



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL: 5-233191

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

CONTENTS

PAGE NO.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

BOMBING ENQUIRIES ACCORDED TOP PRIORITY	1
MORE IN-DEPTH SCRUTINY OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS ALLOWED	2
BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL PASSED	4
BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 WELCOMED	4
FIRM ANTI-SMOKING POLICY PLEDGED	5
ESTABLISHMENT OF HEALTH COUNCIL SUPPORTED	6
NATIONALITY NOT A CRITERION IN GRANTING OF LEGAL AID	7
NORTH-WEST RAILWAY BY-LAWS APPROVED	7
SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION REPORT TABLED	8
DUNN MOVES MOTION ON GREEN PAPER	9
CHANGES MUST HAVE DUE REGARD TO BASIC LAW	12
DIRECT ELECTIONS 'A NATURAL STEP'	16
ELECTIONS SHOULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED IN HASTE	18
THREE GUIDELINES FOR POLITICAL REVIEW	21
CONTENTS OF GREEN PAPER BASED ON JOINT DECLARATION	25
DIRECT ELECTION NOT PANACEA	27
DIRECT ELECTION WITH LEAST DISRUPTION PROPOSED	31

/INTRODUCTION OF

INTRODUCTION OF DIRECT ELECTION NEXT YEAR PREMATURE	34
CHINA SHOULD HAVE FAITH IN HK PEOPLE	36
LEGCO SEAT FOR ACCOUNTANTS URGED	38
CALL FOR EXPANSION OF FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES	39
FURTHER MAJOR CHANGES TO PRESENT SYSTEM DUBIOUS	42
HK PEOPLE'S WISHES SHOULD BE MET	45
TWO BILLS PASSED	47
POLITICAL DEBATE CRUCIAL IN SHAPING FUTURE SYSTEM	48
UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT STATISTICS FOR MARCH - MAY 1987	49
EASY TRAVEL SCHEME PHASE TWO STARTS ON AUGUST 1	51
\$181 M. CONTRACT FOR NT CIRCULAR ROAD TO BE SIGNED TOMORROW	52
GOVERNMENT SITE TO LET	52
FORUMS ON TRAFFIC STUDY TO BE DISCUSSED	53
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS	53
ISLANDERS GET HEALTH ADVICE	54
EASTBOUND TUBE OF AIRPORT TUNNEL CLOSED	55
TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS ON HONG KONG ISLAND	55

- 1 -

BOMBING ENQUIRIES ACCORDED TOP PRIORITY

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID FORD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE HAD GIVEN TOP PRIORITY TO THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE RECENT BOMBING INCIDENTS.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING, MR FORD POINTED OUT THAT ENQUIRIES WERE BEING CONDUCTED BY THE ORGANISED AND SERIOUS CRIMES BUREAU, SUPPLEMENTED BY OFFICERS DRAFTED IN FROM REGIONAL UNITS AND WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF COMPUTER FACILITIES.

FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT OF MR FORD'S STATEMENT:

"MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN, PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY, ON EXPLOSIONS WHICH HAVE OCCURRED RECENTLY. THEY HAVE BEEN OUTRAGED, IN PARTICULAR BY THE INDISCRIMINATE AND CRUEL ATTACK IN CITY PLAZA ON JULY 8, IN WHICH 15 PEOPLE WERE INJURED.

"MEMBERS WILL PROBABLY HAVE HEARD THAT ANOTHER SMALL EXPLOSION OCCURRED INSIDE THE QUEENSWAY GOVERNMENT OFFICES AT NOON TODAY. NO WARNING WAS RECEIVED AND THE MOTIVE IS UNCLEAR. SIR, NO ONE WAS INJURED BY THAT EXPLOSION.

"YOU SIR, AND I HAVE PUBLICLY CONDEMNED THESE SENSELESS ACTIONS AND HAVE REASSURED THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG THAT THE POLICE ARE DOING ALL IN THEIR POWER TO ARREST THE CULPRITS.

"THIS AFTERNOON, I SHOULD LIKE TO SAY AGAIN THAT THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE HAS GIVEN TOP PRIORITY TO THE INVESTIGATION INTO ALL THESE INCIDENTS. ENQUIRIES ARE BEING CONDUCTED BY THE ORGANISED AND SERIOUS CRIMES BUREAU, SUPPLEMENTED BY OFFICERS DRAFTED IN FROM REGIONAL UNITS, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF COMPUTER FACILITIES. A MAJOR INCIDENT INVESTIGATING ROOM HAS BEEN SET UP AND INTENSIVE DOOR-TO-DOOR ENQUIRIES ARE UNDERWAY IN THE CITY PLAZA TO LOCATE FURTHER WITNESSES. POLICE PATROLS, IN UNIFORM AND IN PLAINCLOTHES, HAVE INCREASED IN BUSY SHOPPING AREAS. SHOPKEEPERS HAVE ALSO BEEN ADVISED AS TO HOW TO MAKE THEIR PREMISES MORE SECURE AND WHAT TO DO IF THEY FIND A SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE. PRIVATE SECURITY GUARDS HAVE BEEN URGED TO BE MORE VIGILANT. SIR, FROM ALL I HAVE SAID I HOPE IT IS CLEAR TO MEMBERS AND TO THE PUBLIC THAT THE POLICE HAVE RESPONDED IN A MOST COMMENDABLE WAY.

"THEIR DETERMINATION HAS ALREADY BROUGHT SOME RESULTS. MEMBERS WILL BE AWARE THAT ONE MAN IS NOW IN CUSTODY, CHARGED WITH THE POSSESSION OF AN EXPLOSIVE SUBSTANCE CONTRARY TO SECTION 55 OF THE CRIMES ORDINANCE. SINCE THIS MAN'S ACTIVITIES ARE STILL UNDER INVESTIGATION I WOULD PREFER NOT TO DIVULGE THE RESULTS OF POLICE INVESTIGATIONS SO FAR BUT I WOULD SO EMPHASISE THAT THE INTENSIVE POLICE ACTION WHICH I HAVE OUTLINED ABOVE IS CONTINUING."

MORE IN-DEPTH SCRUTINY OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS ALLOWED

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A MOTION ENABLING THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE AND THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT TO EXTEND THE RANGE AND DEPTH OF THEIR INVESTIGATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ANNUAL ACCOUNT WAS PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THIS WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY PROVIDING A SEPARATE MACHINERY FOR THE COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT'S REPORT THROUGH AMENDMENTS TO THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

"BY THIS METHOD, THE HEAVY WORKLOAD OF THE PAC, NOW CONCENTRATED IN ONE THREE MONTH PERIOD, WILL BE SPREAD OVER TWO PERIODS EACH OF THREE MONTHS," THE CHIEF SECRETARY, MR DAVID FORD, SAID IN MOVING THE MOTION.

MR FORD SAID AT PRESENT STANDING ORDERS AUTHORISED THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT'S ANNUAL REPORT ON HIS EXAMINATION OF THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS OF THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT. THE PAC'S PUBLIC EXAMINATION OF THIS REPORT STARTED WITH ITS TABELING IN NOVEMBER EACH YEAR AND ENDED THREE MONTHS LATER WHEN THE PAC REPORTED ITS FINDINGS, HE ADDED.

UNDER THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE DIRECTOR, PAC AND ADMINISTRATION Tabled IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON NOVEMBER 19 LAST YEAR THE DIRECTOR MIGHT, IN ADDITION, CONDUCT VALUE FOR MONEY AUDITS AND REPORT HIS FINDINGS TO THE COUNCIL. MR FORD SAID CLAUSE 19(A) EMPOWERED THE COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE THESE REPORTS AND TO REPORT ITS FINDINGS TO THE COUNCIL, WHILE CLAUSE 19(C) PROVIDED A SEPARATE MACHINERY FOR THESE REPORTS TO BE EXAMINED.

"WITH THE PROVISION OF THIS SEPARATE MACHINERY THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT WILL TABLE TWO REPORTS A YEAR AND THE PAC WILL RESPOND WITH ITS OWN REPORT ON EACH OF THESE," MR FORD SAID. THE FIRST OF THESE WOULD BE DEALT WITH UNDER THE EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN NOVEMBER AND FEBRUARY EACH YEAR WHILE THE SECOND WILL BE Tabled IN APRIL EACH YEAR AND REPORTED ON BY THE END OF THE SESSION.

