMME, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR MATHEWS SAID THIS BILL MARKED THE START OF A PROGRAMME OF LEGISLATION AIMED AT REPLACING WITH HONG KONG ORDINANCES THE EXTENSIVE BODY OF UNITED KINGDOM ENACTMENTS WHICH APPLIED TO HONG KONG AND WERE CONSEQUENTLY PART OF OUR LAW.

HE SAID THAT MUCH OF THE PRESENT LAW RELATING TO MERCHANT SHIPPING, CIVIL AVIATION, COPYRIGHT AND PATENTS WAS CONTAINED IN UNITED KINGDOM ENACTMENTS APPLYING TO HONG KONG.

"THESE UNITED KINGDOM ENACTMENTS CANNOT REMAIN PART OF OUR LAW AFTER 1997 AS THIS WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH THE STATUS OF HONG KONG AS A SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND WITH THE JOINT DECLARATION.

"STEPS MUST THEREFORE BE TAKEN TO REPLACE THOSE WHICH WILL NEED TO CONTINUE BEYOND 1997 WITH OUR OWN LEGISLATION," MR MATHEWS SAID.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID THE SUPREME COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 WAS A SMALL BUT USEFUL BILL THAT STARTED THE FORMIDABLE TASK OF LAW REPLACEMENT.

MR MATHEWS SAID THE JURISDICTION OF THE HIGH COURT IN RELATION TO ADMIRALTY MATTERS WAS AT PRESENT CONTAINED IN CERTAIN UNITED KINGDOM ENACTMENTS WHICH APPLIED OR HAD BEEN EXTENDED TO HONG KONG.

"THIS JURISDICTION IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO HONG KONG FOR IT RECOGNISES AND COMPLEMENTS HONG KONG'S POSITION AS A MAJOR CENTRE FOR SHIPPING, SHIP-OWNING AND SHIP MANAGEMENT AND AS A FORUM WHERE SHIPPING DISPUTES CAN BE RESOLVED THROUGH OUR COURTS, USING THE SERVICES OF HIGHLY EXPERIENCED JUDGES AND LAWYERS SPECIALISING IN MARITIME LAW.

"CLEARLY, THE HIGH COURT'S JURISDICTION OVER MARITIME DISPUTES MUST CONTINUE BEYOND 1997.

"THE PURPOSE OF THIS BILL IS TO AMEND THE SUPREME COURT ORDINANCE SO THAT THE CIVIL JURISDICTION OF THE HIGH COURT IN RELATION TO ADMIRALTY MATTERS IS SPECIFIED IN THAT ORDINANCE AND TO REPEAL, SO FAR AS THEY ARE PART OF OUR LAW, THOSE UNITED KINGDOM ENACTMENTS FROM WHICH THE HIGH COURT'S PRESENT ADMIRALTY JURISDICTION IS DERIVED," THE ATTORNEY GENERAL EXPLAINED.

/HE POINTED

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HE POINTED OUT THAT THE SUBSTANCE OF THE EXISTING LAW RELATING TO ADMIRALTY JURISDICTION WAS CONTAINED IN SECTIONS 20 TO 24 OF THE SUPREME COURT ACT 1981 AS EXTENDED TO HONG KONG BY THE ADMIRALTY JURISDICTION (HONG KONG) ORDER 1985.

"THIS BILL RE-ENACTS THOSE PROVISIONS WITH ONLY MINOR AMENDMENTS, MADE FOR THEIR BETTER APPLICATION TO HONG KONG.

"THERE IS THUS NO CHANGE IN THE SUBSTANCE OF THE EXISTING LAW.

"THE BILL REPEALS THE 1985 ORDER, AND OTHER UNITED KINGDOM ENACTMENTS CONCERNED WITH ADMIRALTY JURISDICTION INsofar AS THEY ARE PART OF OUR LAW.

"THE BILL ALSO REPEALS SECTION 54(3) OF THE SUPREME COURT ORDINANCE, REMOVING THE PRESENT REQUIREMENT FOR RULES OF PROCEDURE AND PRACTICE RELATING TO ADMIRALTY JURISDICTION MADE BY THE SUPREME COURT RULES COMMITTEE TO BE APPROVED BY HER MAJESTY IN COUNCIL BEFORE THEY CAN COME INTO OPERATION," HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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REVISED BILL TO FACILITATE FASTER PREPARATION OF LEGISLATION

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THE REVISED EDITION OF THE LAWS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 WAS INTENDED TO FACILITATE FASTER AND MORE ECONOMICAL PREPARATION OF LEGISLATION, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE REVISED EDITION OF THE BILL, MR MATHEWS EXPLAINED THAT SECTION 7(3) OF THE REVISED EDITION OF THE LAWS ORDINANCE 1965 REQUIRED THAT, AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH ORDINANCE, THERE SHOULD BE SET OUT IN THE MARGIN A LIST OF ALL ORDINANCES THAT HAD AMENDED IT SINCE IT WAS ENACTED.

"THE BILL AMENDS THAT SECTION TO ENABLE THIS INFORMATION TO BE SET OUT AS A NOTE ACROSS THE PAGE RATHER THAN IN THE MARGIN," HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT THE REASONS FOR THE AMENDMENT WERE SIMILAR TO THOSE FOR AMENDING THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES ORDINANCE IN JUNE LAST YEAR.

"IN JUNE LAST YEAR, THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES ORDINANCE WAS AMENDED TO PERMIT A CHANGE IN THE FORMAT OF ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS BY ELIMINATING NOTES FROM THE MARGIN AND REPOSITIONING MARGINAL NOTES AS SECTION HEADINGS," THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID.

DEBATE ON THE MOTION WAS ADJOURNED.

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SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICAL PROFESSIONS AMENDMENT BILL RE-SUBMITTED

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THE SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICAL PROFESSIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989 WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IT CONTAINS MAINLY ENABLING PROVISIONS TO FACILITATE THE MAKING OF REGULATIONS BY THE FIVE PARAMEDICAL PROFESSIONAL BOARDS SET UP UNDER THE SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICAL PROFESSIONS ORDINANCE WHICH WAS ENACTED IN 1980.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE FIVE PROFESSIONAL BOARDS OF THE PARAMEDICAL PROFESSIONS -- MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNOLOGISTS, RADIOGRAPHERS, PHYSIOTHERAPISTS, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS AND OPTOMETRISTS -- WOULD BE GIVEN POWER TO HOLD EXAMINATIONS FOR THE PURPOSE OF FULL REGISTRATION AND PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION.

THE BILL IS THE SAME AS THE ONE INTRODUCED INTO THE COUNCIL IN JULY LAST YEAR BUT WHICH LAPSED BECAUSE ITS PASSAGE COULD NOT BE COMPLETED BEFORE DISSOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL AT THE END OF ITS 1987-88 SESSION.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE NEW BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON T.H. CHAU, EXPLAINED THAT A LEGCO AD HOC GROUP HAD BEEN SET UP TO CONSIDER THE BILL WHICH HAD BEEN INTRODUCED LAST YEAR.

"WITH REGARD TO CLAUSE 8(2) OF THE BILL, WHICH PROPOSED TO AMEND SECTION 26 OF THE ORDINANCE BY REQUIRING ALL CODES OF PRACTICE AND AMENDMENTS TO THEM TO BE NOTIFIED BY THE PARAMEDICAL BOARDS TO THE SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICAL PROFESSIONS COUNCIL, THE AD HOC GROUP WAS OF THE VIEW THAT THE BILL DID NOT ADEQUATELY PROVIDE FOR A SMOOTH WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND THE BOARDS," MR CHAU SAID.

IN RESPONSE, THE ADMINISTRATION UNDERTOOK TO CONSULT THE SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICAL PROFESSIONS COUNCIL AND THE BOARDS ON THE MATTER, BUT THERE WAS INSUFFICIENT TIME FOR THE CONSULTATIONS TO BE CARRIED OUT BEFORE DISSOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR CHAU SAID THE SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICAL PROFESSIONS COUNCIL HAD BEEN CONSULTED ON THE POINT IN QUESTION IN NOVEMBER.

"IT DID NOT CONSIDER IT NECESSARY, AT THIS STAGE, TO SEEK AMENDMENTS TO THE BILL IN RESPECT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND THE BOARDS," HE SAID. IT HAD RECOMMENDED THAT THE BILL BE RE-SUBMITTED TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR CHAU

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MR CHAU SAID THAT CONCERNING THE WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND THE BOARDS IN RESPECT OF THE PREPARATION AND REVISION OF CODES OF PRACTICE, THE SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICAL PROFESSIONS COUNCIL CONCLUDED THAT THE BOARDS SHOULD BE REQUESTED TO SUBMIT THEIR CODES OF PRACTICE TO THE COUNCIL BEFORE THEY WERE FINALISED.

"THE COUNCIL CONSIDERED THAT THIS ARRANGEMENT WOULD ENABLE IT TO CONDUCT ITS SUPERVISORY AND COORDINATING FUNCTIONS PROPERLY AND THAT, IF THERE WAS ANY MAJOR DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND THE BOARDS REGARDING SUCH CODES OF PRACTICE, THEN BOTH THE COUNCIL AND THE BOARDS SHOULD BE CONSULTED AS TO WHETHER AN AMENDMENT TO THE ORDINANCE WAS REQUIRED IN RESPECT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND THE BOARDS," HE SAID.

SINCE NO CHANGE WAS BEING PROPOSED IN THE BILL TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICAL PROFESSIONS COUNCIL AND THE PARAMEDICAL BOARDS, THE ADMINISTRATION HAD NOT CONSULTED THE BOARDS.

MR CHAU WENT ON TO OUTLINE THE MAJOR PROVISIONS OF THE BILL, WHICH HE SAID WERE MAINLY ENABLING ONES.

THE REMAINING AMENDMENTS WERE OF A MINOR AND TECHNICAL NATURE, HE ADDED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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HOSPITAL-BASED NURSING TRAINING SATISFACTORY

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SINCE THE FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE NURSING SERVICE ARE BEING MET, THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO PLANS AT PRESENT TO REPLACE THE EXISTING SYSTEM OF NURSING TRAINING WITH DEGREE LEVEL COURSES BASED AT LOCAL ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS.

THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON T.H. CHAU, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON RONALD CHOW.

MR CHAU SAID THE EXISTING SYSTEM OF HOSPITAL-BASED TRAINING PRODUCED NURSES WHO MET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR REGISTRATION SET BY THE NURSING BOARD OF HONG KONG.

"IN ADDITION, THE STANDARD OF TRAINING IS CONSIDERED ADEQUATE TO ENABLE NURSES TO DISCHARGE THEIR DUTIES IN A SATISFACTORY MANNER," HE ADDED.

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MEASURES TAKEN TO REDUCE FREIGHT TRAIN NOISE
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THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION HAS IMPLEMENTED SEVERAL MEASURES TO REDUCE FREIGHT TRAIN NOISE AFTER MIDNIGHT, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON PEGGY LAM, MR LEUNG SAID THESE MEASURES INCLUDED:

- * INSTALLING NEW SILENCERS ON THE EXHAUSTS OF DIESEL LOCOMOTIVES, PENDING THE RESULTS OF TESTS TO BE CONDUCTED ON THEIR EFFECTIVENESS;
- * REDUCING THE NUMBER OF FREIGHT TRAIN PATHS FROM FOUR TO THREE DURING THE PERIOD BETWEEN 11 PM TO 2 AM WITH EFFECT FROM NEXT MONTH; AND
- * LUBRICATING THE RAIL TRACKS AT STRATEGIC LOCATIONS TO REDUCE THE LEVEL OF NOISE CAUSED BY THE WHEEL AND RAIL INTERACTION.

MR LEUNG ADDED THAT AS PART OF A CONTINUING EXERCISE, THE CORPORATION HAD ESTABLISHED A RAILWAY NOISE WORKING GROUP TO IDENTIFY OTHER NOISE-REDUCING MEASURES, AND THEN EVALUATE AND IMPLEMENT THEM WHENEVER PRACTICABLE.

MRS LAM HAD ASKED WHETHER ANY ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN TO MINIMISE THE NOISE NUISANCE CAUSED BY FREIGHT TRAINS RUNNING BETWEEN 11 PM AND 2 AM AND BY TRAINS PASSING THROUGH THE AREAS NEAR THE TAI WAI END OF THE BEACON HILL TUNNEL.

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EDUCATION COMMISSION TO RECONSIDER MINIMUM PRIMARY SCHOOL ENTRY AGE
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THE EDUCATION COMMISSION IS NOW STUDYING THE CURRICULA AND BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS DURING THE NINE YEARS OF FREE AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON RON BRIDGE, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON DAVID CHEUNG CHI-KONG, MR BRIDGE SAID THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY THE COMMISSION WOULD RECONSIDER WHETHER IT WAS DESIRABLE TO LOWER THE MINIMUM AGE OF ENTRY TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

MR BRIDGE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE PRESENT POSITION WAS THAT CHILDREN MIGHT START PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM THE AGE OF FIVE YEARS AND EIGHT MONTHS, THOUGH ATTENDANCE WAS NOT COMPULSORY UNTIL THE AGE OF SIX.

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STUDY OFFERS OPTIONS FOR IMPROVING TRAFFIC SITUATION

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A WIDE RANGE OF OPTIONS FOR IMPROVING TRAFFIC UP TO 2001 ARE BEING ANALYSED UNDER THE SECOND COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORT STUDY AND WILL BE SET OUT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION IN A GREEN PAPER TO BE ISSUED LATER THIS YEAR.

THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON JAMES TIEN.

MR TIEN HAD ASKED IF THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER THE OPTION OF FREEZING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VEHICLES BY CATEGORIES AT CURRENT LEVELS FOR A PERIOD OF TIME UNTIL MORE ROADS WERE BUILT.

MR LEUNG SAID HE WOULD ARRANGE FOR MR TIEN'S SUGGESTION TO BE EXAMINED BY THE STUDY TEAM.

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NO PLANS TO BAN SALE OF ALCOHOLIC DRINKS TO PEOPLE UNDER 18

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO PLANS AT PRESENT TO PROHIBIT THE SALE OF ALCOHOLIC DRINKS BY RETAIL OUTLETS TO PERSONS UNDER THE AGE OF 18 AS THE PROBLEM OF ALCOHOLISM AMONG THESE PEOPLE IS NOT SERIOUS.

THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON T.H. CHAU, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON SO CHAU YIM-PING, MR CHAU SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S IMPRESSION, WHICH WAS SHARED BY THE POLICE, WAS THAT THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE TO INDICATE THAT ALCOHOLISM WAS A SERIOUS PROBLEM AMONG PERSONS UNDER 18.

THIS IMPRESSION WAS OBTAINED FROM THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT'S WORK WITH FAMILIES THROUGH ITS FAMILY SERVICES CENTRES.

THE DEPARTMENT'S STATISTICS SHOWED THAT IN THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD BETWEEN 1983-84 AND 1987-88, OUT OF A TOTAL OF 41,900 CASES REFERRED BY THE COURTS FOR SOCIAL ENQUIRY REPORTS, ONLY 61 PERSONS, OR 0.145 PER CENT, WERE CHARGED WITH THE OFFENCE OF "DRUNKENNESS AND DISORDERLY CONDUCT".

OUT OF A TOTAL OF 13,172 CASES PUT ON PROBATION DURING THE SAME PERIOD, ONLY 20 CASES, OR 0.15 PER CENT, INVOLVED THIS OFFENCE.

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ALTHOUGH THE DEPARTMENT'S STATISTICS DID NOT PROVIDE A BREAKDOWN BELOW THE AGE OF 18, MR CHAU SAID THEY DID SHOW THAT OF THE 61 AND 20 PERSONS MENTIONED ABOVE, ONLY 10 AND FOUR RESPECTIVELY WERE BELOW THE AGE OF 16.

ON THE RECOMMENDATION THAT LEGISLATION SHOULD BE INTRODUCED TO PROHIBIT THE SALE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS TO PERSONS UNDER 18, MR CHAU SAID A DECISION ON THIS WOULD BE MADE FOLLOWING A PUBLIC CONSULTATION EXERCISE WHICH WOULD BE CARRIED OUT IN THE NEXT TWO TO THREE MONTHS.

THE RECOMMENDATION WAS MADE TO THE GOVERNMENT BY THE HONG KONG COUNCIL ON SMOKING AND HEALTH, A STATUTORY BODY WHICH ADVISES THE GOVERNMENT ON MATTERS RELATED TO SMOKING AND HEALTH.

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GOVT FIRM IN OBSERVING GATT RULES
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IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S FIRM INTENTION TO CONTINUE TO BE THE LEADING EXAMPLE OF AN OPEN MARKET OBSERVING THE RULES OF THE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE TO THE FULL, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, ASSURED MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON PAUL CHENG, MR JACOBS SAID IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GATT, THERE WAS A BROADLY ACCEPTED MEANING OF THE TERMS "UNFAIR PRACTICES" AND "RETALIATION" AS FAR AS TRADE IN GOODS WAS CONCERNED.

THESE PRACTICES REFERRED BASICALLY TO ACTIONS OF GOVERNMENTS RATHER THAN OF INDIVIDUALS OR FIRMS, MR JACOBS SAID.

"WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY SUCH UNFAIR PRACTICES IN HONG KONG," HE SAID.

"TRADE IN SERVICES IS, OF COURSE, ENTIRELY DIFFERENT IN NATURE," MR JACOBS CONTINUED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT SINCE THERE WAS NO RELEVANT MULTILATERAL AGREEMENT IN EXISTENCE, THERE WAS AS YET NO ACCEPTED MEANING OF "UNFAIR PRACTICES" IN TERMS OF SERVICES.

MR JACOBS ASSURED MEMBERS THAT EFFORTS WERE UNDER WAY IN THE URUGUAY ROUND TO NEGOTIATE AN AGREEMENT ON SERVICES.

"WE SUPPORT THESE EFFORTS," HE SAID, ADDING THAT HONG KONG HAD AN EXCELLENT RECORD IN THE SERVICES FIELD.

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MEASURES TO ENSURE SAFETY OF ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS

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OWNERS AND OCCUPIERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THAT ELECTRICAL WIRING INSTALLATIONS ARE PROPERLY MAINTAINED WITHIN THEIR PRIVATE PREMISES.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON C.K. POON.

UNDER EXISTING LEGISLATION, MR BARNES SAID, ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANIES ARE REQUIRED TO ENSURE THAT ELECTRICITY IS NOT SUPPLIED TO INSTALLATIONS WHICH MAY CAUSE ELECTRICAL SHOCK OR FIRE.

"TO ENSURE THAT ALL NEW INSTALLATIONS ARE SAFE AND FREE FROM FIRE HAZARDS, OWNERS OF PRIVATE BUILDINGS ARE OBLIGED TO CONFORM WITH REQUIREMENTS LAID DOWN IN THE SUPPLY RULES OF THE TWO POWER COMPANIES FOR ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS AND TO PASS TESTS CONDUCTED BY THE POWER COMPANIES BEFORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY IS CONNECTED TO THE BUILDINGS.

"POWER COMPANIES ARE ALSO EMPOWERED TO INSPECT AND TEST INSTALLATIONS IN CONSUMERS' PREMISES IF THE LATTER WERE SUSPECTED TO BE IN A DEFECTIVE CONDITION.

"AFTER INSPECTION AND TESTING, IF THE COMPANY IS SATISFIED THAT DEFECT EXISTS AT SOME PART OF THE CONSUMERS' INSTALLATION, THE COMPANY MAY BY NOTICE REQUIRE THE CONSUMER TO REMOVE THE DEFECT.

"THE COMPANY MAY ALSO DISCONTINUE THE SUPPLY OF POWER TO THE PREMISES IN QUESTIONS UNTIL THE DEFECT HAS BEEN EFFECTIVELY REMOVED," MR BARNES SAID.

MR BARNES ADDED THAT PLACES OF PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT SUCH AS RESTAURANTS AND CINEMAS ARE SUBJECT TO MORE STRINGENT REQUIREMENTS IN THAT ONE OF THE LICENSING CONDITIONS IS THE SAFETY OF ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS IN THESE PREMISES.

"APPLICATIONS IN RESPECT OF THESE PREMISES ARE REFERRED TO THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT WHO WILL THEN INSPECT THE PREMISES TO ENSURE THAT, AMONGST OTHER THINGS, THE ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS HAVE BEEN CERTIFIED BY THE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY. UNTIL THIS IS DONE, LICENCES ARE NOT ISSUED.

"SIMILAR PROCEDURES ARE ADOPTED, ON AN ADMINISTRATIVE BASIS, FOR OLD PEOPLE'S HOMES AND BED-SPACE APARTMENTS," MR BARNES SAID.

MR BARNES SAID THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT WOULD ALSO TAKE ACTION ON INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM THE PUBLIC ABOUT POSSIBLE FIRE HAZARDS, AND ANYONE WHO SUSPECTED THAT THE ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS IN HIS BUILDING WERE UNSAFE MAY CONTACT EITHER THE FIRE SERVICES, OR THE POWER COMPANY, OR BOTH, AND REQUEST THAT AN INSPECTION BE CARRIED OUT.

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FEW POLICY OPTIONS OPEN IN RELATION TO INFLATION
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THERE ARE FEW POLICY OPTIONS OPEN TO HONG KONG IN RELATION TO INFLATION ALTHOUGH THE PROBLEM HAS BECOME ONE OF THE TERRITORY'S MAJOR WORRIES, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

NOTING THAT INFLATION WAS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT PROCESS, HE SAID THAT BEYOND CONTAINING PUBLIC EXPENDITURE, THERE WERE FEW POLICY OPTIONS IN RELATION TO INFLATION OPEN TO A SMALL EXTERNALLY ORIENTED ECONOMY SUCH AS HONG KONG, WHICH HAD BECOME INCREASINGLY INTERDEPENDENT WITH OTHER ECONOMIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

"WE WILL, IN DUE COURSE, EXPERIENCE A SLOWING DOWN OF OUR ECONOMY, AND WITH IT LOWER INFLATION," MR JACOBS SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON PETER WONG.

"I AM AFRAID THIS MAY NOT PROVIDE MUCH COMFORT TO THOSE SUFFERING FROM THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF INFLATION BUT I WOULD POINT OUT THAT, DESPITE THE INCREASE IN INFLATION AND SLOWER ECONOMIC GROWTH IN 1988, WAGES AND SALARIES STILL INCREASED ON AVERAGE IN REAL TERMS."

MR JACOBS POINTED OUT THAT IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS FOR WHICH THERE WERE COMPLETE FIGURES, THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (A) HAD INCREASED, ON A YEAR ON YEAR BASIS, BY 8.8 PER CENT IN SEPTEMBER, BY 7.6 PER CENT IN OCTOBER AND BY 8.6 PER CENT IN NOVEMBER.

"PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE DECEMBER INCREASE WILL NOT BE OUT OF LINE WITH THESE FIGURES," HE ADDED.

THE CPI(A) IS THE BROADEST BASED INDICATOR OF CONSUMER PRICE INFLATION, RELATING TO THE EXPENDITURE OF ABOUT 50 PER CENT OF URBAN HOUSEHOLDS IN HONG KONG.

IT IS ALSO THE INDICATOR IN WHICH GOODS FROM CHINA, IN PARTICULAR FOODSTUFFS, HAVE THE HEAVIEST WEIGHT.

MR JACOBS SAID ALTHOUGH IT WAS TRUE THAT THE RETAIL PRICES OF FOODSTUFFS HAD BEEN INCREASING FASTER THAN CONSUMER PRICES GENERALLY, THERE WAS AS YET LITTLE INDICATION THAT THE PRICES OF FOODSTUFFS FROM CHINA HAD BEEN LEADING THE WAY.

FOOD FROM CHINA CONSTITUTED LESS THAN 20 PER CENT OF THE FOOD CONSUMED IN HONG KONG, HE SAID.

"THUS, ALTHOUGH INFLATION IN THE PRICES OF FOODSTUFFS IS CONTRIBUTING TO GENERAL INFLATION, IT IS HARD TO PUT MUCH OF THE BLAME ON INFLATION IN THE PRICES OF FOODSTUFFS FROM CHINA."

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VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION OF VBP MAY START SOON

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REPATRIATION OF THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE WHO HAVE VOLUNTARILY ASKED TO RETURN TO VIETNAM MAY START TOWARDS THE END OF THIS MONTH OR IN FEBRUARY, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON GEOFFREY BARNES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REPATRIATION OF THESE VOLUNTEERS TO VIETNAM, AND HAS RECENTLY CONCLUDED A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ON THE PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES OF VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION," MR BARNES SAID IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON POON CHI-FAI.

THE UNHCR HAD RECENTLY LAUNCHED AN INTERNATIONAL APPEAL FOR US\$577,000 TO PAY FOR THE REPATRIATION OF SOME 500 VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE, OF WHICH AROUND 300 SEEMED LIKELY TO COME FROM HONG KONG, HE SAID.

"ON THE BASIS OF CURRENT PLANNING WE HOPE THAT A START ON REPATRIATIONS WILL BE MADE TOWARDS THE END OF THIS MONTH OR IN FEBRUARY," MR BARNES SAID.

TALKING ON THE WITHDRAWALS OF APPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION, MR BARNES SAID OF THE 464 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED SINCE JUNE 16 LAST YEAR, 179 (OR 38.6 PER CENT) HAD SUBSEQUENTLY SOUGHT TO WITHDRAW.

THE 285 APPLICATIONS WHICH REMAINED OPERATIVE WERE CURRENTLY BEING PROCESSED, HE SAID.

"THE APPLICATIONS FOR REPATRIATION TO VIETNAM MADE BY BOAT PEOPLE ARRIVING AFTER JUNE 16, 1988 HAVE ALL BEEN VOLUNTARY AND APPLICANTS HAVE NOT BEEN QUESTIONED AS TO THEIR REASONS FOR WISHING TO RETURN," MR BARNES POINTED OUT.

"NOR HAVE THOSE WHO CHANGE THEIR MINDS BEEN REQUIRED TO EXPLAIN THEIR REASONS FOR DOING SO.

"WE THUS HAVE NO RELIABLE INFORMATION AS TO WHY SOME APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN."

HOWEVER, MR BARNES BELIEVED THE EARLY AND SUCCESSFUL REPATRIATION OF A SIZEABLE GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY ASSIST AND PROMOTE THE PROCESS OF VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION.

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"ONCE THOSE VIETNAMESE IN DETENTION CENTRES IN HONG KONG RECOGNISE THAT REPATRIATION CAN BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT FEAR OF PERSECUTION, AND IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE UNHCR WILL PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO HELP THEM RE-ESTABLISH THEMSELVES IN VIETNAM, WE BELIEVE THAT AN INCREASING NUMBER OF BOAT PEOPLE WILL CONSIDER THIS TO BE AN ATTRACTIVE OPTION COMPARED WITH THE PROSPECT OF REMAINING INDEFINITELY IN DETENTION IN HONG KONG," HE SAID.

"AT THE SAME TIME WE HOPE THAT THE MESSAGE TAKEN BACK BY THOSE RETURNING, THAT HONG KONG HOLDS NO HOPE FOR THOSE SEEKING RESETTLEMENT OVERSEAS, WILL DETER OTHERS FROM MAKING A HAZARDOUS JOURNEY TO HONG KONG TO NO AVAIL."

MR BARNES REITERATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S SCREENING POLICY AND ITS NATURAL CONSEQUENCE, WHICH WAS THE RETURN TO VIETNAM OF ALL THOSE NOT CLASSIFIED AS REFUGEES, WOULD CONTINUE UNCHANGED.

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ADEQUATE SAFEGUARDS AGAINST REGISTRATION OF
SOCIETIES ASSOCIATED WITH CRIME

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ADEQUATE SAFEGUARDS HAVE BEEN PROVIDED BY LAW AGAINST THE REGISTRATION OF SOCIETIES ASSOCIATED WITH CRIME AND ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON GEOFFREY BARNES, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON POON CHI-FAI, MR BARNES SAID THE PRESENT CRITERIA FOR REGISTRATION OF SOCIETIES HAD BEEN IN USE FOR MANY YEARS AND WERE WORKING WELL.

THE ENQUIRIES INTO THE BACKGROUND OF THE PROMOTERS, AND SECTIONS 6 AND 7 OF THE SOCIETIES ORDINANCE, HAD PROVIDED ADEQUATE SAFEGUARDS AGAINST REGISTRATION OF SOCIETIES ASSOCIATED WITH CRIME, HE SAID.

"AMENDMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE FROM TIME TO TIME TO ENSURE THE CONTINUED EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LEGISLATION, NOTABLY IN 1982 WHEN CONTROLS OVER INFILTRATION BY TRIAD ELEMENTS AND OVER EVASION OF REGISTRATION WERE INCREASED," MR BARNES SAID.

"ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO INTENTION TO CHANGE THE ORDINANCE AT THE MOMENT, ITS OPERATION IS KEPT UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW," HE ADDED.

/MR BARNES

MR BARNES NOTED THAT EACH APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION WOULD BE CONSIDERED ON ITS OWN MERITS. AN APPLICATION MUST COMPRISE A CONSTITUTION WHICH SHOULD BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE SOCIETIES RULES, A PROMOTERS' LIST, AND AN APPLICATION FORM SIGNED BY THREE PROMOTERS.

THE REGISTRAR OF SOCIETIES MIGHT REGISTER THE SOCIETY OR EXEMPT IT FROM REGISTRATION AFTER ENQUIRIES HAD BEEN MADE BY THE DISTRICT OFFICER AND DISTRICT POLICE COMMANDER.

ON REPORTS THAT SOME ASSOCIATION PREMISES HAD RECENTLY BEEN USED FOR ILLEGAL PURPOSES, MR BARNES SAID SECTION 10 OF THE SOCIETIES ORDINANCE, CAP 151, PROVIDED FOR THE CANCELLATION OF REGISTRATION OF SUCH SOCIETIES.

"CERTAIN SOCIETIES, SUCH AS CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS, CAN BE EXEMPTED FROM REGISTRATION UNDER THE SOCIETIES ORDINANCE.

"THIS EXEMPTION FROM REGISTRATION CAN BE REMOVED UNDER SECTION 10 IF THE PREMISES ARE FOUND TO HAVE BEEN USED FOR ILLEGAL PURPOSES," HE SAID.

MR BARNES NOTED THAT SURPRISE INSPECTIONS WOULD BE CONDUCTED BY THE POLICE IF INFORMATION WAS RECEIVED THAT OFFENCES MIGHT BE BEING COMMITTED INSIDE SOCIETY PREMISES.

"SECTION 8(3) OF THE SOCIETIES ORDINANCE PROVIDES FOR A NOTICE TO BE SERVED ON A SOCIETY ORDERING IT TO DESIST FROM ACTIVITIES NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY AS SET OUT IN ITS CONSTITUTION OR RULES," HE SAID.