"THIS SHOULD ENABLE BOTH THE PAC AND THE DIRECTOR TO EXTEND THE RANGE AND DEPTH OF THEIR INVESTIGATIONS AND IMPLEMENTS A RECOMMENDATION THE PAC ITSELF MADE IN ITS 8TH REPORT IN FEBRUARY, 1986," MR FORD SAID.

ANOTHER AMENDMENT CONTAINED IN THE MOTION PROVIDED FOR THE REPLACEMENT IN STANDING ORDERS OF REFERENCES TO "UNOFFICIALS".

THIS FOLLOWED THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE LATE GOVERNOR IN HIS ADDRESS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN OCTOBER LAST YEAR OF THE DECISION TO DISPENSE WITH THE TERM "UNOFFICIALS".

/IN EVERYDAY

IN EVERYDAY USE, MEMBERS WHETHER APPOINTED, ELECTED, OR OFFICIAL, WERE ALREADY KNOWN SIMPLY AS MEMBERS, BUT FOR THE PURPOSES OF STANDING ORDERS WHERE DIFFERENT ROLES WERE ASSIGNED TO MEMBERS, DEPENDING ON WHETHER THEY WERE OFFICIAL OR OTHERWISE, IT WAS NECESSARY TO REFER TO "OFFICIAL MEMBERS" OR TO "MEMBERS OTHER THAN OFFICIAL", MR FORD SAID.

ANOTHER AMENDMENT WAS DESIGNED TO EXTEND THE PERIOD AVAILABLE FOR ADJOURNMENT DEBATES UNDER STANDING ORDER 9(7) FROM 30 MINUTES TO 60 MINUTES.

"THIS CHANGE REFLECTS THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF ADJOURNMENT DEBATES IN THE PROCEEDINGS OF THIS COUNCIL AND THE INTEREST WHICH MEMBERS HAVE EXPRESSED IN SPEAKING IN THEM," MR FORD SAID.

HE ADDED THAT EXPERIENCE HAD SHOWN THAT THE 30 MINUTES RULE COULD RARELY BE ENFORCED.

"HOWEVER, IF THE CHARACTER OF ADJOURNMENT DEBATES IS TO BE PRESERVED, IT IS DESIRABLE TO IMPOSE SOME TIME LIMIT. A 60 MINUTE LIMIT, OF WHICH THE FINAL 15 MINUTES WILL BE RESERVED FOR THE OFFICIAL REPLY, SEEMS ABOUT RIGHT," MR FORD SAID.

HE SAID IN EXTENDING THE LIMIT, NO CHANGE WOULD BE MADE TO THE PROVISION WHEREBY THE PRESIDENT MIGHT DETERMINE A LONGER PERIOD. HOWEVER THE NEW LIMIT SHOULD MAKE THE OCCASIONS ON WHICH THE PRESIDENT HAD TO RESORT TO THIS PROVISION A RARE EXCEPTION RATHER THAN THE RULE AS IN THE PAST.

THE OTHER AMENDMENT CONCERNED WITH THE PROCEDURES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

MR FORD SAID THAT FROM TIME TO TIME, PARTICULARLY WHEN THE COUNCIL WAS IN RECESS, IT WAS DESIRABLE FOR THE COMMITTEE TO DEAL WITH PAPERS BY CIRCULATION.

HE SAID CLAUSE 18(C) SOUGHT TO AMEND STANDING ORDER 60 TO ALLOW THE FINANCE COMMITTEE TO DO SO, BUT THERE WOULD BE A SAFEGUARD THAT, WHERE ANY MATTER WAS NOT APPROVED ON CIRCULATION BY ALL MEMBERS IN HONG KONG AT THE TIME, THE MATTER SHOULD BE DEEMED TO BE REFERRED FOR DECISION AT A SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15, 1987

- 4 -

BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL PASSED
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THE BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 PASSED ITS THIRD READING AT TODAY'S (WEDNESDAY'S) LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING.

SPEAKING DURING THE DEBATE OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, MR GRAHAM BARNES, THANKED COUNCILLORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF THE BILL AND IN PARTICULAR CONSTRUCTIVE COMMENTS FROM MR CHENG HON-KWAN.

HE SAID: "MR CHENG QUITE RIGHTLY POINTED OUT THAT THE BUILDING AUTHORITY MUST ENSURE THAT WORKS CARRIED OUT IN THE INTERESTS OF PUBLIC SAFETY ARE DONE AT MINIMUM COST AND TO A SATISFACTORY STANDARD.

"I WOULD REASSURE HIM THAT THE AUTHORITY'S PROCEDURES FOR TENDERING OF CONTRACTS AND SUPERVISION OF THE WORKS ARE AIMED AT ACHIEVING PRECISELY THIS."

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BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 WELCOMED
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THE HON CHENG HON-KWAN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT A PROPOSAL IN THE BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 WHICH EMPOWERED THE BUILDING AUTHORITY TO RECOVER COSTS FOR NECESSARY INCIDENTAL WORKS AND SERVICES WOULD GREATLY ASSIST PRIVATE BUILDING OWNERS IN BUILDING MANAGEMENT.

SPEAKING DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL, MR CHENG SAID UNDER EXISTING LEGISLATION, THE BUILDING AUTHORITY WAS EMPOWERED TO CARRY OUT WORKS IN THE INTEREST OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND TO RECOVER THE DIRECT COSTS INCURRED, WHEN THE PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BUILDING HAD FAILED TO CARRY OUT THE WORKS THEMSELVES.

"INDIRECT OR INCIDENTAL COSTS ARE NOT RECOVERABLE, AND THE BUILDING AUTHORITY TENDS TO OMIT ANY WORK INCIDENTAL TO THE REMOVAL OF DANGER," HE SAID.

MR CHENG SAID OMELCO HAD IN FACT RECEIVED REPRESENTATIONS FROM DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS AND PRIVATE BUILDING OWNERS WHO POINTED OUT THAT THIS WAS UNSATISFACTORY.

HE SAID THE OMELCO LANDS AND WORKS PANEL HAD DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM WITH THE ADMINISTRATION. THE PROPOSAL CONTAINED IN THE BILL WAS A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM.

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HOWEVER, MR CHENG SAID THE AUTHORITY MUST ENSURE THAT ONLY THOSE OTHER WORKS WHICH WERE NECESSARY SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT AND AT THE MINIMUM COSTS INCURRED, SO AS NOT TO CREATE UNNECESSARY FINANCIAL BURDEN FOR THE OWNERS.

"THE OWNERS WITH WHOM LIES THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE BUILDING SHOULD DO THEIR PART AND GIVE FULL COOPERATION TO THE AUTHORITY," HE SAID.

"GOOD COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES WILL ENSURE THAT SUCH WORKS DONE AND COST INCURRED ARE TO THE SATISFACTION OF ALL CONCERNED," HE ADDED.

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FIRM ANTI-SMOKING POLICY PLEDGED
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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COUNCIL ON SMOKING AND HEALTH IN NO WAY INDICATES ANY WEAKENING OF THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO A FIRM POLICY ON THE DANGERS OF SMOKING, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

WINDING UP THE DEBATE ON THE HONG KONG COUNCIL ON SMOKING AND HEALTH BILL 1987, MR CHAMBERS SAID THE PROVISIONAL COUNCIL ON SMOKING AND HEALTH WAS ALREADY CONSIDERING A NUMBER OF PROPOSALS FOR TIGHTENING UP CONTROLS ON TOBACCO ADVERTISING AND EXTENDING NO-SMOKING AREAS.