IF THE NOTICE WAS IGNORED, THEN CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN TO CANCELLING THE REGISTRATION OR EXEMPTION FROM REGISTRATION OF THE SOCIETY UNDER SECTION 10 OF THE ORDINANCE, MR BARNES SAID.

ON THE NUMBER OF SOCIETIES THAT HAD APPLIED FOR REGISTRATION OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS, MR BARNES SAID THE NUMBER OF REGISTRATION RESPECTIVELY WAS 242, 235 AND 279, WHEREAS THE NUMBER OF EXEMPTION FROM REGISTRATION WAS 31, 37 AND 43.

CATEGORIES INCLUDE ASSOCIATIONS OF ALUMNI, CLANSMEN AND NATIVES, RECREATIONAL, SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS, SPORTS, TRADERS, BENEVOLENT ORGANISATIONS, AND OWNERS AND TENANTS.

MR BARNES POINTED OUT THAT IF ANY ORGANISATION OPERATING WITHOUT REGISTRATION CAME TO POLICE ATTENTION BY VIRTUE OF ITS ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES, APPROPRIATE ENFORCEMENT ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN.

"HOWEVER IF IT IS A BONA FIDE ORGANISATION THAT HAS NOT REGISTERED DUE TO AN OVERSIGHT, THE LEGALITIES REQUIRED WILL BE POINTED OUT TO THE ORGANISATION, AND THE REGISTRAR OF SOCIETIES WILL CONSIDER REGISTERING IT UPON RECEIPT OF ITS APPLICATION," HE SAID.

OLD AGE ALLOWANCE DECLARATION CONSIDERED REASONABLE

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THE REQUIREMENT FOR AN INCOME AND ASSET DECLARATION BY APPLICANTS FOR THE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE FOR PEOPLE AGED FROM 65 TO 69, WHO WERE NOT PREVIOUSLY ELIGIBLE, IS CONSIDERED REASONABLE, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON T.H. CHAU, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON JAMES MCGREGOR, MR CHAU EXPLAINED THAT THE REQUIREMENT WAS CONSISTENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S OVERALL WELFARE POLICY OF PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO THOSE MOST IN NEED.

MR CHAU POINTED OUT THAT IN OCTOBER 1987 PROPOSALS WERE ANNOUNCED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FOR A PACKAGE OF IMPROVEMENTS TO THE MAIN SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES, INCLUDING THE PHASED EXTENSION OF THE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE TO PERSONS IN THE 65-69 AGE GROUP.

"ONE ELEMENT OF THIS PROPOSED PACKAGE WAS THAT ALL NEW APPLICANTS FOR THE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO DECLARE THAT THEIR INCOME AND ASSETS DID NOT EXCEED SPECIFIED LEVELS," HE SAID.

"THESE PROPOSALS WERE GENERALLY WELCOMED BY MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL AND BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AMONGST OTHERS."

MR CHAU ADDED THE GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED THAT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE NOT TO PROCEED WITH THE DECLARATION FOR NEW APPLICANTS AGED OVER 70, WHILST RETAINING IT FOR THOSE BETWEEN 65 AND 69.

THIS DECISION WAS MADE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATION OF VIEWS EXPRESSED AGAINST THE PROPOSED INCOME AND ASSET DECLARATION, PARTICULARLY FOR THOSE OVER 70 YEARS OLD, MR CHAU EXPLAINED.

THE FIRST PHASE OF THE EXTENSION OF THE ALLOWANCE TO THE 65-69 AGE GROUP WAS IMPLEMENTED ON SEPTEMBER 1 LAST YEAR.

PERSONS AGED 68 AND 69 WERE NOW ELIGIBLE FOR THE ALLOWANCE, SUBJECT TO A DECLARATION THAT THEIR MONTHLY INCOME DID NOT EXCEED THE LEVELS OF \$1,700 FOR A SINGLE PERSON AND \$2,800 FOR A MARRIED COUPLE.

THEIR ASSETS LEVELS HAD ALSO BEEN SET AT \$100,000 FOR A SINGLE PERSON AND \$150,000 FOR A MARRIED COUPLE.

MR CHAU POINTED OUT THAT WITH EFFECT FROM APRIL 1 THIS YEAR ELIGIBILITY WOULD BE EXTENDED TO THOSE AGED 67 WHILST THOSE AGED 66 AND 65 WOULD BECOME ELIGIBLE WITH EFFECT FROM APRIL 1990 AND 1991 RESPECTIVELY.

"THERE ARE CURRENTLY NO PLANS TO DISPENSE WITH THE DECLARATION FOR THIS AGE GROUP," HE ADDED.

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NO DATE YET FOR BILINGUAL ADVANCED LEVEL EXAMS

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THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON RON BRIDGE, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE DATE FOR INTRODUCING BILINGUAL ADVANCED LEVEL EXAMINATIONS HAS NOT BEEN FIXED, BUT THE EARLIEST DATE CANNOT BE BEFORE 1992.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID CHEUNG, MR BRIDGE NOTED THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CHINESE TEXTBOOKS COMMITTEE HAD URGED THAT SUCH EXAMINATIONS BE INTRODUCED AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE.

THE CHAIRMAN ALSO INFORMED HIM OF THE COMMITTEE'S VIEW THAT THERE WAS NO DIRECT LINK BETWEEN THE AVAILABILITY OF CHINESE TEXTBOOKS AND REFERENCE MATERIALS AND THE INTRODUCTION OF BILINGUAL EXAMINATIONS.

HOWEVER, THE SIXTH FORM WORKING GROUP HAD NOT YET FINALISED ITS VIEW ON THE APPROPRIATE TIMING, MR BRIDGE SAID.

"THE HONG KONG EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY CONDUCTED A SURVEY OF SCHOOLS IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR TO ASCERTAIN THE LIKELY REQUIREMENT FOR CHINESE-MEDIUM A-LEVELS FROM 1992 ONWARDS, AND FOUND THAT VERY FEW SCHOOLS INTENDED TO ENTER STUDENTS FOR THESE EXAMINATIONS BEFORE 1994," HE SAID.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, AT THE REQUEST OF THE SIXTH FORM WORKING GROUP, WAS NOW CONDUCTING A SECOND SURVEY OF SCHOOLS TO SEE WHETHER MORE SCHOOLS WOULD WISH TO ENTER CANDIDATES FOR CHINESE-MEDIUM A-LEVEL EXAMINATIONS BEFORE 1994.

"WHILE A FINAL DECISION ON THE TIMING FOR INTRODUCING BILINGUAL A-LEVEL EXAMINATIONS WILL BE TAKEN AFTER THE SIXTH FORM WORKING GROUP HAS COMPLETED ITS REPORT, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE FOR SUCH EXAMINATIONS CANNOT BE BEFORE 1992," MR BRIDGE SAID.

"THE GROUP WILL REPORT TO ME IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS YEAR ON MEASURES RELEVANT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS."

AS FOR THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS, MR BRIDGE SAID IT WAS ESTIMATED THAT AN ADDITIONAL \$220,000 PER YEAR WOULD BE REQUIRED INITIALLY.

"THE HONG KONG EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY ESTIMATES THAT BILINGUAL A-LEVEL EXAMINATIONS WILL COST \$200,000 EACH YEAR IN ADDITIONAL PAYMENTS TO EXAMINATION PERSONNEL, AND TRANSLATION OF SYLLABUSES WILL COST ABOUT \$20,000 WITH SMALLER COSTS THEREAFTER WHENEVER SYLLABUSES ARE REVISED," HE EXPLAINED.

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"UNTIL THE HIGHER LEVEL EXAMINATION IS ABOLISHED, NO ADDITIONAL FEE INCOME IS EXPECTED AS A RESULT OF A-LEVELS BEING AVAILABLE IN BOTH LANGUAGES."

THE HIGHER LEVEL EXAMINATION WOULD NEED TO BE RETAINED UNTIL ALL CHINESE MIDDLE SCHOOLS WERE ABLE TO OPERATE TWO-YEAR SIXTH FORMS, HE POINTED OUT.

"ANY PERIOD OF OVERLAP BETWEEN THE ABOLITION OF HIGHER LEVELS, WHICH THE AUTHORITY RUNS AT A SUBSTANTIAL LOSS, AND THE INTRODUCTION OF BILINGUAL A-LEVELS WOULD IMPOSE A CONSIDERABLE EXTRA WORKLOAD ON THE AUTHORITY'S STAFF AND WOULD REQUIRE AN INCREASE OF ABOUT 16 PER CENT IN FEES FOR A-LEVEL EXAMINATIONS."

EXPLAINING THE PROGRESS MADE SINCE THE GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED IN MAY LAST YEAR THE EDUCATION COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON SIXTH FORM EDUCATION, INCLUDING THE AVAILABILITY OF A-LEVEL EXAMINATIONS IN CHINESE, MR BRIDGE SAID THREE COURSES HAD BEEN FOLLOWED.

FIRSTLY, HE SAID THE SIXTH FORM WORKING GROUP HAD BEEN SET UP, COMPRISING MEMBERS FROM TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS, THE HONG KONG EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

SECONDLY, THE HONG KONG EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY HAD BEEN ASKED TO BEGIN PLANNING FOR THE PROVISION OF BILINGUAL A-LEVEL EXAMINATIONS.

THIRDLY, THE CHINESE TEXTBOOKS COMMITTEE, HAD BEEN ASKED TO CONSIDER THE QUESTION OF TEXTBOOKS AND REFERENCE MATERIALS IN CHINESE SUITABLE FOR USE IN CHINESE-MEDIUM A-LEVEL COURSES.

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ONE BILL PASSED
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THE PUBLIC ORDER (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 WAS PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

DEBATE ON THREE OTHER BILLS WAS ADJOURNED. THEY ARE THE REVISED EDITION OF THE LAWS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, THE SUPREME COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 AND THE SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICAL PROFESSIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989.

IN ADDITION, THE HONG KONG INDUSTRIAL ESTATES CORPORATION ANNUAL REPORT 1987-88 AND THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 1987-88 WERE TABLED AT THE MEETING.

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BEST YEAR FOR INDUSTRIAL ESTATES CORPORATION

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THE HONG KONG INDUSTRIAL ESTATES CORPORATION HAS GRANTED A RECORD 19.6 HECTARES OF LAND IN 1987-88 THROUGH 20 AGREEMENTS FOR LEASE, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CORPORATION, THE HON STEPHEN CHEONG, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

TABLING THE CORPORATION'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR, MR CHEONG SAID THAT BY COMPARISON THE AVERAGE AREA OF LAND GRANTED IN THE THREE PREVIOUS YEARS HAD BEEN 8.5 HECTARES, WITH THE AMOUNT IN THE PREVIOUS BEST YEAR, 1985-86, TOTALLING 11.2 HECTARES.

"THE STRONG DEMAND REPORTED IN THE TWO PREVIOUS YEARS CONTINUED BUT AT AN EVEN QUICKER PACE," MR CHEONG SAID.

HE SAID THE VARIED NATURE OF THE COMPANIES APPLYING AND MEETING THE CORPORATION'S SELECTION CRITERIA UNDOUBTEDLY HELPED TO BROADEN HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIAL BASE.

MOREOVER, THE RISE IN THE AVERAGE COMMITTED INVESTMENT OF GRANTEES -- FROM \$53 MILLION PER HECTARE TO \$68 MILLION -- WAS AN ENCOURAGING SIGN OF MORE CAPITAL INTENSIVE OPERATIONS BEING ATTACHED TO HONG KONG.

MR CHEONG SAID A LARGE SITE HAD BEEN GRANTED ON THE TAI PO ESTATE TO THE FIRST OF A NUMBER OF MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES INVOLVED IN COMPOUNDING AND PRODUCTION OF MASTER BATCHES AND FEEDSTOCK FOR USE BY THE PLASTICS CONVERSION INDUSTRY.

AN AGREEMENT HAD BEEN SIGNED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ADVANCED SEMI-CONDUCTOR FACILITY INCORPORATING AN IMPORTANT DESIGN CENTRE ON ANOTHER LARGE SITE IN THE HIGH TECHNOLOGY ZONE ON THE TAI PO ESTATE.

"WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ABOUT THREE HECTARES OF LAND REMAINING ON THE TAI PO ESTATE WHICH IS BEING RESERVED FOR APPLICATIONS INVOLVING THE LATEST TECHNOLOGIES, THE GREAT MAJORITY OF SITES AT TAI PO HAD BEEN GRANTED BY THE END OF THE YEAR," HE SAID.

MR CHEONG SAID THE DEMAND FOR SITES ON THE YUEN LONG ESTATE HAD CONTINUED TO BE STRONG, ASSISTED BY THE GOVERNMENT'S UPGRADING OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE NORTHWEST NEW TERRITORIES.

THE FAVOURABLE RESULTS HAD ENABLED THE CORPORATION TO MAKE RECORD REPAYMENTS OF \$219 MILLION TO THE DEVELOPMENT LOAN FUND, THUS SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCING THE CORPORATION'S INDEBTEDNESS TO THE FUND.

"THE CORPORATION IS NOW ON A SOUND FINANCIAL FOOTING. IT WILL NOT ONLY BE ABLE TO REPAY ALL THE LOANS DUE BEFORE THE REMAINING SITES ON THE TWO ESTATES ARE SOLD, BUT WILL PRODUCE A SURPLUS AS A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE CAPITAL COST OF A THIRD ESTATE," HE SAID.

/MR CHEONG

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MR CHEONG ALSO SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE CORPORATION WAS NOT TO DISPOSE OF INDUSTRIAL LAND WITH MAXIMUM PROFIT, THE BOARD CONSIDERED IT PRUDENT TO REVIEW ITS LAND PREMIA FROM TIME TO TIME HAVING REGARD TO MARKET TRENDS.

CONSEQUENTLY, THE PREMIA ON THE TWO ESTATES WERE INCREASED MODERATELY LAST AUGUST. THEY NOW STOOD AT \$1,250 PER SQUARE METRE FOR SITES ON THE TAI PO ESTATE AND \$1,100 AT YUEN LONG, HE SAID.

HE SAID THE CORPORATION WAS ALSO CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND WORKED VERY CLOSELY WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT IN ENSURING THAT APPLICANTS UNDERSTOOD WHAT WAS REQUIRED OF THEM AT AN EARLY STAGE.

"A SET OF GUIDELINES HAS BEEN IN USE FOR SOME YEARS AND THESE WERE CAREFULLY REVIEWED AND UPDATED DURING THE YEAR. THEY ARE BOTH PRACTICABLE FOR THE INDUSTRIALISTS AND ACCEPTABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT," HE SAID.

TURNING TO THE PROSPECTS FOR 1988-89, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS PROMISING, MR CHEONG SAID THAT THE CORPORATION HAD, IN THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF THE YEAR, GRANTED SITES TOTALLING 10 HECTARES TO 11 APPLICANTS; AND THE PROJECTS AND PROPOSED INVESTMENTS WERE ON AVERAGE LARGER THAN BEFORE.

HE NOTED THAT THREE SIZEABLE PROJECTS ON THE YUEN LONG ESTATE TAKEN TOGETHER REQUIRED FIVE HECTARES OF LAND AND WOULD INVOLVE INVESTMENTS TOTALLING \$1,000 MILLION, AND ALL THREE CAME FROM MAJOR OVERSEAS GROUPS.

MR CHEONG SAID THAT, TO ENSURE CONTINUITY IN THE SUPPLY OF INDUSTRIAL LAND FOR SELECTED APPLICANTS, THE CORPORATION HAD ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO CONSIDER GRANTING IT A SITE TO DEVELOP A THIRD ESTATE.

"THIS HAS BEEN ENDORSED IN PRINCIPLE BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND CONSULTANTS ARE NOW CARRYING OUT A FEASIBILITY STUDY OF A LARGE SITE TO BE RECLAIMED TO THE SOUTHEAST OF JUNK BAY," HE ADDED.

MR CHEONG SAID THAT THE CORPORATION HAD NOTICED A GROWING DEMAND FOR SITES FROM THE SUPPORTING AND LINKAGE INDUSTRIES OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS.

"THIS IS CONTINUING PARTICULARLY AS THE REQUIREMENT FOR HIGH QUALITY COMPONENTS BUILDS UP," HE SAID.

"SUCH INDUSTRIES CERTAINLY HELP TO BROADEN HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIAL BASE AND BRING NEW SKILLS TO OUR WORK FORCE THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF THE LATEST AUTOMATED PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES.

"I BELIEVE THAT THE CORPORATION'S INDUSTRIAL ESTATES ARE BEST SUITED TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THESE AND OTHER HIGH TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRIES IN THE YEARS AHEAD."

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VOCATIONAL TRAINING HAS VITAL ROLE

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VOCATIONAL TRAINING IS VITAL TO THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HONG KONG COMMUNITY, THE HON STEPHEN CHEONG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

TABLING THE SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL (VTC), MR CHEONG PAID TRIBUTE TO THE COUNCIL'S OUTGOING CHAIRMAN, MR CHAN KAM-CHUEN, UNDER WHOSE LEADERSHIP IN THE PAST TWO YEARS MANY IMPORTANT PROJECTS WERE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED.

MR CHEONG SAID THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE 1987-88 YEAR FOR THE VTC WAS THE OPENING OF THE CHAI WAN TECHNICAL INSTITUTE, THE LARGEST IN HONG KONG WITH A CAPACITY OF 2,700 FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STUDENT PLACES.

"WITH ITS COMPLETION, THERE ARE NOW OVER 10,500 FULL-TIME PLACES IN THE TECHNICAL INSTITUTES, AN INCREASE OF OVER 135 PER CENT SINCE THE COUNCIL WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1982 AND TOOK OVER THE MANAGEMENT OF THESE INSTITUTES," HE SAID.

"THE NUMBER OF PART-TIME PLACES HAS ALSO INCREASED FROM ABOUT 35,800 TO 49,000 IN THE LAST SIX YEARS."

ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE WAS THE COMING INTO OPERATION OF THE COUNCIL'S JEWELLERY INDUSTRY TRAINING CENTRE AND THE SEAMEN'S TRAINING CENTRE.

MEANWHILE, THE PROJECTS EMBARKED ON BY THE COUNCIL TO IMPROVE THE TEACHING FACILITIES AND STUDENT AMENITIES IN THE OLDER TECHNICAL INSTITUTES WERE PROGRESSING MOST SATISFACTORILY.

THESE INCLUDED THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW ANNEXES AT THE KWAI CHUNG TECHNICAL INSTITUTE AND THE KWUN TONG TECHNICAL INSTITUTE AND THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE MORRISON HILL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE ANNEXE, WHICH WERE SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION IN THE LATER PART OF THIS YEAR AND IN EARLY TO MID-1990 RESPECTIVELY.

"THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE FIRM COMMITMENT AND SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT.

"FOR THIS I WOULD LIKE TO THANK GOVERNMENT MOST SINCERELY AND I LOOK FORWARD TO EQUALLY ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT IN THE FUTURE," MR CHEONG SAID.

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FINANCE COMMITTEE APPROVES NEW PAY SCALES

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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED FOR THE DISCIPLINED SERVICES NEW SALARY SCALES EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 1 LAST YEAR AND CHANGES TO ALLOWANCES WITH EFFECT FROM FEBRUARY 1 THIS YEAR.

MEMBERS NOTED THAT A SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION OF ABOUT \$534 MILLION WOULD BE REQUIRED IN 1988-89 TO IMPLEMENT THESE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINED SERVICES PAY AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICES.

THE NEW SALARY SCALES WERE APPROVED SUBJECT TO NO REDUCTION IN GROSS INCOME OF ANY INDIVIDUAL OFFICER AS A RESULT OF THE REVIEW.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FINAL REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE WERE ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT LAST MONTH.

AT TODAY'S MEETING, THE FINANCE COMMITTEE ALSO APPROVED, RETROSPECTIVE FROM APRIL 1 LAST YEAR, RECALCULATED PAY ADJUSTMENTS FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE AS RECOMMENDED BY A COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY WHICH LOOKED INTO THE 1988 CIVIL SERVICE PAY ADJUSTMENTS DISPUTE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE STAFF SIDE.

THE ORIGINAL PAY ADJUSTMENTS MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT, WHICH TOOK EFFECT FROM APRIL 1 LAST YEAR, WERE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING PAY TREND INDICATORS:

UPPER PAY BAND	6.54 PER CENT
MIDDLE PAY BAND	7.28 PER CENT
LOWER PAY BAND	8.50 PER CENT

THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY RECOMMENDED, AND THE FINANCE COMMITTEE APPROVED THAT THESE ADJUSTMENTS BE RECALCULATED ON THE BASIS OF THE FOLLOWING REVISED PAY TREND INDICATORS:

UPPER PAY BAND	9.56 PER CENT
MIDDLE PAY BAND	9.93 PER CENT
LOWER PAY BAND	9.62 PER CENT

THE FINANCE COMMITTEE ALSO APPROVED SIMILAR ADJUSTMENTS TO THE PAY SCALES AND RATES OF PAY OF ORGANISATIONS, INCLUDING DEFICIENCY SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS, WHICH WERE NORMALLY ADJUSTED IN LINE WITH CIVIL SERVICE.

TO IMPLEMENT THESE RECOMMENDATIONS IN FULL IN 1988-89, COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOTED THAT SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION OF ABOUT \$508.3 MILLION WOULD BE REQUIRED.

THEY ALSO NOTED THAT SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION OF ABOUT \$18.6 MILLION SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE, ON APPLICATION, TO DISCRETIONARY SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS IN 1988-89 IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MERITS OF EACH CASE.

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FUNDING APPROVED FOR 1991 CENSUS

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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ACCEPTED THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS, ESTIMATED AT \$151.4 MILLION, INVOLVED IN CONDUCTING A POPULATION CENSUS IN 1991.

THE CENSUS WILL OBTAIN UP-TO-DATE BENCHMARK INFORMATION ON THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION IN HONG KONG.

SUCH INFORMATION IS IMPORTANT FOR PLANNING, PARTICULARLY IN SUCH AREAS AS HOUSING, EDUCATION, TRANSPORT, MEDICAL AND HEALTH, AND SOCIAL SERVICES.

IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR BUSINESS AND RESEARCH PURPOSES.

TO MEET THE CENSUS OBJECTIVES MOST COST-EFFECTIVELY, THE 1991 POPULATION CENSUS WILL BE A TWO-PHASE OPERATION.

THIS WILL CONSIST OF, FIRSTLY, A 100 PER CENT ENUMERATION OF ALL PERSONS BY AGE AND SEX; AND SECONDLY, A ONE-IN-SEVEN SAMPLE ENQUIRY OF THE BROAD RANGE OF DETAILED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION.

AS IN PREVIOUS CENSUS, THERE WILL BE A PRE-TEST AND A PILOT CENSUS TO TEST THOROUGHLY ALL ASPECTS OF THE CENSUS BEFOREHAND IN ORDER TO RECTIFY, IN GOOD TIME, ANY DEFECTS IN THE SYSTEM.

THE ENUMERATION STAFF REQUIREMENT FOR THE CENSUS IS ESTIMATED TO BE AROUND 16,000, WHICH WILL BE MET BY EMPLOYING SCHOOL TEACHERS AND SECONDARY AND POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS.

THE ENTIRE OPERATION OF THE 1991 POPULATION CENSUS IS PROPOSED TO BE CARRIED OUT AS FOLLOW:

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|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (A) PRE-TEST : | FEBRUARY 24 - MARCH 5, 1989 |
| (B) PILOT CENSUS : | NOVEMBER 3 - 12, 1989 |
| (C) MAIN CENSUS : | MARCH 15 - 24, 1991 |
| (D) DATA PROCESSING AND
DISSEMINATION : | APRIL 1991 - MARCH 1993 |

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COMPUTER SYSTEM FOR STORING HK LAWS
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THE GOVERNMENT WILL SOON SET UP A BILINGUAL COMPUTER SYSTEM FOR STORING ALL 31 VOLUMES OF THE LAWS OF HONG KONG.

THE COMPUTERISED INFORMATION SYSTEM WHICH WILL BE SET UP IN THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT'S LAW DRAFTING DIVISION IS PRIMARILY AN AID TO RESEARCH AND IS DESIGNED TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY AND QUALITY OF DRAFTING.

ACCORDING TO THE PROPOSED TIME-TABLE, TENDERS FOR THE COMPUTER WILL BE CALLED IN JANUARY, THE EQUIPMENT WILL BE INSTALLED IN OCTOBER AND THE SYSTEM WILL BE READY FOR OPERATION EARLY NEXT YEAR.

THE LEGAL INFORMATION SYSTEM IS EXPECTED TO BE PARTICULARLY USEFUL TO LAWYERS WORKING ON THE BILINGUAL DRAFTING AND THE LOCALISATION OF LAWS PROGRAMMES.

THE FINANCE COMMITTEE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED A NON-RECURRENT COMMITMENT OF \$8.44 MILLION TO MEET THE CAPITAL COSTS OF EQUIPMENT, SITE PREPARATION AND OTHER EXPENDITURE.

IN ADDITION, THE STAFF COSTS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT IS ESTIMATED AT \$1.3 MILLION BETWEEN NOW AND APRIL 1990.

THEREAFTER THE ANNUAL RECURRENT COST OF MAINTAINING THE SYSTEM IS ESTIMATED TO BE ABOUT \$1 MILLION.

AT PRESENT, THE LAWS OF HONG KONG CONSISTING OF ABOUT 20,000 PAGES, INCLUDES 536 ORDINANCES, IN 31 VOLUMES AND IS MAINTAINED MANUALLY BY THE LAW DRAFTING DIVISION.

"A MANUAL SYSTEM MEANS THAT THE LACK OF AUTOMATED FACILITIES FOR RETRIEVING CROSS-CONNECTING TEXT CONTENT WHEN DRAFTING NEW LEGISLATION OR MAKING AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING LAWS, OR ANY OTHER RESEARCH ON THE CONTEXT OF THE LAWS, NECESSITATES LABORIOUS AND TIME-CONSUMING EFFORT," A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

ONE OF THE EXPECTED BENEFITS OF THE SYSTEM IS TO ENABLE NEWLY ENACTED LAWS OR AMENDMENTS TO BE MORE ACCURATE AND CONSISTENT.

IT SHOULD ALSO REDUCE THE NEED FOR AMENDING LEGISLATION DUE TO ERRORS AND OMISSIONS, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

HE SAID THAT EXTENSIVE CHANGES TO EXISTING LAWS ARE ENVISAGED IN THE TRANSITION TO 1997. THESE INCLUDE LOCATING AND THEN CHANGING ALL REFERENCES TO ENGLISH LEGISLATION AND COLONIAL STATUS.

FURTHERMORE, AN ESTIMATED FIVE VOLUMES OF ENGLISH LAWS NOW APPLICABLE TO HONG KONG MUST BE LOCALISED AND ENACTED BEFORE 1997.

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ANY POSSIBLE CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE EXISTING LAWS AND THE FUTURE BASIC LAW WILL ALSO NEED TO BE IDENTIFIED AND RESOLVED BEFORE 1997 TO ENSURE THEIR HARMONISATION.

THE NEW COMPUTER SYSTEM WILL HELP TO MAKE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL THE NECESSARY CHANGES TO THE EXISTING LAWS FASTER AND MORE THOROUGH, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

ANOTHER MAJOR ACTIVITY FOR THE LAW DRAFTING DIVISION DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD IS THE TRANSLATION OF THE EXISTING LAWS OF HONG KONG FROM ENGLISH INTO CHINESE.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID: "IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT BOTH LANGUAGE VERSIONS OF HONG KONG'S LEGISLATION ARE CONSISTENT WITH EACH OTHER, AGREED EQUIVALENTS MUST BE SETTLED AND USED CONSISTENTLY.

"THIS IS AGAIN A TASK THAT REQUIRES EXHAUSTIVE RESEARCH INTO THE EXISTING LAWS AND FOR WHICH THE EMPLOYMENT OF MANUAL SEARCHES IS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE."

HE SAID THAT THE BILINGUAL LEGAL INFORMATION COMPUTER SYSTEM WILL HELP THE DRAFTSMAN TO ACHIEVE A CONSISTENT TRANSLATION OF THE LAWS.

THIS WOULD MINIMISE FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LITIGATION AND OTHER ARGUMENTS ARISING SOLELY FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF BILINGUAL LEGISLATION.

IN ADDITION, THE GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME WILL BE EXPEDITED SINCE STATUTORY RESEARCH WILL BE CONDUCTED FASTER WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF COMPUTER FACILITIES.

THE NECESSARY PROVISION WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE 1989-90 DRAFT ESTIMATES.

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LORD GLENARTHUR VISITS JUNK BAY NEW TOWN, HKUST

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THE MINISTER OF STATE AT THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR HONG KONG, LORD GLENARTHUR, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TOURED JUNK BAY NEW TOWN AND VISITED THE SITE FOR THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN SAI KUNG.

ACCOMPANIED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, MR MICHAEL SUEN, LORD GLENARTHUR ARRIVED BY HELICOPTER AT HANG HAU AND WAS MET BY SAI KUNG DISTRICT OFFICER, MR CHRISTOPHER MUNN.

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FROM A VANTAGE POINT NEAR HONG SING COURT, LORD GLENARTHUR HAD A PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE AREA INCLUDING THE JUNK BAY TUNNEL PROJECT WHICH IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION. HE WAS BRIEFED ON THE DEVELOPMENTS OF JUNK BAY BY THE PROJECT MANAGER (NEW TERRITORIES/SOUTH), MR CHOW CHE-KING.

LORD GLENARTHUR WAS TOLD THAT JUNK BAY NEW TOWN WAS BEING PLANNED TO ENSURE A BALANCED AND LARGELY SELF-SUFFICIENT COMMUNITY WITH A TARGET POPULATION OF 440,000 WITH THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE LIVING IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES.

THE POPULATION WOULD BE SERVED BY SCHOOLS, MARKETS, TRANSPORT AND SOCIAL WELFARE FACILITIES WITHIN THE ESTATES AND BY MORE LARGE-SCALE FACILITIES WHICH WOULD SERVE THE ENTIRE NEW TOWN.

THESE INCLUDE A TOWN HALL, COMMUNITY CENTRES, LIBRARIES, SPORTS CENTRES, THEATRES, CLINICS, POLICE STATIONS, FIRE STATIONS, PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.

EMPLOYMENT FOR THE MAJORITY OF JUNK BAY'S WORKING POPULATION WOULD BE PROVIDED IN INDUSTRIAL AREAS TO THE SOUTH OF THE NEW TOWN AND CONSIDERATION WAS BEING GIVEN TO DEVELOPING HONG KONG'S THIRD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE AT JUNK BAY.

THE AREA'S MAIN LINK WITH KOWLOON WOULD BE A TWIN-TUBE ROAD TUNNEL, SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION IN OCTOBER 1990, AND DISCUSSIONS WERE CURRENTLY BEING UNDERTAKEN TO PROVIDE FOR A POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY TO JUNK BAY.