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE COUNCIL WOULD NO DOUBT PURSUED THESE MATTERS FURTHER, AND HE LOOKED FORWARD TO RECEIVING ITS PROPOSALS IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

HE SAID THAT HE WAS ALSO CONCERNED THAT MANY FACTORS WHICH IMPINGED ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES TO SMOKING WERE QUITE BEYOND THE SCOPE OF LEGISLATIVE CONTROL. SUCH FACTORS AS PEER PRESSURE, THE EXAMPLE OF PARENTS AND COMMUNITY ATTITUDES, COULD ONLY BE CHANGED GRADUALLY THROUGH EFFECTIVE PUBLICITY AND EDUCATION, HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 6 -

ESTABLISHMENT OF HEALTH COUNCIL SUPPORTED
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DR THE HON CHIU HIN-KWONG TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SUPPORTED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HONG KONG COUNCIL ON SMOKING AND HEALTH TO CARRY OUT THE DUTIES IN ALIGNMENT WITH GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-SMOKING POLICY.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF THE HONG KONG COUNCIL ON SMOKING AND HEALTH BILL 1987, DR CHIU SAID THE BILL SIGNIFIED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD DETERMINED TO TAKE ANOTHER STEP TOWARDS THE PREVENTION OF THE HAZARD OF SMOKING WHICH WAS AN ADDICTIVE HOBBY RESPONSIBLE FOR 10 PER CENT OF DEATHS EACH YEAR IN HONG KONG.

THE FIRST STEP BY THE GOVERNMENT WAS ITS WISE DECISION OF A PHASED-IN TOTAL BAN ON TOBACCO ADVERTISEMENT FROM ELECTRONIC MEDIA, HE SAID.

DR CHIU POINTED OUT THAT THE BILL WAS WELCOMED BY HIS COLLEAGUES OF THE MEDICAL FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY, THE ANTI-CANCER SOCIETY, THE HONG KONG CARDIOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND THE HONG KONG SMOKE-OUT COMMITTEE.

HE SAID EFFORTS TO RESTRICT TOBACCO ADVERTISING, TO PUBLICISE HEALTH WARNINGS ON CIGARETTE PACKET AND TO RAISE THE TAX OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS WERE THE ONLY AREAS THAT GOVERNMENT WAS ABLE TO AFFECT DIRECTLY IN ITS ANTI-SMOKING POLICY.

WHILE OTHER FACTORS THAT COULD NOT BE SIMILARLY INFLUENCED BY GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION, SUCH AS SOCIAL PRESSURE, PEER INFLUENCE, PARENTAL AND TEACHER EXAMPLE, MIGHT HAVE MORE IMMEDIATE INFLUENCE ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S DECISION TO SMOKE, HE SAID.

"IF THESE AREAS ARE NOT GIVEN SPECIAL CONCERN, LEGISLATION ON SMOKING OR GOVERNMENT POLICY ON HEALTH EDUCATION CAN ONLY HOPE TO ACHIEVE THEIR DESIRED RESULTS AND EVENTUALLY WILL PROVE TO BE INEFFECTIVE," HE SAID.

NOTING THAT IT WAS ALWAYS MORE YOUNGSTERS THAN ADULTS WHO STARTED TO SMOKE, DR CHIU SAID ANOTHER AREA THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD LOOK INTO WAS SPORTS SPONSORSHIP BY THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY.

HE SAID THOSE SPORTS SPONSORSHIP MIGHT ACT AS ADVERTISING TO YOUNG PEOPLE.

DR CHIU SUGGESTED THAT THERE SHOULD BE A STRICTER CONTROL MEASURE TO PROTECT NON-SMOKING PEOPLE FROM THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF PASSIVE-SMOKING, BECAUSE A SURVEY OF PUBLIC OPINION CONDUCTED HERE IN 1981 SHOWED THAT MORE THAN THREE QUARTERS OF THE RESPONDENTS WERE IN FAVOUR OF BANNING SMOKING IN ALL ENCLOSED PUBLIC PLACES.

HE SAID HE WAS ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT WHETHER SUFFICIENT FUND WOULD BE ALLOCATED TO THE COUNCIL TO ENABLE IT TO PERFORM ITS VARIOUS FUNCTIONS EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY.

FINALLY, DR CHIU STRESSED: "GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT IS CRUCIAL IN ANTI-SMOKING PROGRAMMES, WITHOUT WHICH THE CONCERNED EFFORTS ARE DOOMED TO BE A FAILURE."

NATIONALITY NOT A CRITERION IN GRANTING OF LEGAL AID

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THERE IS NO LIMITATION ON THE GRANT OF LEGAL AID ON THE GROUNDS OF AN APPLICANT'S NATIONALITY, AND ALIENS MAY APPLY AND RECEIVE LEGAL AID, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID FORD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE WAS REFERRING TO A CASE IN WHICH LEGAL AID WAS GRANTED TO FOUR FILIPINA MAIDS TO SEEK JUDICIAL REVIEW OF THE DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION'S POLICY ON THE EXTENSION OF STAY OF OVERSEAS DOMESTIC HELPERS.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PETER C. WONG, MR FORD SAID SECTION 24(1) OF THE LEGAL AID ORDINANCE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A LEGALLY AIDED PERSON AND THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AID AND THE COUNSEL AND SOLICITORS ASSIGNED BY THE DIRECTOR IN SUCH A CASE WAS PRIVILEGED.

"ACCORDINGLY, I AM UNABLE TO MAKE A STATEMENT ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO THE GRANTING OF LEGAL AID OR THE BASIS ON WHICH LEGAL AID WAS GRANTED TO THE FOUR FILIPINA MAIDS.

"IT WOULD NOT BE RIGHT FOR ME TO DISCUSS THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF THEIR CASE BEFORE IT WAS ARGUED IN COURT," HE SAID.

MR FORD NOTED THAT THE FILIPINA MAIDS' APPLICATION FOR LEAVE TO APPLY FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW HAD BEEN GRANTED BY THE HIGH COURT LAST FRIDAY. "IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE HEARING WILL BEGIN ON JULY 30," HE SAID.

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NORTH-WEST RAILWAY BY-LAWS APPROVED

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A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE NORTH-WEST RAILWAY BY-LAWS 1987 MADE BY THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION (KCRC) EARLIER ON JULY 3 WAS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE RESOLUTION, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON PETER JOHNSON, SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD EXAMINED THESE BY-LAWS CAREFULLY AND CONSIDERED THEM ACCEPTABLE.

UNDER SECTION 31 OF THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION ORDINANCE (CHAPTER 372), THE KCRC IS EMPOWERED TO MAKE BY-LAWS WHICH, HOWEVER, ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

/"THESE BY-LAWS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 8 -

"THESE BY-LAWS ARE REQUIRED BY THE KCRC TO EXERCISE EFFECTIVE CONTROL IN THEIR OPERATION OF THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (LRT) SYSTEM AND ITS ASSOCIATED BUS SERVICES IN THE NORTH-WEST TRANSIT SERVICE AREA," MR JOHNSON SAID, ADDING THAT THEY WERE MODELLED ON THE EXISTING KCRC BY-LAWS FOR THE MAIN RAILWAY LINE, WHICH HAD BEEN WORKING SATISFACTORILY.

"THE BY-LAWS SET OUT THE CONDITIONS FOR THE CARRIAGE OF PASSENGERS, THE ISSUE OF PASSENGER TICKETS AND CONTROL OF PERSONS AND VEHICLES ON THE LRT SYSTEM AND ITS FEEDER BUSES.

"THEY ALSO PRESCRIBE THE AUTHORITY OF CORPORATION STAFF, THE CONDUCT OF PERSONS ON THE LRT SYSTEM AND THE CORPORATION'S BUSES AND THE PENALTIES FOR THE CONTRAVENTION OF THESE BY-LAWS," HE SAID.

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SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION REPORT TABLED

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SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION OF \$1,991.2 MILLION WAS APPROVED FOR THE FINAL QUARTER OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1986-87, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON JOHN YAXLEY, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

TABLING A SUMMARY OF THE SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION FOR THE FINAL QUARTER OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1986-87 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR YAXLEY SAID \$1,595.6 MILLION OF THIS SUM AROSE FROM THE 1986 CIVIL SERVICE AND SUBVENTED SECTOR PAY ADJUSTMENTS.