LORD GLENARTHUR WAS TOLD THAT THE CURRENT POPULATION OF THE NEW TOWN WAS ABOUT 33,000 WHICH INCLUDED 9,000 PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN LIVING IN VILLAGES AND OTHER SETTLEMENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AREA FOR MANY YEARS.

TRAVELLING BY CAR TO PO LAM ESTATE, LORD GLENARTHUR VISITED THE PO LEUNG KUK YICK CHARK FUNG KINDERGARTEN WHERE HE LOOKED IN ON CHILDREN ENGAGED IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES.

AT A NEARBY HOUSING BLOCK, LORD GLENARTHUR VISITED A FAMILY LIVING IN A FLAT IN PO TAI HOUSE.

DURING A WALK THROUGH THE ESTATE, LORD GLENARTHUR VISITED A MARKET WHERE HE STOPPED TO SPEAK TO SOME OF THE STALL OPERATORS.

FROM JUNK BAY, LORD GLENARTHUR WENT TO THE SITE FOR THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AT CLEARWATER BAY, SAI KUNG WHERE HE WAS MET BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HKUST COUNCIL, SIR S.Y. CHUNG.

LORD GLENARTHUR WAS BRIEFED ON THE CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS AND VARIOUS OTHER PLANS FOR HONG KONG'S THIRD UNIVERSITY.

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THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS IS BEING BUILT ON A 60-HECTARE SITE ON THE CLEARWATER BAY PENINSULA OF SAI KUNG OVERLOOKING PORT SHELTER.

THE FIRST PHASE OF THE UNIVERSITY FOR ABOUT 2,000 STUDENTS IS SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION BY MAY 1991, IN TIME FOR THE FIRST STUDENT INTAKE IN OCTOBER THAT YEAR. PHASE TWO FOR ABOUT 5,000 STUDENTS IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED BY MAY 1993.

LORD GLENARTHUR WAS TOLD THAT SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF GOVERNMENT FUNDS, PHASE THREE FOR ANOTHER 3,000 STUDENTS WHICH WOULD BRING THE OVERALL STUDENT POPULATION TO 10,000 SHOULD BE READY BY MAY 1995.

HE WAS TOLD THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB HAD GENEROUSLY DONATED \$1.5 BILLION TO HELP FINANCE THE CAPITAL COST AND THE GOVERNMENT'S CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE CONSTRUCTION OF PHASES I AND II WAS ESTIMATED AT \$590 MILLION.

THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ALSO BEAR THE COST OF SPECIALIST AND TEACHING EQUIPMENT AND ALL RECURRENT COSTS.

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GOVT STRESSES 'NO AMNESTY' POLICY

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THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT IS NOT GIVING ANY CONSIDERATION TO AN AMNESTY FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS SUCH AS THAT GIVEN IN MACAU, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE GOVERNMENT WOULD MAINTAIN ITS POLICY OF RETURNING ALL ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS TO CHINA, HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE POLICE AND ARMY UNITS ON THE BORDER WOULD BE STEPPING UP THEIR VIGILANCE IN CASE ANY PEOPLE SHOULD MISTAKENLY SUPPOSE THERE WOULD BE AN AMNESTY IN HONG KONG AND TRY TO ENTER THE TERRITORY.

THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF A REVIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY.

THE GOVERNMENT WAS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CONTROLS AGAINST ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION THAT ALL ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WOULD BE CAPTURED AND WOULD BE RETURNED TO CHINA, THE SPOKESMAN EMPHASISED.

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DB TO DISCUSS PROPOSAL ON REFUGEES

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THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT BOARD WILL DISCUSS AT A SPECIAL MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY) THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AT THE SHAM SHUI PO REFUGEE CENTRE.

AS AN INTERIM MEASURE TO IMPROVE THE LIVING CONDITIONS AT THE SAN YICK REFUGEE CENTRE, THE GOVERNMENT HAS PROPOSED TO MOVE NOT MORE THAN 1,500 REFUGEES TO A NEW SECTION OF THE SHAM SHUI PO REFUGEE CENTRE WHICH OFFER MORE SATISFACTORY ACCOMMODATION.

UPON THE COMPLETION OF THE WHOLE PILLAR POINT REFUGEE CENTRE IN JUNE OR JULY THIS YEAR, THIS BATCH AND SOME 1,000 PEOPLE FROM THE EXISTING SHAM SHUI PO CENTRE ARE EXPECTED TO BE REHOUSED THERE.

THE PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MRS CARRIE YAU, WILL EXPLAIN THE DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL AT THE MEETING.

FOLLOWING THE SPECIAL MEETING, MEMBERS OF THE TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE WILL MEET TO DISCUSS ROADWORKS AND TRAFFIC ARISING FROM THE TAI WOR PING HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME DEVELOPMENT.

OTHER ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED ARE AN INCREASE IN CHARGES AT THE SHEK KIP MEI CARPARK, IMPROVEMENT OF PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES AT BEACON HILL, DEMOLITION OF THE PEI HO STREET FOOTBRIDGE AND RELOCATION OF SIGNAL-CONTROLLED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING FACILITIES AT THE JUNCTION OF LAI CHI KOK ROAD AND KWEILIN STREET.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT BOARD SPECIAL MEETING WHICH WILL BEGIN AT 2 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT THE CHEUNG SHA WAN COMMUNITY CENTRE, 55 FAT TSEUNG STREET. IT WILL BE FOLLOWED BY A MEETING OF THE BOARD'S TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING.

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CONSULTANCY STUDY ON UNSEWERED DEVELOPMENTS COMMISSIONED

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT HAS COMMISSIONED A CONSULTANCY STUDY ON THE POLLUTION PROBLEMS CAUSED BY ABOUT 100 UNSEWERED VILLAGES AND DEVELOPMENTS.

THESE VILLAGES AND DEVELOPMENTS ARE WITHIN THE TOLO HARBOUR CATCHMENT AREA INCLUDING THE SHA TIN AND TAI PO NEW TOWNS.

/A SPOKESMAN

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE EPD SAID THIS WAS ONE OF THE ELEMENTS INCLUDED IN THE GOVERNMENT'S TOLO HARBOUR ACTION PLAN WHICH AIMED AT IMPROVING THE WATER QUALITY IN TOLO HARBOUR.

THE STUDY WILL EXAMINE ALL SEWAGE POLLUTION SOURCES WITHIN THESE UNSEWERED DEVELOPMENTS, ASSESS THE RESULTING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND INVESTIGATE THE APPROPRIATE MITIGATORY MEASURES FOR THE FORMULATION OF A LONG-TERM POLLUTION CONTROL PLAN.

A PROGRAMME FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NECESSARY ENGINEERING WORKS IDENTIFIED WILL ALSO BE PRODUCED, WHICH WILL INCLUDE A LIST OF THE PRIORITY SCHEMES FOR AREAS WHERE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS ARE REQUIRED.

THE CONTRACT SIGNING OF THE CONSULTANCY STUDY TOOK PLACE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BETWEEN EPD'S ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, MR MIKE STOKOE, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF BALFOURS INTERNATIONAL (ASIA).

THE STUDY, AT A COST OF \$12 MILLION, WILL TAKE 12 MONTHS TO COMPLETE.

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LUCKY 7 FOR AUCTION AT LUNAR NEW YEAR
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ENTHUSIASTS OF LUCKY CAR NUMBERS SHOULD NOT MISS THE LUNAR NEW YEAR LUCKY VEHICLE NUMBER AUCTION ON JANUARY 21 (SATURDAY).

THE SPECIAL NEW YEAR AUCTION, ORGANISED BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT, WILL TAKE PLACE AT 10 AM IN THE CITY HALL THEATRE.

TOPPING THE LIST OF THE 20 LUCKY NUMBERS AVAILABLE AT THE AUCTION IS CAR NUMBER "7" WITH NO PREFIX.

THE LUNAR NEW YEAR CAR NUMBER AUCTION ORGANISED BY THE DEPARTMENT LAST YEAR SAW THE AUSPICIOUS NUMBER "8", ALSO WITHOUT PREFIX, FETCH A RECORD OF \$5 MILLION.

THE 20 LUCKY CAR NUMBERS PUT FOR AUCTION THIS TIME ARE AS FOLLOWS:

BM9	CG6789	7	CD777
378	AR3	XX89	BM525
HK3333	BC99	AC323	CC8888
AS18	133	HK9898	HK5
66	EA1	BD1	AC8338

ALL THE NUMBERS ARE NOT TRANSFERABLE.

SINCE MAY 1973 A TOTAL OF 133 AUCTIONS HAD BEEN HELD BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT, RAISING \$69.14 MILLION FOR THE CHARITABLE LOTTERIES FUND.

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NEW OFFICES FOR MSB DIVISION

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THE FOOD SECTION (KOWLOON) AND THE HEALTH EDUCATION UNIT OF THE HYGIENE DIVISION OF THE MUNICIPAL SERVICES BRANCH WILL BE MOVING TO NEW OFFICES ON THE EIGHTH FLOOR, URBAN COUNCIL FA YUEN STREET COMPLEX, 123A FA YUEN STREET, KOWLOON TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE NEW TELEPHONE NUMBERS OF THE FOOD SECTION (KOWLOON) AND THE HEALTH EDUCATION UNIT WILL BE 3-7870007 AND 3-7871230 RESPECTIVELY.

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CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL TO OPEN IN SHA TAU KOK

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THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR MICHAEL SUEN, WILL OFFICIATE AT THE OPENING OF THE SHA TAU KOK CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL ON JANUARY 26.

THE \$11 MILLION SCHOOL, SITUATED WITHIN THE FRONTIER CLOSED AREA, IS THE SECOND CENTRALLY LOCATED PRIMARY SCHOOL BUILT IN THE NEW TERRITORIES IN LINE WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE IN THE 1981 WHITE PAPER ON PRIMARY EDUCATION AND PRE-PRIMARY SERVICES.

THE SHA TAU KOK CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL IS PART OF THE \$300 MILLION REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN SHA TAU KOK.

OTHER FACILITIES PROVIDED UNDER THE PROGRAMME INCLUDE A RURAL PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATE BUILT BY THE HONG KONG HOUSING SOCIETY TO ACCOMMODATE SQUATTERS AFFECTED BY CLEARANCE, A RECREATION GROUND AND A SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT.

THERE WILL ALSO BE AN AIR-CONDITIONED COMMUNITY HALL WITH A PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICE CENTRE, A KINDERGARTEN, A MARKET AND COOKED FOOD COMPLEX, A WATERFRONT PROMENADE AND A PERMANENT SHELTERED ANCHORAGE FOR FISHING BOATS.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR MICHAEL SUEN, WILL OFFICIATE AT THE OPENING OF THE SHA TAU KOK CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL ON JANUARY 26 (THURSDAY). YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE EVENT WHICH WILL BEGIN AT 10.30 AM.

AFTER THE OPENING, A GUIDED TOUR WILL BE CONDUCTED FOR THE PRESS TO VISIT THE VARIOUS REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN SHA TAU KOK.

/TO FACILITATE

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TO FACILITATE APPLICATIONS FOR FRONTIER CLOSED AREA PERMITS, REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS COVERING THE FUNCTION SHOULD SEND PHOTOCOPIES OF THEIR IDENTITY CARDS TO MRS ANGELA WONG, INFORMATION OFFICER OF NORTH DISTRICT OFFICE, JOCKEY CLUB ROAD, FANLING BEFORE JANUARY 17 (TUESDAY). LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED.

TRANSPORT FOR MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES WILL BE PROVIDED ON JANUARY 26.

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SOUTHERN DB TO DISCUSS LICENSING GUIDELINES FOR GAMES CENTRES

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MEMBERS OF THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT BOARD WILL MEET TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSED NEW GUIDELINES FOR THE GRANTING AND RENEWAL OF LICENCES FOR AMUSEMENT GAMES CENTRES.

REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION BRANCH AND THE TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING AUTHORITY WILL ATTEND THE MEETING TO INTRODUCE A DOCUMENT IN RESPECT OF THE NEW GUIDELINES AND ANSWER MEMBERS' QUESTIONS.

ON THE MA HANG VALLEY REDEVELOPMENT SCHEME, THE DISTRICT BOARD WILL BE INFORMED ON WHETHER LOCAL RESIDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN REHOUSED IN OTHER PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES CAN CHOOSE TO MOVE BACK TO MA HANG WHEN THE PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECT THERE IS COMPLETED.

MEMBERS WILL ALSO DISCUSS THE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS OF THE BOARD AND ITS COMMITTEES FOR THE YEAR 1989/90.

OTHER ITEMS ON THE AGENDA INCLUDE THE MEMBERSHIP AND THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ELECTION OF CHAIRMEN OF THE BOARD'S COMMITTEES, AS WELL AS THE APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS TO SERVE ON THE COMMITTEES FOR THE YEAR 1989/90.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT BOARD TO BE HELD TOMORROW (THURSDAY), BEGINNING AT 2.30 PM AT THE DB CONFERENCE ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, MEI FUNG COURT, ABERDEEN CENTRE, NAM NING STREET, ABERDEEN.

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COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARES SYSTEM
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MEMBERS OF THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT BOARD'S TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE WILL MEET TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO DISCUSS A PROPOSAL MADE BY A DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER ASKING THE GOVERNMENT TO REVIEW ITS AGREEMENT WITH PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMPANIES ON THE APPROVAL OF FARE INCREASE APPLICATIONS.

AT THE MEETING, COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, MR CHAN CHI-KWAN, WILL ASK WHAT MEASURES THE GOVERNMENT IS TAKING TO ENSURE WATERBORNE TRANSPORT SAFETY AND TO CONTROL WIND-SURFING ACTIVITIES IN THE HARBOUR.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

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

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STUDENT TRAVEL ALLOWANCE ON AGENDA
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THE CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICT BOARD'S COMMUNITY BUILDING AND SERVICES COMMITTEE WILL MEET TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO DISCUSS THE NEW STUDENT TRAVEL ALLOWANCE SCHEME.

THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WILL TABLE A PAPER ON THE LICENSING AND MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL BUSES FOR MEMBERS' INFORMATION.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING WHICH WILL BEGIN AT 2.30 PM IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM, 14TH FLOOR, HARBOUR BUILDING, 38 PIER ROAD, CENTRAL.

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TUEN MUN DB ORGANISES STUDY TOUR TO SOUTH KOREA

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THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT BOARD IS ORGANISING A STUDY TOUR TO SOUTH KOREA FROM JANUARY 18 TO 25.

MEMBERS WILL LOOK AT THE COUNTRY'S NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENT, TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MATTERS AS WELL AS THE TREATMENT OF INDUSTRIAL WASTES.

APART FROM VISITING SEOUL, THEY WILL SPEND TWO DAYS IN THE SCENIC CHEJU.

IN ORDER TO GIVE PARTICIPANTS SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON SOUTH KOREA, A BRIEFING SESSION WILL BE HELD TOMORROW (THURSDAY) MORNING DURING WHICH STAFF FROM THE KOREAN CONSULATE WILL TALK ABOUT THE COUNTRY'S CUSTOM, CULTURE AND LATEST DEVELOPMENT.

A VIDEO SHOW WILL ALSO BE PRESENTED DURING THE BRIEFING WHICH WILL BE FOLLOWED BY A TEA RECEPTION.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE TEA RECEPTION HOSTED BY THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT BOARD IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR STUDY TOUR TO SOUTH KOREA.

THE RECEPTION WILL BEGIN AT 11 AM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT BOARD CONFERENCE ROOM ON THE THIRD FLOOR, GOVERNMENT OFFICES BUILDING, 1 TUEN HI ROAD, TUEN MUN.