"OF THE AMOUNT OF \$1,991.2 MILLION, \$1,080 MILLION IS OFFSET BY SAVINGS UNDER THE SAME HEAD OR OTHER HEADS OF EXPENDITURE OR BY THE DELETION OF FUNDS UNDER THE ADDITIONAL COMMITMENTS VOTES. THE REMAINING \$911.2 MILLION IS NET SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION," HE SAID.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT ITEMS IN THE SUMMARY HAD BEEN APPROVED EITHER BY FINANCE COMMITTEE OR UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY.

"THE LATTER HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 8(8)(A) OF THE PUBLIC FINANCE ORDINANCE," HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 9 -

DUNN MOVES MOTION ON GREEN PAPER

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SENIOR MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE HON LYDIA DUNN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT CHANGES IN THE LEGISLATURE ARE INEVITABLE BECAUSE THE JOINT DECLARATION HAS COMMITTED IT TO THE GREATEST CHANGE OF ALL.

MISS DUNN WAS REFERRING TO THE FACT THAT THE LEGISLATURE OF THE SAR IS TO BE CONSTITUTED BY ELECTIONS WHEREAS THE PRESENT COUNCIL IS ONLY PARTLY ELECTED.

"NOW OF COURSE WE COULD SAY NO FURTHER CHANGE FOR 1988," SHE SAID, "BUT IN THE LONG RUN, NO CHANGE IS NOT AN OPTION."

"THE LONGER WE POSTPONE FURTHER CHANGE, THE GREATER WILL BE THE PRESSURE FOR IT AND THE SHORTER THE TIME AVAILABLE TO SEE IT SMOOTHLY INTRODUCED," SHE ADDED.

IN MOVING A MOTION AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL "THAT THIS COUNCIL TAKES NOTE OF THE GREEN PAPER : THE 1987 REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT", MISS DUNN STRESSED THAT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE SHOULD PROCEED WITH CAUTION.

"STABILITY WITH A LESS THAN PERFECT SYSTEM IS PREFERABLE TO THE INSTABILITY THAT IS AN INEVITABLE PRODUCT OF SUDDEN RADICAL CHANGE, HOWEVER CLOSE TO PERFECTION THE NEW SYSTEM MAY BE SEEN TO ITS PROPONENTS," SHE SAID.

HOWEVER, SHE WAS QUICK TO EXPLAIN THAT STABILITY IN A HUMAN SOCIETY WAS OBTAINED NOT BY TRYING TO SET THINGS IN CONCRETE, BUT BY ALLOWING ITS SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS TO ADAPT TO THE CHANGES THAT OCCURRED IN SOCIETY.

SHE DESCRIBED "EDUCATION" AS THE MOST POTENT FORCE FOR CHANGE, CLOSELY FOLLOWED BY "PROSPERITY".

SHE POINTED OUT THAT BECAUSE THE TWO HAD GONE HAND IN HAND FOR MANY YEARS PAST, THE CHANGES IN HONG KONG'S SOCIETY AND POLITICAL SYSTEM HAD NOT BROUGHT ABOUT INSTABILITY.

"THEY HAVE INSTEAD ENSURED CONTINUED STABILITY. THAT, ABOVE ALL, WE MUST PRESERVE," MISS DUNN SAID.

EXPRESSING HER VIEWS ON DIRECT ELECTIONS, MISS DUNN POINTED OUT THAT DIRECT ELECTIONS WAS NOT A "REVOLUTIONARY INNOVATION" BUT AN "EVOLUTIONARY STEP".

"WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT INTRODUCING DIRECT ELECTIONS TO HONG KONG, BUT ONLY ABOUT EXTENDING AN EXISTING ELECTORAL PRACTICE TO THIS COUNCIL," SHE SAID.

/DIRECT ELECTIONS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 10 -

DIRECT ELECTIONS ALREADY EXISTED FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS, THE URBAN COUNCIL AND THE REGIONAL COUNCIL.

SHE DID NOT THINK THAT ANY OF THESE EXAMPLES OF DIRECT ELECTIONS, OR ANY OF THE INDIRECT ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HAD LED TO THE KIND OF IRRESPONSIBLE VOTE-CATCHING THAT OPPONENTS OF DIRECT ELECTIONS FOR THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SEEMED TO FEAR.

"I DO NOT THINK THAT THERE IS ANY EVIDENCE FROM PAST ELECTIONS THAT ORDINARY PEOPLE CANNOT BE TRUSTED TO SEE THEIR OWN LONG TERM INTERESTS CLEARLY AND THAT ONLY THE BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL SECTORS CAN BE TRUSTED TO DO THAT", SHE SAID.

SHE ADDED THAT TO KEEP POWER IN THE HANDS OF CERTAIN SECTORS OF SOCIETY WAS IN ITSELF DANGEROUS TO STABILITY.

"IT IS FAR BETTER TO DIFFUSE POWER SO THAT EVERYONE HAS A CHANCE TO INFLUENCE HIS OWN FUTURE AND NO ONE SECTOR CAN DETERMINE THE FATE OF ALL", SHE SAID.

BUT SHE POINTED OUT THAT ONE OF THE QUESTIONS THAT MUST BE CONSIDERED BY ALL WAS "HOW THE NECESSARY DIFFUSION OF POWER IS TO BE ACHIEVED GRADUALLY AND WITHOUT A LURCH TOWARDS INSTABILITY," AND IT SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED ON THE BASIS OF SUSPECT ARGUMENTS.

"IN THE LONG RUN, IT IS THE GOOD SENSE OF HONG KONG PEOPLE THAT IS OUR SAFEGUARD AGAINST ALL THE IMPERFECTIONS OF ANY ELECTIVE SYSTEM."

MISS DUNN WARNED THAT WHILST INDIRECT ELECTION COULD HAVE THEIR DISADVANTAGES, DIRECT ELECTION WAS BY NO MEANS PANACEA.

"IT DOES NOT GUARANTEE BETTER GOVERNMENT OR EVEN GOOD GOVERNMENT. ABOVE ALL, IT IS NOT A WEAPON TO BE USED TO CONFRONT CHINA NOR A SHIELD TO PROTECT HONG KONG FROM INTERFERENCE," SHE SAID.

SHE SAID HONG KONG'S FUTURE LAY IN COOPERATING WITH CHINA, BUILDING MUTUAL TRUST, UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT; AND BEING SENSITIVE TO EACH OTHER'S CONCERNS.

SHE SAID THAT TO HER, THE CASE FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS WAS PURELY AND SIMPLY THAT, OF ALL OTHERS, IT WAS THE FAIREST WAY OF SELECTING PEOPLE TO EXERCISE PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITIES.

SHE VIEWED THE INTRODUCTION OF A FEW DIRECTLY ELECTED MEMBERS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AS A "LOGICAL NEXT STEP" IN HONG KONG'S MOVE TOWARDS A MORE REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.

"AS I SEE IT, THE REAL ARGUMENT IS NOT SO MUCH 'WHETHER' AS 'WHEN'," SHE SAID.

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ON THE QUESTION OF TIMING, MISS DUNN FELT THAT SINCE THE COUNCIL HAD TAKEN A BIG STEP FORWARD LESS THAN TWO YEARS AGO, THERE WAS A CASE FOR A PAUSE BEFORE TAKING THE NEXT STEP.

IT WOULD DO THE COUNCIL NO HARM IF MEMBERS GAVE THEMSELVES MORE TIME BEFORE THEY MADE ROOM FOR ANOTHER NEW WAVE OF MEMBERS, AND THE PUBLIC SHOULD BE GIVEN A FEW MORE YEARS TO FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT THE COUNCILLORS DID AND HOW WELL THEY OPERATED.

TURNING TO THE FUTURE ROLE OF OFFICIAL MEMBERS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MISS DUNN SAID THAT THE OVERRIDING PREOCCUPATION MUST BE TO PRODUCE A BALANCED AND EFFECTIVE LEGISLATURE, BUT IT ALSO HAD TO FIT THE MOULD OF THE LEGISLATURE ENVISAGED BY THE JOINT DECLARATION, PROVISION FOR WHICH WOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE BASIC LAW.

SINCE IT WAS TO BE A LEGISLATURE "CONSTITUTED BY ELECTIONS", THERE COULD BE NO PLACE FOR EX-OFFICIO OR APPOINTED OFFICIAL AS MEMBERS, SHE SAID.

THE JOINT DECLARATION ALSO REQUIRED THAT THE EXECUTIVE AUTHORITIES SHOULD BE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE LEGISLATURE.

MISS DUNN REITERATED THAT SOME FORM OF "MINISTERIAL TYPE SYSTEM" SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.

"I DO NOT MEAN A FORM OF PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT IN A WESTMINSTER 'MODEL'," SHE STRESSED.

"IN THE LONG TERM, WE SHOULD AIM TO LINK THE NON-GOVERNMENT MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WITH THE ADMINISTRATION OF THIS TERRITORY RATHER THAN RELY ON OFFICIAL MEMBERS ALONE TO PROVIDE THAT LINK," SHE SAID.

"THIS COULD BE ON THE BASIS OF THE GOVERNOR APPOINTING NON-GOVERNMENT MEMBERS TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROGRAMME AREAS AND WOULD PUT FORWARD THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES, INTRODUCE ITS LEGISLATION AND ANSWER QUESTIONS AS THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS DO NOW," SHE ADDED.

ANOTHER POSSIBILITY WAS THAT OFFICIAL MEMBERS MIGHT REGULARLY ATTEND THE COUNCIL MEETINGS BUT WOULD NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE.

SHE URGED THAT THIS ISSUE BE TACKLED BEFORE CONSIDERING ANY FURTHER REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF OFFICIAL MEMBERS.

MISS DUNN COMMENDED THE APPOINTED MEMBERS ON THEIR GOOD SERVICE TO THE COUNCIL.

/"THEY HAVE

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 12 -

"THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN YES-MEN, NOR HAVE THEY EVER SEEN THEMSELVES AS HERE TO DO THE GOVERNOR'S BIDDING. THEY HAVE BEEN AS SCEPTICAL AND QUIRKY AND CANTANKEROUS AND AS DIFFICULT TO PLEASE AS ANY OF OUR NEWLY ELECTED COLLEAGUES," SHE SAID.

SHE HOPED THAT ELECTED MEMBERS WOULD AGREE THAT THEIR APPOINTED COUNTER-PARTS HAVE A CONTRIBUTION TO MAKE AS MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL FOR SOME YEARS TO COME.

COMMENTING ON THE PRESIDENCY OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MISS DUNN BELIEVED THAT IT SHOULD BE MADE POSSIBLE FOR THE GOVERNOR TO NOMINATE SOME OTHER MEMBERS ON THE COUNCIL TO PRESIDE FROM TIME TO TIME IN HIS PLACE IN VIEW OF THE FREQUENCY AND LENGTH OF COUNCIL MEETINGS NOWADAYS.

CONCLUDING HER SPEECH, MISS DUNN EMPHASISED THE NEED FOR HONG KONG TO SEARCH FOR THE RIGHT COMBINATION OF ACCEPTABLE PRINCIPLE AND WORKABLE PRACTICE BY LISTENING TO THE VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE.

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CHANGES MUST HAVE DUE REGARD TO BASIC LAW
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THE HON CHEN SHOU-LUM TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THERE ARE MANY WHO HAVE CRITICISED THE GREEN PAPER ON THE GROUND THAT IT LACKS GUIDING DIRECTIONS.

SPEAKING ON THE MOTION ON THE GREEN PAPER, MR CHEN SAID THOSE CRITICS HAD CHOSEN, DELIBERATELY AND AGAINST THEIR BETTER JUDGMENT IT SEEMED, TO IGNORE THE FACT THAT IN PREPARING THE PAPER, THE GOVERNMENT MUST, AT THE OPINION GATHERING STAGE, HAD A COMPLETELY OPEN MIND ON THE MATTER OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT AND MUST DO NO MORE THAN HIGHLIGHTING THE POSSIBLE OPTIONS WITHOUT APPEARING TO FAVOUR ANY PARTICULAR ONE OF THEM.

TO DO OTHERWISE WOULD NOT ONLY BE WRONG BUT WOULD INVITE ACCUSATIONS OF MANIPULATING PUBLIC OPINION, HE SAID.

HOWEVER, HE URGED READERS OF THE GREEN PAPER TO PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE FACTORS WHICH WOULD HAVE A FUNDAMENTAL BEARING ON HONG KONG'S FUTURE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT.

/MR CHEN

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 13 -

MR CHEN SAID: "FIRSTLY, WE NEED TO ACCEPT THE FACT THAT HONG KONG IS NOT AND WILL NOT BE AN INDEPENDENT STATE. THE CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS UNDER WHICH HONG KONG OPERATES WILL CHANGE AS FROM JULY 1, 1997."

MR CHEN SAID, SECONDLY, HONG KONG WOULD BECOME A SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION OF CHINA IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS OF THE JOINT DECLARATION. "JUST AS THE LETTERS PATENT HAVE PROVIDED THE AUTHORITY FOR HONG KONG TO BE GOVERNED BY THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION, THE BASIC LAW WILL PROVIDE THE GOVERNMENT FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE SAR," HE SAID.

"IT IS CLEAR THEREFORE THAT WHATEVER CHANGES WE MAY WISH TO BRING WITHIN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT SYSTEM, THEY MUST HAVE DUE REGARD TO WHAT MAY BE PROVIDED IN THE BASIC LAW," HE ADDED.

MR CHEN POINTED OUT THAT THE STATED PURPOSE OF THE 1987 REVIEW WAS TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IN HONG KONG SHOULD BE FURTHER DEVELOPED.

IN CONSIDERING THIS QUESTION, HE SAID ONE MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WAS COMMITTED TO MAINTAIN HONG KONG'S PROSPERITY AND STABILITY AND TO ENSURE A SMOOTH TRANSFER OF GOVERNMENT IN 1997.

"PERHAPS THE BEST WAY TO ADDRESS THIS QUESTION IS TO CONDUCT A BRIEF APPRAISAL ON THE EXISTING SYSTEM TO SEE HOW IT HAS BEEN WORKING TO SUSTAIN HONG KONG'S PROSPERITY AND STABILITY," HE SUGGESTED.

MR CHEN SAID HONG KONG'S ASTONISHING GROWTH IN RECENT YEARS HAD BEEN REGARDED BY MANY AS NO LESS THAN AN ECONOMIC MIRACLE. FEW WOULD NOT CONCEDE THAT APART FROM ITS ENTERPRISING ENTREPRENEURS AND RESILIENT WORK FORCE, HONG KONG OWED ITS REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT TO A STABLE AND EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT SYSTEM THAT HAD BEEN RELATIVELY FREE FROM THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF POLITICS, AND WITHIN WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION WAS ABLE TO CONCENTRATE ON DOING A GOOD JOB OF ADMINISTERING THE TERRITORY WITH THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMUNITY IN MIND.

HE SAID IN TERMS OF STABILITY AND EFFICIENCY THE EXISTING SYSTEM APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN WORKING WELL. IT HAD THE FLEXIBILITY REQUIRED TO ENABLE PEOPLE FROM ALL STRATA OF THE COMMUNITY TO PARTICIPATE, THROUGH DIFFERENT MEANS AND IN DIFFERENT FORUMS, IN THE FORMULATION OF POLICIES WHICH AFFECTED THE LIVES OF ALL IN HONG KONG.

HE SAID: "THROUGH AN APPOINTMENT SYSTEM, CANDIDATES WITH DIFFERENT SOCIAL BACKGROUNDS ARE APPOINTED TO BODIES AT DISTRICT, REGIONAL AND CENTRAL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT OF WHICH THIS COUNCIL FORMS A PART.

/^AS FAR

"AS FAR AS THIS COUNCIL IS CONCERNED, AND I AM SURE THE SAME IS TRUE FOR OTHER BODIES, DECISIONS ARE NORMALLY TAKEN ON THE BASIS OF BROAD CONSENSUS BETWEEN DIFFERENT OR EVEN CONFLICTING INTERESTS IN THE COMMUNITY."

"THE SYSTEM HAS ENSURED NOT ONLY THAT INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS CANNOT DOMINATE OVER OTHERS BUT ALSO INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS MAY SPEAK THEIR MINDS WITHOUT BEING HINDERED OR INFLUENCED BY POLITICAL PRESSURE OF ELECTIONS. THE VALUE OF SUCH A SYSTEM SHOULD NOT BE UNDERMINED," HE ADDED.