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DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 5-8428777

DIB SUPPLEMENT

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 1989

TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN BY
LORD GLENARTHUR, MINISTER OF STATE,
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE,
ON JANUARY 11, 1989

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 1989

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LORD GLENARTHUR GIVES PRESS CONFERENCE

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THE FOLLOWING IS A FULL TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY LORD GLENARTHUR, MINISTER OF STATE AT THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR HONG KONG:

LORD GLENARTHUR: THIS HAS BEEN MY FOURTH VISIT TO HONG KONG IN 18 MONTHS. AS MINISTER WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY I REGARD IT AS ESSENTIAL TO KEEP IN CLOSE AND REGULAR TOUCH WITH DEVELOPMENTS IN THE TERRITORY.

AS IN THE PAST, I HAVE HAD A VERY FULL AND WORTHWHILE VISIT. I HAVE HAD TALKS WITH THE GOVERNOR AND SENIOR HONG KONG GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. I HAVE HAD MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS. I HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITIES TO HEAR THE VIEWS OF URBAN AND REGIONAL COUNCILLORS, BUSINESSMEN AND A WIDE VARIETY OF OTHER HONG KONG PEOPLE.

I HAVE ALSO VISITED VIETNAMESE REFUGEE CENTRES IN THE TUEN MUN AREA. I HAVE SEEN THE SPLENDID NEW EXHIBITION AND CONVENTION CENTRE. AND I HAVE VISITED JUNK BAY NEW TOWN AND THE SITE OF THE THIRD UNIVERSITY.

MY VISIT HAS BEEN DOMINATED BY THE PROBLEM OF THE 25,000 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND BOAT PEOPLE IN HONG KONG. I HAVE THE GREATEST ADMIRATION FOR THE WAY IN WHICH THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT, THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, THE POLICE AND THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES HAVE COPEd WITH THIS INTRACTABLE PROBLEM OVER THE PAST VERY DIFFICULT MONTHS.

LET ME SAY AT ONCE THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ARE COMMITTED TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO HELP. WE ARE NOT DUCKING OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO DO SO. LET ME DESCRIBE WHAT WE ARE DOING.

FIRST AS REGARDS THE 15,000 VIETNAMESE WHO HAVE REFUGEE STATUS. AS YOU KNOW WE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED OUR READINESS TO TAKE A FURTHER 1,000 REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG - ON TOP OF THE MORE THAN 13,000 WE HAVE ALREADY TAKEN - OVER THE NEXT TWO TO THREE YEARS. THAT WOULD AMOUNT TO A DOUBLING OF OUR PRESENT INTAKE OF REFUGEES.

WE HAVE SAID THAT WE WILL DO THIS PROVIDED OTHER RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES ALSO AGREE TO TAKE MORE. SOME IN HONG KONG HAVE CRITICISED LACK OF COMMITMENT ON OUR PART. I CANNOT SEE WHY. WE NEED THE HELP OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO SEE THE REFUGEES RESETTLED. SURELY IT MAKES SENSE TO USE OUR WILLINGNESS TO TAKE MORE AS A LEVER TO GET MORE RESETTLEMENT PLACES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES?

WE HAVE MOUNTED A VIGOROUS DIPLOMATIC CAMPAIGN TO PERSUADE OTHER COUNTRIES TO FOLLOW OUR LEAD AND ALTHOUGH IT IS STILL EARLY DAYS, I AM ENCOURAGED BY THE FIRST RESPONSES WE HAVE HAD TO OUR REPRESENTATIONS.

/SECONDLY, THERE

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SECONDLY, THERE ARE THE 10,000 VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE WHO HAVE ARRIVED SINCE JUNE LAST YEAR. THE FUTURE OF THOSE WHO, AFTER SCREENING, PROVE NOT TO BE REFUGEES, MUST LIE IN VIETNAM, AND ONLY IN VIETNAM. TOGETHER WITH THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT WE HAVE HELD TWO ROUNDS OF TALKS WITH THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT TO DISCUSS THE REPATRIATION OF THESE PEOPLE. WE HAVE AGREED ON THE NEED FOR COMPREHENSIVE ARRANGEMENTS TO COVER ALL THOSE WHO ARE NOT REFUGEES.

WE ARE NOW PRESSING THE VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES TO FINALISE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE REPATRIATION OF THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY ASKED TO RETURN TO VIETNAM. UNHCR ARE CLOSELY INVOLVED AND HAVE REACHED THEIR OWN AGREEMENT WITH THE VIETNAMESE ON THE HUMANITARIAN TREATMENT OF THOSE WHO RETURN. THOUGH WE DO NOT YET HAVE A DATE I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE FIRST VOLUNTEERS WILL GO BACK SOON.

I AM VERY CONSCIOUS THAT THE PRESENCE OF SO MANY VIETNAMESE HERE IMPOSES FINANCIAL AS WELL AS OTHER BURDENS. IN THAT CONTEXT I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THREE NEW STEPS WHICH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS TAKING.

FIRSTLY, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS PLEDGING A FURTHER 1 MILLION POUNDS TO UNHCR, SPECIFICALLY EARMARKED FOR THEIR OPERATIONS IN HONG KONG. THAT IS OF COURSE IN ADDITION TO THE 1 MILLION POUNDS WHICH WE ANNOUNCED IN OCTOBER OF LAST YEAR.

SECONDLY, IN RESPONSE TO UNHCR'S RECENT APPEAL, HMG IS PLEDGING 125,000 US DOLLARS - THAT'S ABOUT 1 MILLION HK DOLLARS - TOWARDS THE BUDGET FOR UNHCR'S REPATRIATION PROGRAMME WHICH IS DUE TO START SHORTLY. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT IS ALSO CONSIDERING MAKING AN APPROPRIATE CONTRIBUTION.

THIRDLY, TRAINING, PARTICULARLY LANGUAGE TRAINING, IS A KEY ELEMENT IN THE ABILITY OF REFUGEES TO ADAPT TO THEIR NEW LIVES IN THE WEST AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN RESETTLED. WITH THIS IN MIND, WE ARE MAKING A DONATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING EQUIPMENT WORTH 2,500 POUNDS FOR THE USE OF REFUGEES IN HONG KONG AWAITING RESETTLEMENT.

THESE ARE CONCRETE, PRACTICAL MEASURES.

FINALLY, LET ME SAY THAT WE ARE PLAYING OUR FULL PART IN THE PREPARATIONS FOR A NEW INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE PROBLEM OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE IN THE REGION AS A WHOLE. IF ALL GOES WELL THAT WILL TAKE PLACE LATER THIS YEAR, AND WE SHALL BE PRESSING HONG KONG'S INTERESTS VERY HARD. AND WE ARE PLAYING OUR PART, NOT LEAST TO RESOLVE THE CAMBODIAN ISSUE WHICH IS CLOSELY BOUND UP WITH THE WHOLE PROBLEM.

/I HAVE

I HAVE DEVOTED SO MUCH TIME TO THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE BECAUSE OF ITS GREAT IMPORTANCE AND THE CONCERN EXPRESSED TO ME ABOUT IT. BUT OF COURSE I HAVE DISCUSSED OTHER ISSUES, NOT LEAST THE VITAL QUESTION OF THE BASIC LAW, NOW UNDER DISCUSSION AT A PLENARY MEETING OF THE BASIC LAW DRAFTING COMMITTEE IN CANTON. I WILL MAKE ONLY TWO POINTS. FIRSTLY, I HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY THE WAY IN WHICH THE DRAFTERS HAVE RESPONDED TO THE CONCERNS EXPRESSED IN HONG KONG ABOUT THE FIRST DRAFT. SECOND, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WILL STUDY THE NEXT DRAFT VERY CAREFULLY AND, AS WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO DO, WILL WISH TO SATISFY OURSELVES THAT IT DOES REFLECT THE PROVISIONS OF THE JOINT DECLARATION.

I SEE IT AS ENORMOUSLY IMPORTANT TO REMAIN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE AFFAIRS OF HONG KONG. VISITS SUCH AS THIS ONE ARE EXTREMELY USEFUL. I ALWAYS WELCOME THE CHANCE TO HEAR A WIDE RANGE OF VIEWS: THIS I HAVE CERTAINLY DONE OVER THE PAST FIVE DAYS.

MAGGIE NELSON (RTHK): COULD YOU ELABORATE ON THE VIGOROUS DIPLOMATIC CAMPAIGN?

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL, IT IS PRECISELY WHAT I SAID IT IS. WE HAVE OF COURSE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, EXPLAINING THE PROPOSAL THAT WE HAVE PUT AND WE ARE NOW COLLECTING THEIR RESPONSES. OF COURSE WE HAVE ONLY HAD INITIAL RESPONSES SO FAR AS I SAID IN THE STATEMENT. THEY WILL, OF COURSE, BE LOOKING AT THE PROBLEMS, LOOKING AT THE ISSUE THEMSELVES.

MAGGIE NELSON: AND WERE YOU ENCOURAGED BY THE INITIAL RESPONSE?

LORD GLENARTHUR: YES, I WAS ENCOURAGED.

MAGGIE NELSON: BUT WHY?

LORD GLENARTHUR: BECAUSE THE IMMEDIATE RESPONSES ARE ENCOURAGING BECAUSE NOBODY HAS RULED OUT THE POSSIBILITY. THERE ARE SOME POSITIVE SIGNS. RATHER THAN GOING INTO THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF DIPLOMATIC PROCEDURES, IT IS A POSITIVE SIGN AND AN ENCOURAGING ONE.

CHAN CHEUK-HAY (TVB): MAY I ASK IN CHINESE?

LORD GLENARTHUR: YES.

CHAN CHEUK-HAY (QUESTION ASKED IN CANTONESE): LORD GLENARTHUR, YOU SAID YESTERDAY THAT THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE PROBLEM WAS AN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM. BUT AS WE ALL KNOW, HONG KONG'S VIETNAMESE REFUGEE PROBLEM IS CREATED BY BRITAIN'S POLICY. IN 1979, BRITAIN ON BEHALF OF HONG KONG MADE A COMMITMENT THAT HONG KONG SHOULD BE A PORT OF FIRST ASYLUM FOR VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. LAST YEAR, BRITAIN ALSO ASKED HONG KONG TO ADOPT A SCREENING POLICY. WAS BRITAIN PREPARED TO SHOULDER THE RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN DECIDING ON SUCH POLICIES? IS UK PREPARED TO ACCEPT ALL VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND BOAT PEOPLE WHEN UK WITHDRAWS FROM HONG KONG IN 1997?

/LORD GLENARTHUR:

LORD GLENARTHUR: I SAID IT WAS AN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM BECAUSE SO MUCH OF WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD AND THE EFFECT THAT SOUTHEAST ASIA'S DIFFICULTIES HAVE HAD UPON IT MUST BE INTERNATIONAL. IT IS ALL VERY WELL LOOKING BACK TO 1979 BUT I DON'T THINK THAT ANY OF US COULD POSSIBLY HAVE FORETOLD THAT THE DEVELOPMENTS THAT WOULD TAKE PLACE LEADING TO SUCH AN OUTFLOW OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES, BOAT PEOPLE, FROM THAT PART OF THE WORLD WOULD HAVE DEVELOPED AS IT HAS. WE INTRODUCED THE CHANGE OF POLICY IN JUNE LAST YEAR BECAUSE OF THE VERY REAL PROBLEMS THAT THE BOAT PEOPLE ARE CAUSING HONG KONG, AND OF COURSE ONE CANNOT BE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN IN ADVANCE OF CONSEQUENCES THAT MIGHT FLOW FROM AN INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION THAT DEVELOPS AS TIME GOES BY. THE UNITED KINGDOM HAS PLAYED A MAJOR PART IN PROMOTING THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN IN THE PAST TO TAKE RESETTLEMENT CASES. WE HAVE PLAYED A PART OURSELVES. I HAVE GIVEN YOU JUST NOW DETAILS OF WHAT WE HOPE TO DO IN THE FUTURE. WE DO HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY, YES, BUT THE PROBLEM IS NOT AS SIMPLE AS A STRAIGHT BRITISH PROBLEM. IT IS ESSENTIALLY ONE WHICH DOES INVOLVE THE ENTIRE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, AS HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED BY THOSE INTERNATIONAL COUNTRIES WHO HAVE ACTUALLY TAKEN RESETTLEMENT CASES.

CHAN CHEUK-HAY: MAY I ASK IN CHINESE AGAIN?

LORD GLENARTHUR: YES, HOLD ON.

CHAN CHEUK-HAY (QUESTION ASKED IN CANTONESE): BUT THE SCREENING POLICY WILL ALSO EXONERATE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THOSE RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE SIGNED THE 1979 AGREEMENT ON VIETNAMESE REFUGEES FROM ACCEPTING VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. HOW CAN BRITISH GOVERNMENT CONVINCED HONG KONG PEOPLE THAT EFFORTS BY BRITAIN WOULD BE ABLE TO RESOLVE THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE PROBLEM COMPLETELY BEFORE 1997? THAT IS, ALL VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WOULD BE REMOVED FROM HONG KONG WITHOUT INCURRING A LARGE SUM OF MONEY AND NO GRADUAL INTEGRATION OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES INTO THE HONG KONG COMMUNITY. COULD YOU MAKE A GUARANTEE TO HONG KONG PEOPLE THAT BRITAIN WILL DEFINITELY BE ABLE TO REMOVE ALL VIETNAMESE REFUGEES BEFORE 1997?

LORD GLENARTHUR: WE HAVE TO DO ALL THAT WE CAN TO TRY AND ACHIEVE THE RESETTLEMENT OF THESE PEOPLE. IN ANY CASE, 1997 IS A POINT IN THE FUTURE AND IS REALLY IRRELEVANT TO THIS PARTICULAR DISCUSSION. THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN THAT HAS BEEN MOUNTED IS IMPORTANT. IT HAS ALREADY BORNE FRUIT IN THE PAST. I SEE NO REASON WHY THE NEW ONE WHICH WE HAVE STARTED SHOULD NOT DO SIMILARLY, AND THAT IS WHAT WE ARE WORKING TO ACHIEVE. BUT THE OTHER ASPECT OF IT IS THAT THOSE WHO COME TO HONG KONG AND ARE SCREENED OUT AS NOT BEING THE CORRECT -- NOT BEING REFUGEES UNDER THE DEFINITION, THE INTERNATIONALLY UNDERSTOOD DEFINITION, THEIR FUTURE LIES IN VIETNAM ULTIMATELY. THAT IS WHAT I HAVE MADE PLAIN IN THE STATEMENT. THERE IS NO FUTURE FOR THEM HERE, OTHER THAN IN THE MEANTIME THE POSSIBILITY, THE FACT THAT THEY WILL BE LOCKED UP UNTIL THEY CAN GO HOME.

/CHAN BO SHUN

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 1989

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CHAN BO SHUN (HONG KONG ECONOMIC JOURNAL): I WOULD LIKE TO ASK BECAUSE SOME DEMOCRATS IN HONG KONG ARE ASKING FOR A REFERENDUM IN HONG KONG BEFORE 1997 TO DETERMINE THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF THE FUTURE SAR. AND IN UK'S VIEW DO YOU THINK IT IS AN APPROPRIATE SUGGESTION?

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL, IT IS AN ISSUE WHICH IS REALLY UP TO THE BASIC LAW DRAFTERS TO DECIDE THE FORM OF CONSIDERATION THAT SHOULD TAKE PLACE ON THE SECOND DRAFT. I MEAN, IT IS A LIVE ISSUE AT THE MOMENT. IT HAS TO BE LOOKED AT BY THOSE CONCERNED BUT IT IS CLEARLY A FACT THAT THE MORE THE HONG KONG PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO REACH A CLEAR VIEW ON THE WAY FORWARD, THE EASIER IT IS GOING TO BE FOR THE DRAFTERS TO TAKE THOSE VIEWS INTO ACCOUNT.