NOTING THAT AN APPOINTED MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MIGHT BE ACCUSED OF DEFENDING THE APPOINTMENT SYSTEM BECAUSE OF VESTED INTEREST, MR CHEN TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE KNOWN HIS INTENTION TO RETIRE FROM BOTH THE LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE COUNCILS AT THE END OF THE CURRENT SESSION TO COINCIDE WITH HIS RETIREMENT FROM HIS PROFESSIONAL CAREER IN THE PUBLIC UTILITY SERVICE SECTOR.

"MY VIEWS EXPRESSED TODAY SHOULD THEREFORE BEAR NO INFLUENCE ON THE WHILE PAPER ON THE ISSUE," HE SAID.

MR CHEN NOTED THAT IN 1985 THE APPOINTMENT SYSTEM UNDERWENT A MOMENTOUS CHANGE WHEN GOVERNMENT INTRODUCED INDIRECT ELECTIONS THROUGH WHICH VARIOUS SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY WERE PERMITTED TO SELECT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE SAID SINCE OCTOBER 1985, THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL HAD BEEN MUCH BUSIER BUT THE PRODUCTIVITY WAS RELATIVELY LOW.

"ALTHOUGH THE NUMBER OF BILLS PASSED DURING THE CURRENT SESSION IS ONLY marginally LESS THAN THAT FOR THE 1984-85 SESSION, THE NUMBER OF MEETINGS OF THE AD-HOC GROUPS AND PANELS TO DEAL WITH THE BUSINESS HAD INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY INDICATING THAT EITHER THE BILLS HAD TO BE EXAMINED IN MUCH GREATER DEPTH THUS REQUIRING MORE AND LENGTHIER DISCUSSIONS OR, MORE LIKELY, THE RESULT OF INCREASING DIFFICULTY IN REACHING CONSENSUS, OR A COMBINATION OF BOTH," HE NOTED.

"WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT TO COPE WITH THE INCREASED ACTIVITIES IN THIS COUNCIL, MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION MUST HAVE ALSO HAD TO PUT IN EXTRA AMOUNT OF TIME AND EFFORT TO DEAL WITH THE WORK GENERATED, SUCH AS RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS ASKED IN THIS CHAMBER, PREPARING REPLIES TO DEBATES AND ATTENDING MEETINGS TO DISCUSS AND BRIEF MEMBERS.

"I AM SURE THE ADMINISTRATION MUST HAVE FELT THE STRAIN AND I SHALL NOT BE SURPRISED TO SEE IN THE BUDGET NEXT YEAR LARGER THAN USUAL REQUESTS FOR INCREASE IN THE STAFF ESTABLISHMENT."

/HOWEVER, MR

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 15 -

HOWEVER, MR CHEN SAID WHAT WAS MORE WORRYING WAS THE TENDENCY THAT IN TRYING TO BE RESPONSIVE TO OPINION, THE GOVERNMENT WAS BECOMING UNDULY SENSITIVE TO POLITICAL PRESSURE.

"BECAUSE OF THIS, I AM INCREASINGLY CONCERNED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SYSTEM, PRESENTLY EXECUTIVE-LED, MAY GRADUALLY AND UNWITTINGLY BECOME LEGISLATIVE-LED. SUCH A TREND IS NOT CONDUCTIVE TO THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT," HE SAID. "IS THIS WHAT HONG KONG WANTS?" HE QUESTIONED.

MR CHEN STRESSED THAT THE PRESENT SYSTEM HAD SERVED HONG KONG WELL AND THERE WAS REALLY NO COMPELLING REASON FOR HASTY AND DRASTIC CHANGES.

"WHAT WE REALLY NEED IS, PERHAPS, FINER TUNING OF AN ALREADY WELL-RUN MACHINERY," HE SAID.

MR CHEN SAID CHANGES MUST BE INTRODUCED IN A PRUDENT AND GRADUAL MANNER.

"WE MUST FIRST WANT TO KNOW WHAT THE POST-1997 POLITICAL STRUCTURE IS LIKELY TO BE BEFORE WE COULD DECIDE WHICH DIRECTION POLITICAL REFORMS DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD SHOULD TAKE TO ENSURE A SMOOTH TRANSFER OF GOVERNMENT IN 1997.

"WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT THERE IS A FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HONG KONG AND OTHER INDEPENDENT STATES. IN ANY DEMOCRACIES, THE PEOPLE CAN THROW OUT OR CHANGE THEIR GOVERNMENT IF THEY FIND IT INEFFECTIVE OR UNSATISFACTORY. BUT HONG KONG CAN NEVER BE SUCH A DEMOCRACY EITHER NOW OR IN THE FUTURE."

FINALLY, MR CHEN SAID: "I THINK THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON DOING WHAT THEY HAVE ALWAYS DONE BEST, THAT IS TO WORK HARD TO ENSURE HONG KONG'S PROSPERITY, WHICH IS THE VERY FOUNDATION FOR HONG KONG'S EXISTENCE, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE."

"CONTINUED PROSPERITY DEPENDS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS RATHER THAN HASTY AND DRASTIC CHANGES," HE ADDED.

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DIRECT ELECTIONS 'A NATURAL STEP'

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THE HON PETER C. WONG SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE CONCEPT OF DIRECT ELECTIONS IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED AS A NATURAL STEP IN THE EVOLUTION OF A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM, AND VIEWS DIFFER ONLY ON THE TIMING OF ITS INTRODUCTION.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE MOTION ON THE GREEN PAPER, MR WONG SAID THAT WHEN CONSIDERING THE TIMING OF DIRECT ELECTIONS, APART FROM PUBLIC RESPONSE, AT LEAST TWO ISSUES WERE RELEVANT: POLITICAL MATURITY AND THE QUESTION OF CONVERGENCE WITH THE BASIC LAW.

ON THE QUESTION OF CONVERGENCE, HE SAID THAT FEW POLITICAL ANALYSTS WERE AGAINST THE CONCEPT OF CONVERGENCE.

"WHICHEVER WAY ONE LOOKS AT IT, CONVERGENCE IS CERTAINLY DESIRABLE, IF ONLY TO AVOID DEVELOPING A POLITICAL SYSTEM WHICH MAY NOT BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE BASIC LAW," HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT THE ARGUMENT ONE OFTEN HEARD WAS THAT SINCE THE JOINT DECLARATION PROVIDED FOR THE POST-1997 LEGISLATURE TO BE CONSTITUTED BY ELECTIONS, SOME ELEMENT OF DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN 1988 WAS NOT LIKELY TO BE INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE BASIC LAW.

"THIS MAY OR MAY NOT BE TRUE, SINCE ELECTIONS DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN DIRECT ELECTIONS," HE SAID.

REGARDLESS OF ONE'S VIEW ON THIS ISSUE, THERE WAS LOGIC IN THE ARGUMENT THAT IDEALLY DIRECT ELECTIONS SHOULD BE INTRODUCED ONLY AFTER THE PROMULGATION OF THE BASIC LAW AND THUS ENSURED CONVERGENCE. THE IMPORTANT THING WAS THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF DIRECT ELECTIONS WAS ACCEPTED. ITS INTRODUCTION WAS ONLY A QUESTION OF TIMING, HE SAID.

TURNING TO THE QUESTION OF THE POLITICAL MATURITY OF HONG KONG PEOPLE, MR WONG SAID THAT DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS, HONG KONG HAD DEMONSTRATED A GREAT AWARENESS OF ITS CIVIC RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES. MANY BELIEVED THAT THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG WERE POLITICALLY MATURE ENOUGH AND READY TO PARTICIPATE MORE FULLY IN THE PROCESS OF GOVERNMENT.

"IT IS THEREFORE LOGICAL TO CONCLUDE THAT SHOULD THE PUBLIC OPT FOR EARLY INTRODUCTION, THERE IS CERTAINLY A STRONG CASE FOR SOME ELEMENT OF DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO BE INTRODUCED IN 1988," HE SAID.

/CONVERSELY, IF

CONVERSELY, IF THE MAJORITY WAS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS AT A LATER DATE, GOVERNMENT WAS DUTY BOUND TO TAKE FULLY INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS SO EXPRESSED, HE SAID.