JOHN ELLIOT (FINANCIAL TIMES): WHICH OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE YOU APPROACHED ABOUT TAKING REFUGEES AND WHAT LEVEL OF RESPONSE DO YOU REQUIRE FROM THEM IN ORDER TO TRIGGER THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S WILLINGNESS TO TAKE THE THOUSAND?

LORD GLENARTHUR: ALL THE MAIN RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN APPROACHED. YOU ONLY HAVE TO LOOK AT A LIST OF THOSE THAT HAVE SO FAR TAKEN RESETTLEMENT CASES TO KNOW WHO THOSE ARE. THE LEVEL OF APPROACH WE HAVE TO JUDGE IN THE LIGHT OF THE RESPONSES THAT WE GET. AS I SAID, THE INITIAL RESPONSES ARE ENCOURAGING. WE HAVE ACTUALLY NOW GOT TO SEE MEAT BEING PUT ON THE BONES OF THOSE RESPONSES BEFORE WE CAN JUDGE.

JOHN ELLIOT: BUT YOU MUST HAVE SOME IDEA, IF YOU HAVE SAID YOU WILL DO SOMETHING ON CONDITION OF SOMEBODY ELSE DOING SOMETHING ELSE, YOU MUST HAVE SOME IDEA OF WHAT YOU EXPECT THOSE PEOPLE TO DO?

LORD GLENARTHUR: I AM VERY CONFIDENT THAT THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE WILL BE A SATISFACTORY ONE. WE HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT THAT RESPONSE IS. BEYOND THAT I CAN'T GO.

STEVE VINES (OBSERVER): CAN I ASK YOU ABOUT YOUR REMARKS ON THE BASIC LAW. YOU SAY YOU WILL BE LOOKING AT THE SECOND DRAFT TO MAKE SURE THAT IT COMPLIES WITH THE JOINT DECLARATION. HAVING SEEN THE FIRST DRAFT, WERE THERE ANY ELEMENTS IN THE FIRST DRAFT THAT YOU FELT DIDN'T COMPLY WITH THE JOINT DECLARATION AND WERE THOSE ISSUES RAISED WITH THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT?

LORD GLENARTHUR: I THINK THAT THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES ARE WELL AWARE OF THE CONCERN THAT WAS EXPRESSED IN A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT FORA FROM HONG KONG PARTICULARLY ON THE PERCEIVED INADEQUACIES OF THE BASIC LAW. INDEED FROM MY OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IN PARLIAMENT WHERE WE HAD A DEBATE ON IT IN THE LORDS, AND INDEED THERE WAS ONE IN THE COMMONS AS WELL, A NUMBER OF CASES WHERE, A NUMBER OF ISSUES WERE RAISED THERE, AND I AM QUITE CERTAIN THAT DUE NOTE WAS TAKEN OF THEM BY THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES. WE NOW HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT THE NEW DRAFT PRODUCES. I AM QUITE CERTAIN THAT THERE WILL BE A NUMBER OF SATISFACTORY CHANGES THERE.

/STEVE VINES:

STEVE VINES: CAN I JUST ASK YOU THE SPECIFIC QUESTION AGAIN. DID THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT RAISE ITEMS OF CONCERN TO HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT?

LORD GLENARTHUR: WE HAVE A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT FORMS OF DIALOGUE WITH THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES. THE SECRETARY OF STATE NATURALLY SPEAKS TO HIS OPPOSITE NUMBER. THE GOVERNOR HERE HAS MET SENIOR CHINESE OFFICIALS IN PEKING. I HAVE RAISED THE MATTER PERSONALLY WITH MY CHINESE OPPOSITE NUMBER, AND I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT A NUMBER OF POINTS ARE PUT ACROSS.

AGNES LAM (SCMP): I HAVE GOT TWO QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE CONFIDENCE OF HONG KONG PEOPLE. THE FIRST ONE IS, LORD GLENARTHUR, YOU SAID IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS ON JANUARY 20, 1986 THAT THE WHOLE AIM OF THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION WAS TO PROVIDE A SECURE FUTURE FOR ALL THE RESIDENTS IN HONG KONG, ONE IN WHICH THEY CAN FEEL CONFIDENT AND CAN CONTINUE TO LIVE AND PROSPER, AND THE AGREEMENT GUARANTEES THAT. IT IS QUITE CLEAR NOW THAT HONG KONG PEOPLE DON'T SEE THAT AND THEY WANT TO HAVE AN ALTERNATIVE RIGHT OF ABODE. THIS WAS SHOWN BY THE FACT THAT ABOUT 45,000 PEOPLE EMIGRATED LAST YEAR. SO MY QUESTION IS: DOES BRITAIN FEEL SUFFICIENTLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE TERRITORY'S BRAIN DRAIN PROBLEM AND TO RECONSIDER ITS POLICY ON THE RIGHT OF ABODE FOR HONG KONG PEOPLE, AND FOLLOWS THE EXAMPLE OF PORTUGAL WHICH WILL EXTEND CITIZENSHIP TO THE PEOPLE OF MACAU?

LORD GLENARTHUR: THANK YOU. THE QUESTION OF CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG IS OF COURSE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT AND I STAND BY PRECISELY WHAT I SAID IN 1986. INDEED I THINK THAT THE FACT THAT THERE HAVE BEEN SO MANY ENCOURAGING ASPECTS OF THE WAY THAT THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES HAVE APPROACHED THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES WITH THEIR HALF OF THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION IS A VERY POSITIVE SIGN INDEED. NOW I KNOW THAT THE QUESTION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM IMMIGRATION RULES AND THE BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT IS ONE THAT HAS CAUSED A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CONCERN. I DON'T THINK IT IS WORTH GOING OVER THE OLD GROUND ALL OVER AGAIN, NOR DO I THINK THAT IT IS REALLY CORRECT TO COMPARE, AS YOUR QUESTION IMPLIES, WHAT THE UNITED KINGDOM DOES ON THAT ASPECT WITH THE PORTUGUESE PASSPORT ISSUE. BRITAIN AND PORTUGAL HAVE HAD A VERY DIFFERENT HISTORY. THEY HAVE HAD A VERY DIFFERENT CONSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION AND ONE RESULT IS THAT BRITISH AND PORTUGUESE NATIONALITY LAWS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN VERY DIFFERENT. OF COURSE I KNOW HOW STRONGLY HONG KONG PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT THE WHOLE NATIONALITY QUESTION BUT AS I HAVE SAID IT HAS BEEN MUCH DEBATED AND I REALLY DON'T THINK THERE IS ANY POINT IN GOING OVER THE OLD GROUND AGAIN.

AGNES LAM: MY SECOND QUESTION IS THAT TALKING ABOUT THE BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT, SECTION 4(5) ENABLES THE GOVERNMENT TO GRANT AUTOMATIC CITIZENSHIP TO HONG KONG RESIDENTS WHO HAVE FAITHFULLY SERVED THE CROWN AND THIS IS RESTRICTED TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND DISCIPLINARY SERVICES, AND ACCORDING TO A RECENT REPORT IN OUR PAPER PUBLISHED LAST WEEK IT SHOWS THAT ONLY 54 OF THE APPLICANTS WERE GRANTED THEIR CITIZENSHIP AND ALL BUT 8 WERE EX-SERVICES. AND WHAT I AM ASKING IS COULD BRITAIN BE MORE GENEROUS AS 1997 IS COMING AND EXTEND THIS PRIVILEGE TO OTHER CIVIL SERVANTS OR EVEN THE HONG KONG PUBLIC AS A WHOLE?

/LORD GLENARTHUR:

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL, SECTION 4(5) OF THE BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT HAS ALWAYS BEEN EXPLAINED TO THOSE CONCERNED AS BEING ONE AT WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL CASES WOULD BE LOOKED AT ON THEIR MERITS AND I MADE IT PLAIN IN 1986 THAT IT WAS ALWAYS INTENDED THAT DISCRETIONARY FLEXIBILITY SHOULD BE USED VERY SPARINGLY AND THE CRITERION IS ONE OF HIGH QUALITY OF SERVICE AND THAT IS WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO LOOK AT INDIVIDUAL CASES ON THEIR OWN MERITS. IT DOESN'T MEAN TO SAY WE UNDER-VALUE IN ANY SENSE THOSE WHO DON'T OR AREN'T IN THE END SUCCESSFUL. BUT IT IS ONE OF INDIVIDUAL CASES.

TOM MCMULLAN (PRESS ASSOCIATION, UK): CAN I TAKE YOU BACK TO THE ISSUE OF MACAU. ARE YOU ACTUALLY SAYING THAT IT IS REASONABLE FOR THE PEOPLE OF MACAU TO BE ABLE TO ENTER THE UNITED KINGDOM MORE EASILY THAN THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG, AND IF NOT WHAT DO YOU THINK THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO ABOUT IT?

LORD GLENARTHUR: I AM SAYING THAT THERE IS A DIFFERENCE OF HISTORY BETWEEN THE WAY THAT MACAU AND THE PORTUGUESE HAVE DEVELOPED AND THE WAY THAT HONG KONG AND THE UNITED KINGDOM HAVE DEVELOPED AND I HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT THOSE DIFFERENCES REMAIN AND THAT THERE IS -- I REALLY SEE NO PROSPECT OF FURTHER CHANGES IN THE BRITISH NATIONALITY LAW TO ALLOW HONG KONG PEOPLE WHO HAVE BRITISH NATIONALITY THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

TOM MCMULLAN: DO YOU THINK THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT MIGHT TAKE THIS UP WITHIN THE EEC, OR NOT?

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL, IT IS SOMETHING THAT CERTAINLY I SHALL NEED TO LOOK AT IN SOME DETAIL WHEN I GET BACK HOME. IT HAS CROPPED UP IN A PARTICULARLY LIVE WAY IN THE LAST FEW DAYS SINCE I HAVE BEEN AWAY. IT IS A MATTER THAT AFFECTS OTHER DEPARTMENTS AS WELL AS THE FOREIGN OFFICE, BUT I SHALL HAVE TO TALK TO OTHERS WHEN I GET HOME.

TOM MCMULLAN: HAVE YOU ANY CONCERN, OR NOT?

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL, THERE ARE PLENTY OF THINGS IN LIFE WHICH GIVE ONE CONCERN, BUT WHETHER OR NOT THERE IS ANYTHING THAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT IS A MATTER WHICH I CAN'T SAY ANY MORE ABOUT NOW.

DAVID SCHLESINGER (REUTERS): I WOULD LIKE TO JUST CONTINUE WITH THIS. YOU STRESSED THAT BRITAIN AND PORTUGAL HAVE DIFFERENT HISTORIES BUT THE POINT IS THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE, AND ESPECIALLY AFTER 1992 (INAUDIBLE) FALLING ALL OVER EUROPE; ISN'T IT RATHER STRANGE FROM THE BRITISH POINT OF VIEW THAT PEOPLE IN MACAU SHOULD HAVE SUCH DIFFERENT RIGHTS IN EUROPE AS PEOPLE IN HONG KONG?

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL AT FACE VALUE THAT MAY APPEAR TO BE THE CASE.

/DAVID SCHLESINGER:

DAVID SCHLESINGER: COULD YOU PUT IT ANOTHER WAY?

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL, THERE ARE SOME FAIRLY FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES TO MAKE. ONE IS FRANKLY THE QUESTION OF NUMBERS. THERE ARE ABOUT 100,000 PEOPLE AFFECTED IN MACAU AS I UNDERSTAND IT AND WE ARE TALKING ABOUT THREE OR SO MILLION HERE. SO THERE IS A PRACTICAL SIDE OF IT. THERE ARE A WHOLE DIFFERENT, A RANGE OF DIFFERENT ISSUES WHICH ARE CONCERNED HERE. I HAVE SAID THAT I DO NOT SEE THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER CHANGES IN BRITISH NATIONALITY LAW TO REFLECT THAT BUT AS I HAVE ALSO SAID, SOMETHING WHICH I HAVE GOT TO LOOK AT AND I WILL DO WHEN I GET BACK.

WONG SAU-YING (AFP) (QUESTION ASKED IN CANTONESE): I WOULD LIKE TO REFER TO THE VR PROBLEM. YOU HAVE ASSURED US OF THE UK GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO THIS PROBLEM. YOU SAY THAT IN THE NEXT TWO TO THREE YEARS, YOU INCREASE YOUR INTAKE BY ABOUT 1,000 PEOPLE. BUT IF OTHER COUNTRIES DO NOT INCREASE INTAKE SIGNIFICANTLY, WHAT WILL BE THE NEXT STEP TAKEN BY THE UK GOVERNMENT?

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL, AS I HAVE SAID, I HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE THAT OTHER COUNTRIES WILL RESPOND. LET'S NOT CROSS HURDLES BEFORE WE ACTUALLY GET TO THEM. THE FACT IS THAT WE HAVE MOUNTED THIS VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN. OTHER CAMPAIGNS IN THE PAST HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL, AND THE LEVERAGE THAT OUR RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT MADE WILL, I AM SURE, PROVIDE THE RIGHT SORT OF RESPONSE.

JULIE MAPLESTON (ATV): LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT BRITAIN SHOULD PROPOSE A THREE YEAR PLAN TO SOLVE THE WHOLE REFUGEE PROBLEM. IS THAT UNREALISTIC AND HAVE YOU DISCUSSED IT WITH THEM?

LORD GLENARTHUR: IT WAS CERTAINLY MENTIONED. WHETHER OR NOT IT IS REALISTIC DEPENDS VERY MUCH ON THE PROGRESS THAT IS MADE ACROSS THE BOARD. PART OF THE ISSUE IS RESETTLEMENT. PART OF IT IS THE INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE TO TRY AND SOLVE THE VIETNAM PROBLEM, ALLIED WITH CAMBODIA AND EVERYTHING ELSE. RESETTLEMENT, REPATRIATION, THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL DIMENSION OF THE PROBLEMS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA ALL PLAY THEIR PART, SO ONE CAN'T SAY WITH CERTAINTY THAT IT IS REALISTIC BUT ON THE OTHER HAND I'D HOPE THAT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE VERY RAPID PROGRESS.

SERENA CHOI (EXPRESS): YOU SAID THE DIFFERENCE OF MACAU AND HONG KONG IS THE NUMBER. DO YOU MEAN THAT IF THE BRITISH ISSUE THE BRITISH PASSPORT TO HONG KONG, YOU MEAN THE HONG KONG PEOPLE, YOU ARE AFRAID THE HONG KONG PEOPLE ALL GO TO BRITAIN, SO YOUR COUNTRY DON'T ISSUE THE BRITISH PASSPORT TO HONG KONG, SO DO YOU, WERE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT, THEY ISSUED THE EC COUNTRY PASSPORT TO MACAU. YOU DON'T HAVE CONFIDENCE OF HONG KONG'S FUTURE?

/LORD GLENARTHUR:

LORD GLENARTHUR: IT'S ONE ELEMENT IN IT, YES. THE CONCERN THAT'S EXPRESSED REALLY IS ONE THAT IF PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO ENTER THE UNITED KINGDOM MORE EASILY BECAUSE OF THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, FROM MACAU, THEN IS IT NOT UNFAIR ON THOSE FROM HONG KONG? THE ANSWER IS THAT I DON'T THINK IT IS REASONABLE THAT THAT SHOULD BE THE CASE. THE IMPORTANT PROBLEM AND THE DIFFICULTY, IS WHAT YOU CAN ACTUALLY DO ABOUT IT, AND THAT IS WHAT HAS GOT TO BE LOOKED AT IF YOU TRY TO TAKE THIS SORT OF THING FORWARD, AND IT MAY WELL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT. IT DOES AT FACE VALUE SEEM UNFAIR. BUT THAT'S THE WORLD WE ARE IN. HAVING SAID THAT WE MUST OBVIOUSLY LOOK TO SEE WHAT.....

SERENA CHOI: REGARDING THE BRITISH PASSPORT FOR HONG KONG PEOPLE, THEY MAY NOT ALL GO TO BRITAIN, IF YOU JUST GIVE A PASSPORT, YOU WILL GIVE CONFIDENCE TO HONG KONG PEOPLE. DO YOU THINK THAT PORTUGAL IS MORE FAIR TO MACAU PEOPLE THAN THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT?

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL, THAT MAY BE A POINT OF VIEW, BUT THE FACT IS THAT IT IS DIFFERENCES IN THE PAST WHICH LEAD TO THE SITUATION THAT WE ARE NOW AT. YOU SAY IT IS UNFAIR THAT THAT SHOULD BE THE CASE. WE WILL HAVE TO LOOK AT THE SITUATION THAT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED TO ME AND THAT YOU HAVE MADE CLEAR, BUT I DO SEE REAL PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES IN TRYING TO MEET THE CONCERNS THAT YOU EXPRESSED.

SERENA CHOI: WHAT DIFFICULT SITUATION?

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL I THINK THAT IF YOU READ ALL THE DEBATES THAT TOOK PLACE IN PARLIAMENT AND THE DISCUSSIONS WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN A WIDE RANGE OF COUNTRIES ON THE BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT, IN 1986, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO BE BROUGHT UP TO THE POSITION THEN ON PRECISELY WHAT VIEWS WERE EXPRESSED.

YOJANA SHARMA (DAILY TELEGRAPH): GOING BACK TO YOUR OWN COMMENTS ON THE PORTUGUESE NATIONALITY AND THE RESPONSE TO A HISTORICAL PROBLEM, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO, ARE YOU THEN SAYING THAT NUMBERS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN HISTORICAL OBLIGATION?

LORD GLENARTHUR: NO, I.....

YOJARA SHARMA: TO HONG KONG PEOPLE, PERHAPS YOU MIGHT CONSIDER IT?

LORD GLENARTHUR: NO, OF COURSE NOT. THAT IS A THOROUGH TWIST OF WHAT I SAID. AND WELL YOU KNOW IT. THE FACT IS THAT NUMBERS MUST BE PART OF CONSIDERATION, THERE ARE HISTORICAL PATTERNS WHICH HAVE EVOLVED BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES, THAT IS TO SAY THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MACAU AND PORTUGAL OVER THE YEARS, WHICH ARE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE THAT EXIST BETWEEN AND HAVE EVOLVED BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND HONG KONG. THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY CAME INTO BEING AND AS A RESULT THERE HAVE BEEN CERTAIN CHANGES. NOW WHETHER IT IS POSSIBLE TO MEET THE CONCERNS THAT ARE EXPRESSED, I DON'T KNOW, BUT AS I HAVE SAID THAT IS OBVIOUSLY SOMETHING I WILL HAVE TO LOOK AT.

JOHN ELLIOT (FINANCIAL TIMES): ARE YOU SAYING NUMBERS ARE A FACTOR, OR ARE NOT A FACTOR?

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL OF COURSE NUMBERS EXIST, YOU CAN'T GET AWAY FROM THE FACT THAT THERE ARE 100,000 PEOPLE AFFECTED, ROUGHLY, IN MACAU, AND IT IS IN EXCESS OF 3 MILLION HERE.

YOJARA SHARMA: BUT THE POPULATION OF PORTUGAL IS SMALLER THAN THE POPULATION OF BRITAIN, AND IT'S A SMALLER COUNTRY, AND A POORER COUNTRY.

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL, YES, YOU POINT AT A PROBLEM WHICH IS DIFFERENT IN ITS DIMENSIONS WITHIN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.

MAGGIE NELSON (RTHK): CAN I HAVE YOUR RESPONSE TO THE MOUNTING PRESSURE TO GIVE FULL BRITISH CITIZENSHIP TO THE WIVES OF EX-SERVICEMEN?

LORD GLENARTHUR: YES, THIS WAS A POINT THAT WAS RAISED WITH ME LAST NIGHT, AND WHAT I HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO DO IS TO LOOK VERY CAREFULLY AT THE INDIVIDUAL CASES, AND I EXPECT OMELCO NOW TO SUBMIT DETAILS AND DOSSIERS OF THOSE CASES AND I WILL HAVE THEM LOOKED AT STRAIGHT AWAY.

TOM MCMULLAN (PRESS ASSOCIATION): TO CLARIFY ONE OF YOUR EARLIER ANSWERS WHEN YOU MENTIONED 100,000 AGAINST 3 MILLION, WHY DID YOU ACTUALLY MENTION 3 MILLION? DO YOU THINK THAT 3 MILLION PEOPLE WOULD WANT TO COME TO BRITAIN?

LORD GLENARTHUR: I DIDN'T MENTION IT BECAUSE I THINK 3 MILLION COULD, IT'S THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO, THEY'VE GOT BRITISH NATIONALITY, THAT'S ALL, THAT'S THE RATIO.

TOM MCMULLAN: AND HOW MANY DO YOU THINK MIGHT COME IF THE OFFER WERE OPEN TO THEM?

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL I'M NOT OPEN TO MAKE ANY CALCULATIONS OF THAT SORT AT ALL. WHAT I'M PREPARED TO SAY IS THAT I HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE THAT ALL THE WORK THAT HAS BEEN DONE TO IMPLEMENT THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION, IS BEING CARRIED FORWARD IN DISCUSSIONS NOW WITH THE CHINESE, THAT THE NEED WOULD NOT ARISE IN ANY CASE.

STEVE VINES (OBSERVER): LORD GLENARTHUR, CAN I ASK YOU FROM IMMIGRATION FROM A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW. AS YOU KNOW THE KNOW THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT WHICH IS THE, OR RATHER AUSTRALIA, WHICH IS THE SECOND LARGEST RECIPIENT OF HONG KONG IMMIGRANTS, IS SUFFICIENTLY CONCERNED ABOUT A POSSIBLE DOWNTURN IN IMMIGRATION FROM HONG KONG AND INVESTMENT FROM HONG KONG TO BE SENDING A GOVERNMENT MINISTER HERE TO REASSURE THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG THAT THEY WILL BE WELCOME IN AUSTRALIA. BRITAIN I THINK IS THE FOURTH, AND THE FOURTH BY A VERY LONG MARGIN AWAY FROM THE UNITED STATES AS THE THIRD POSITION RECIPIENT OF HONG KONG IMMIGRANTS; DO YOU THINK BRITAIN IS MISSING OUT ON OPPORTUNITIES BY HAVING SO FEW IMMIGRANTS FROM HONG KONG, AND SO LITTLE INVESTMENT COMING IN FROM THIS PLACE?

/LORD GLENARTHUR:

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL I THINK THERE ARE TWO QUESTIONS, INVESTMENT ON THE ONE HAND AND IMMIGRATION, SORRY, HAVE I GOT YOUR QUESTION ABSOLUTELY RIGHT, YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT.....?

STEVE VINES: I AM WONDERING WHETHER BRITAIN IS LOSING OUT ON OPPORTUNITIES WHICH OTHER COUNTRIES SEEM VERY ANXIOUS TO AVAIL THEMSELVES OF, FROM HONG KONG IMMIGRATION AND THE INVESTMENT THAT IT BRINGS WITH IT, IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES?

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL I THINK THAT IT'S QUITE UNDERSTANDABLE THAT WE SHOULD BE IN THE POSITION THAT WE ARE AT; I MEAN WE, WHETHER OR NOT YOU CAN SAY THAT WE ARE MISSING OUT, I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU REALLY QUALIFY THAT; I MEAN THERE ARE A LOT OF GOOD PEOPLE ALL OVER THE PLACE WHO MAY FIND IT ATTRACTIVE AND USEFUL TO COME TO THE UNITED KINGDOM. WHETHER OR NOT THEY WILL DO DEPENDS ON A WHOLE RANGE OF DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES. IF YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT PEOPLE WHO ARE IN NEED OF RESETTLEMENT, THEN IT MAY HAVE BEEN IN THE PAST THAT WE HAVE NOT HAD THOSE WHO WERE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE AS MUCH AS SOME OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE, BUT THE OVERALL EFFECT IS THAT WE ARE KEEN TO ACHIEVE RESETTLEMENT FOR PEOPLE AS NECESSARY WHEREVER IT MAY BE, INCLUDING OUR OWN COMMITMENT.

STEVE VINES: COULD I PUT THE QUESTION TO YOU ANOTHER WAY ROUND THEN? DO YOU THINK THAT IMMIGRANTS FROM HONG KONG WOULD HAVE A USEFUL ROLE TO PLAY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM? THIS SEEMS TO BE THE ATTITUDE THAT OTHER GOVERNMENTS ARE TAKING AND THEY SEEM TO BE VERY KEEN IN FACT TO HAVE IMMIGRANTS FROM THIS PLACE.

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL THERE WILL BE THOSE WHO COULD PLAY A USEFUL ROLE I DARE SAY, BUT I THINK IT'S ALSO EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT PEOPLE REMAIN IN HONG KONG BECAUSE THEY HAVE A FUTURE HERE AS WELL, AND THAT HAS BEEN MADE PERFECTLY CLEAR THROUGHOUT.

SANDY LI CHAU-WA (SING TAO JIH PAO): I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU ONE QUESTION ABOUT TAIWAN BECAUSE I KNOW THAT THE UK INTENDS TO ORGANISE 10 ECONOMIC TOURS TO TAIWAN THIS YEAR IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE CLOSE TIES IN THE RELATIONSHIP BUT SUCH RAPID DEVELOPMENT CAN'T BE SEEN IN THE PAST FEW YEARS. IS IT THE RIGHT TIME FOR UK GOVERNMENT TO THINK THAT IT IS THE RIGHT TIME TO SHIFT THE HONG KONG BASE TO TAIWAN?

LORD GLENARTHUR: I AM NOT QUITE SURE WHAT LIES BEHIND YOUR QUESTION.

SANDY LI: IT IS PUBLISHED FROM THE NEWSPAPER.

LORD GLENARTHUR: COULD YOU SAY IT AGAIN? I AM AFRAID IT WAS VERY INDISTINCT. I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT POINT YOU WERE DRIVING AT.

SANDY LI: THE UK INTENDS TO ORGANISE 10 ECONOMIC TOURS TO TAIWAN....

/LORD GLENARTHUR:

LORD GLENARTHUR: PROMOTION OF TRADE WITH TAIWAN, IS THAT WHAT YOU ARE DRIVING AT? PROMOTION OF TRADE, YES. I MEAN, THERE IS SCOPE I THINK FOR INCREASING OUR TRADE LINKS WITH TAIWAN. WE HAVE BEEN LOOKING AT A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT PROPOSALS. IT IS QUITE INTERESTING TO NOTE, TOO, THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN ECONOMIC TRADE ACTIVITY BETWEEN MAINLAND CHINA AND TAIWAN.

SANDY LI: TREMENDOUS DEVELOPMENT HASN'T BEEN SEEN IN THE PAST YEARS.

LORD GLENARTHUR: RAPID DEVELOPMENT IN...?

SANDY LI: PAST FEW YEARS.

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL, THERE HAS BEEN RAPID DEVELOPMENT IN TAIWAN. THERE IS ALSO THE NEED TO TRY AND BUILD UP THE LINKS BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND TAIWAN ON A TRADE BASIS AND WE ARE CONTINUALLY LOOKING AT WAYS OF IMPROVING THAT.

AGNES LAM (SCMP): ABOUT THE ANNOUNCEMENT, RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ANGLO-HONG KONG TRUST WHICH IS AIMED TO FOSTER THE LINK BETWEEN HONG KONG AND BRITISH BUSINESSMEN. I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT WILL BE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO THE TRUST AND DO YOU FEEL THAT HONG KONG, I MEAN LOCAL BUSINESSMEN, ARE SUFFICIENTLY AWARE OF THE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN UK?

LORD GLENARTHUR: I THINK IT IS A GOOD IDEA. IT IS ESSENTIALLY A PRIVATE VENTURE, AND WE CERTAINLY HAVE GIVEN IT OUR BLESSING SO FAR AS ITS EXPRESS PURPOSE OF IMPROVING TWO-WAY TRADE AND INVESTMENT BETWEEN BRITAIN AND HONG KONG IS CONCERNED. LORD YOUNG AND I ARE GOING TO HOST A DINNER, AN INAUGURAL DINNER, ON MARCH 21 I THINK, AND HOPEFULLY IT WILL FLOURISH. I THINK IT IS A GOOD IDEA.

AGNES LAM: BUT WHAT WILL THE BRITISH COMMITMENT ON THE TRUST BE?

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL, IT HASN'T EVEN REALLY HAPPENED YET. IT IS STILL IN ITS FORMATION. IT IS A PRIVATE VENTURE. I MEAN OUR COMMITMENT IS TO SUPPORT IT SO FAR AS WE CAN TELL IT IS GOING TO DEVELOP. I MEAN IT IS ALL PART OF A MEANS OF TRYING TO DEVELOP THE MUTUAL, THE TWO-WAY TRAFFIC IN TRADE AND INVESTMENT. SO OUR COMMITMENT IS AS WHOLEHEARTED AS I HAVE DESCRIBED IT.

AGNES LAM: MY QUESTION IS ABOUT THE AWARENESS OF LOCAL BUSINESSMEN.

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL, IT IS SOMETHING THAT WE ARE VERY KEEN TO TRY AND INCREASE, AWARENESS OF THE OPPORTUNITIES HERE FOR BRITISH FIRMS TO COME. IT IS SOMETHING WHICH LORD YOUNG AND I HAVE BOTH CONCENTRATED ON IN THE PAST AND THERE IS A TWO-WAY SIDE TO IT. WE WOULD LIKE TO ENCOURAGE COMPANIES THAT ARE BASED HERE TO SET UP THE OTHER WAY, AND SO ON.

/MAGGIE NELSON (RTHK):

MAGGIE NELSON (RTHK): COULD I JUST GO BACK TO BRITAIN'S CONDITIONAL OFFER TO ACCEPT ANOTHER THOUSAND IF OTHER COUNTRIES TAKE MORE. WHY WOULD YOU NOT SAY HOW MANY MORE OTHER COUNTRIES WILL HAVE TO TAKE?

LORD GLENARTHUR: BECAUSE WE HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT THE REACTION IS, WAIT AND SEE WHAT THE DEEPER REACTION IS TO THE INITIAL RESPONSES WHICH WE HAVE SO FAR RECEIVED AND UNTIL WE GET THAT I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO SAY.

MAGGIE NELSON: BUT IF YOU DON'T SAY, HOW DO PEOPLE THEN KNOW THAT YOU CARRIED OUT WHAT YOU SAID YOU WOULD DO?

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL, YOU WILL HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE, WON'T YOU.

AGNES LAM: WHEN CAN WE EXPECT THE RESULT?

LORD GLENARTHUR: WELL, I HOPE THAT IT WON'T BE TOO LONG. I CAN'T SAY PRECISELY WHEN BUT IT IS SOMETHING WHICH WE REGARD AS EXCEEDINGLY IMPORTANT. THAT IS WHY THE CAMPAIGN IS BEING TAKEN FORWARD IN THE VIGOROUS WAY THAT IT IS. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.