HE BELIEVED THAT MOST PEOPLE APPRECIATED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DIRECT ELECTIONS. IT WAS EQUALLY IMPORTANT THAT THEY WERE AWARE OF ITS IMPLICATIONS. A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THESE IMPLICATIONS WOULD CERTAINLY ENABLE THOSE WHO INTENDED TO EXERCISE THEIR CIVIC RIGHTS TO FORM THEIR VIEWS INTELLIGENTLY.

MR WONG ALSO URGED THE PUBLIC TO EXERCISE THEIR CIVIC RIGHTS AND SUBMIT THEIR CONSIDERED VIEWS TO THE SURVEY OFFICE ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 30, 1987.

HE SAID THAT CRUCIAL TO THIS EXERCISE WAS THE SILENT MAJORITY. THEY MUST NOT REMAIN SILENT, IF THE CONSULTATION WAS TO BE MEANINGFUL, HE STRESSED.

IN THIS RESPECT, THE GOVERNMENT MUST SPARE NO EFFORTS IN REACHING OUT TO THEM, HE SAID.

"EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO BRING HOME THE FACT, THROUGH THE NUMEROUS CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATIONS AND IN PARTICULAR THE MEDIA, THAT POLITICAL REFORM IS IMPORTANT. IT AFFECTS DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY EACH AND EVERYONE OF US WHO LIVE IN HONG KONG," HE SAID.

IN THEIR OWN INTERESTS AND IN THE INTERESTS OF HONG KONG, THE PUBLIC MUST BE PREPARED TO MAKE THEIR VIEWS KNOWN. AND DID SO CONSCIENTIOUSLY AND WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR. IN THIS WAY AND THIS WAY ALONE COULD DEMOCRACY BE ATTAINED, HE ADDED.

MR WONG SAID THAT HE BELIEVED IN PRACTICAL POLITICS, IN REALISM AND NOT IDEALISM, IN RECONCILIATION AND NOT CONFRONTATION AND ABOVE ALL, IN COMPROMISE AND THE VIRTUE OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE.

"WHATEVER CHANGES MAY BE INTRODUCED IN 1988, I AM CONFIDENT THAT GIVEN GOOD SENSE AND OUR EXCELLENT TRACK RECORD, HONG KONG WILL CONTINUE TO BE STABLE AND PROSPEROUS," HE SAID.

ELECTIONS SHOULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED IN HASTE

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DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT DIRECT ELECTION IS A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE FOR HONG KONG'S POLITICAL REFORM AND SHOULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED IN HASTE AND WITHOUT PROPER REGARD TO THE PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES PREVAILING IN HONG KONG.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GREEN PAPER, DR HO NOTED THAT THE BASIC LAW, WHICH WOULD PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR HONG KONG'S POLITICAL STRUCTURE AFTER 1997, WOULD BE PROMULGATED IN 1990.

"IT WILL SPECIFY, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE FORM OR FORMS OF ELECTION AND WILL THUS HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FORMATION AND COMPOSITION OF THE LEGISLATURE," HE NOTED.

UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, HE SAID HE WAS INCLINED TO REGARD THE TWO-AND-A-HALF YEARS LEADING TO 1990 AS AN INTERIM PERIOD.

"DURING THIS SHORT RUN-UP, I PREFER TO SEE ONLY MINOR, INCREMENTAL CHANGES AT MOST TO OUR GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE, IN ORDER TO LEAVE THE PRESENT INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS LEAST DISTURBED, WHICH ARE INSTRUMENTAL IN ACHIEVING SOCIAL STABILITY AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY," HE SAID.

DR HO ADDED THAT IF REFORMS WERE INTRODUCED HURRIEDLY AND RECKLESSLY AND WERE FOUND SHORTLY AFTERWARDS TO BE INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE BASIC LAW, THERE WAS NO OTHER VIABLE ALTERNATIVE BUT TO HAVE THEM WITHDRAWN OR REVERSED IMMEDIATELY.

"IN CASE OF THIS EVENTUALITY, OUR ECONOMY WILL INVARIABLY SUFFER FROM TREMENDOUS DISRUPTIONS AND OUR CONFIDENCE IN OUR POLITICAL FUTURE WILL LIKewise BE INFLECTED WITH LASTING DAMAGE," HE SAID.

HOWEVER, DR HO BELIEVED THAT A FRANK, RATIONAL AND DISPASSIONATE EXPRESSION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT OF DIRECT ELECTION IN THE DEBATE AND OTHER FORUMS WOULD EFFECTIVELY SERVE THE PURPOSE OF DRAWING THE ATTENTION OF THE LOCAL AND THE CHINESE MEMBERS OF THE BASIC LAW CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE AND THE BASIC LAW DRAFTING COMMITTEE TO THE PREFERENCE AND ASPIRATION FERVENTLY CHERISHED IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM AFTER 1997.

HE ALSO REMINDED PROPONENTS OF DIRECT ELECTION THAT DIRECT ELECTION MUST NOT BE SEEN AS AN END IN ITSELF. IN ORDER FOR THE SPIRIT AND THE EFFECT OF DIRECT ELECTION TO REALISE, A GREAT MAJORITY OF THE POPULACE MUST HAVE ATTAINED A HIGH LEVEL OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND MATURITY, DR HO ADDED.

/HE SAID

HE SAID THAT IN A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM, IT WAS UP TO THE GENERAL ELECTORATE TO MONITOR WHETHER THEIR CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS WERE SAFEGUARDED AS PROMISED, WHETHER JUSTICE AND EQUITY WERE DONE, AND WHETHER THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES HAD HONOURED THEIR ELECTION PLEDGES.

"BY REFERENCE TO THE RECENT EXPERIENCES OF THE ELECTIONS TO DISTRICT BOARDS AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILS, I AM OF THE VIEW THAT THE GENERAL LEVEL OF POLITICAL MATURITY AND SOPHISTICATION ON THE PART OF THE ELECTORATE DOES NOT MATCH THE DEMAND MADE ON THEM BY A GOVERNMENT SYSTEM BASED ON DIRECT ELECTIONS. CIVIC EDUCATION HAS A VITAL ROLE TO PLAY IN THIS RESPECT," HE SAID.

IN OTHER WORDS, THE AVERAGE MAN AND WOMAN IN THE STREET MUST NOT ONLY HAVE THE POLITICAL WILL, BUT ALSO THE KNOW-NOW TO ASSESS, CENSURE, PROD AND IMPEACH THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN RESPECT OF THEIR PERFORMANCE AND CONDUCT.

DR HO WENT ON TO SAY THAT IN COUNTRIES WHERE DIRECT ELECTION BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE WAS PRACTISED, POLITICAL PARTIES WERE A SPONTANEOUS FEATURE. THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT COULD NOT COUNTENANCE PARTY POLITICS IN HONG KONG AND THAT IT MIGHT ACTIVATE THE COMMUNIST ELEMENTS INTO A PARTY SHOULD POLITICAL PARTIES EMERGE HERE.

THE IMPLICATION OF AN ACTIVE, POWERFUL COMMUNIST PARTY IN HONG KONG'S DIRECTLY ELECTED LEGISLATURE WERE FAR-REACHING, DR HO NOTED.

DR HO SAID PARTY POLITICS WAS ADVERSARIAL AND CONFRONTATIONAL IN CHARACTER. THE IMMEDIATE TASK OF THOSE PARTIES NOT IN POWER WAS TO TOPPLE THE GOVERNMENT. THEY WOULD FIND FAULT WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES, HARASS THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' BEHAVIOUR, DISCREDIT GOVERNMENT'S DECISIONS AND SHATTER THE PUBLIC'S CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT.

THE END RESULT WAS A SUCCESSION OF CHANGES OF GOVERNMENTS, RESULTING IN A LACK OF CONTINUITY OF POLICY. EVIDENCE OF THIS UNSTABLE GOVERNMENT WAS ABUNDANT IN COUNTRIES PLAGUED BY A PLURALTY OF POLITICAL PARTIES.

ON THE OTHER HAND, WHERE DIRECT ELECTION WAS PRACTISED WITHOUT THE ACCOMPANIMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES, A DIFFERENT SCENARIO WHICH WAS ALSO UNDERSIRABLE, MIGHT LIKELY EMERGE. THERE WAS A HIGH PROBABILITY THAT THE LEGISLATURE WAS COMPOSED OF MEMBERS REPRESENTING ONLY A LIMITED NUMBER OF PROFESSIONS AND SECTORS.

"THIS LOBSIDED PHENOMENON WAS VIVIDLY BORNE OUT BY THE ELECTION OUTCOME OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND DISTRICT BOARDS. THIS STATE OF LOBSIDED REPRESENTATION WILL LIKELY BE EXACERBATED BY THE SMALL NUMBER OF SEATS IN THE LEGISLATURE EARMARKED FOR DIRECTLY ELECTED MEMBERS," HE SAID.

"IN THE INTEREST OF BALANCED DEVELOPMENT, A LEGISLATURE SHOULD BE FILLED BY AS WIDE A SPECTRUM OF OCCUPATIONAL, GEOGRAPHICAL AND SECTORAL INTERESTS AS POSSIBLE. THIS EXPLAINS THE CALLS FOR THE NUMBER OF FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES TO BE INCREASED," HE SAID.

TURNING TO THE PRESIDENCY OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, DR HO SAID HE DID NOT SUBSCRIBE TO THE THINKING THAT THE GOVERNOR OF HONG KONG SHOULD NOT SIMULTANEOUSLY SERVE AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE NOTED THAT CONSTITUTIONALLY, THE GOVERNOR WAS THE SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATIVE OF THE QUEEN'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER HONG KONG AND EXERCISED THE POWERS OF THE ROYAL PREROGATIVE.

THIS MEANS THAT HIS POWERS AS GOVERNOR WERE COMPREHENSIVE AND INCLUSIVE OF HIS POWERS AS PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. EVEN IF HE APPOINTED SOME OTHER PERSON TO PRESIDE ON HIS BEHALF, THE GOVERNOR WOULD CONTINUE, BY VIRTUE OF THE LETTERS PATENT AND THE ROYAL INSTRUCTIONS, TO RETAIN THE POWERS THAT ENABLED HIM TO CONTROL THE BUSINESS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE GOVERNOR COULD EXERCISE CERTAIN POWERS WHICH THE PRESIDENT WAS NOT ENTITLED TO: INCLUDING TO ASSENT TO, OR WITHHOLD HIS ASSENT FROM, LEGISLATION PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL; DETERMINE WHETHER A SITTING BE HELD OUTSIDE THE NORMAL SESSION; AND DISSOLVE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

"UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT THEREFORE SERVES NO USEFUL PURPOSE TO REPLACE THE PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BY ANOTHER PERSON," HE SAID.

MOREOVER, WHILE THE BASIC LAW WAS BEING PROMULGATED DURING THIS INTERIM PERIOD, THERE WAS NO KNOWLEDGE AS TO THE RELATIONSHIP AND THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNOR (OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE) IN THE FUTURE HKSAR LEGISLATURE.

"THEREFORE, IN THE INTEREST OF CONVERGENCE, I PREFER THE OPTION TO MAKE NO FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE TO THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNOR AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, BUT ALLOWS HIM THE DISCRETION TO APPOINT SOME ONE TO PRESIDE IN HIS ABSENCE FOR SPECIFIC SITTINGS OR PART OF A SITTING," DR HO SAID.

FINALLY, DR HO URGED THE PUBLIC TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS TO THE SURVEY OFFICE.

"IN HIS/HER DELIBERATIONS, I EARNESTLY URGE THAT HE/SHE MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT THE POLITICAL REFORMS REFERRED TO IN 1988 SHOULD BE VIEWED AS INTERIM MEASURES, WHILE AWAITING THE PROMULGATION OF THE BASIC LAW," HE SAID.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 21 -

THREE GUIDELINES FOR POLITICAL REVIEW

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THERE ARE THREE GUIDELINES WHICH HONG KONG HAS TO OBSERVE IN THE 1987 REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, THE HON F.K. HU SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING ON THE MOTION ON THE GREEN PAPER, MR HU SAID FIRSTLY, ANY CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES MUST BE UNDERTAKEN WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION.

"SECONDLY, THE RESULTANT CHANGES FROM THE CURRENT REVIEW HAVE TO CONVERGE WITH THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT MODEL TO BE STIPULATED IN THE BASIC LAW, WHICH IS STILL BEING DRAFTED.

"THIRDLY, IN THE COURSE OF CHANGES, THE GOVERNMENT HAS TO ENSURE THAT HONG KONG'S PROSPERITY AND STABILITY WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED."

MR HU RECALLED THAT IN THE DEBATE ON THE WHITE PAPER ON THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT ON JANUARY 9, 1985 HE HAD CALLED FOR A CAUTIOUS APPROACH.

"I REPEAT THE CALL TODAY WITH A STRONGER CONVICTION," HE SAID.

HE SAID THE 1985 REVIEW HAD INTRODUCED ELECTED MEMBERS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THROUGH THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE AND FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES.

"THE NEW SYSTEM STILL HAS NOT SETTLED IN AND WE WOULD NEED MORE TIME TO ASSESS THE EFFECTS OF THESE CHANGES WHICH WERE MADE ONLY TWO YEARS AGO.

"BEFORE THERE IS CLEAR EVIDENCE TO CONVINCING US OF THE NEED FOR ANY CHANGE, WE MUST NOT COMMIT OURSELVES TO FURTHER CHANGES JUST FOR THE SAKE OF CHANGE AND RISK DISTURBING OUR PRESENT SYSTEM UNNECESSARILY." HE STRESSED.

MR HU THEN SPOKE ON THE OPTIONS IN THE 1987 GREEN PAPER AND BEGAN WITH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

"IN PRINCIPLE I SUPPORT A DIRECTLY ELECTED ELEMENT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. I BELIEVE DIRECT ELECTIONS SHOULD BE INTRODUCED IN DUE COURSE AND THEREFORE THE PROBLEM HERE IS ONE OF TIMING," HE SAID.

"AS I HAVE MENTIONED, THE CURRENT POLITICAL REVIEW HAS TO BE CONDUCTED UNDER CERTAIN GUIDELINES, AND CONVERGENCE WITH THE BASIC LAW IS CLEARLY ONE.

/"THE HONG KONG

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 22 -

"THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE TERRITORY BEFORE 1997. BUT 10 YEARS LATER THE POWER OF HONG KONG'S SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION GOVERNMENT WILL NOT BE BASED ON THE ROYAL INSTRUCTION OR THE LETTER'S PATENT, BUT THE BASIC LAW INSTEAD.

"THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG HAVE BEEN ASSURED TIME AND AGAIN THAT BOTH THE BASIC LAW AND THE CURRENT POLITICAL REVIEW WILL BE BASED ON THE SAME PUBLIC OPINIONS IN HONG KONG. I AGREE THAT IN REGARD TO THE ISSUE OF DIRECT ELECTIONS, THERE WILL NOT BE MUCH DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE OUTCOMES OF THE TWO EXERCISES."

BUT HE SAID THIS POSSIBILITY SHOULD NOT BE USED AS AN EXCUSE TO PREEMPT THE OUTCOME OF BASIC LAW BY INTRODUCING DIRECT ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR.

"IT IS BECAUSE DESPITE OUR CONFIDENCE THAT WE WILL HAVE A FUTURE LEGISLATURE WITH A DIRECTLY ELECTED ELEMENT IN IT, THERE IS NO WAY OF TELLING THE DETAILS INVOLVED. IF WE INTRODUCE DIRECT ELECTION IN 1988, WE WILL BE FORCING IT ON THE BASIC LAW WHICH IS STILL IN THE DRAFTING STAGE.

"THE CONSEQUENCE OF SUCH BLATANT DISREGARD FOR OUR FUTURE CONSTITUTION CANNOT BE FATHOMED AT THE MOMENT. BUT ONE THING IS SURE, IT WILL NOT BE IN ANYWAY BENEFICIAL TO HONG KONG'S PROSPERITY AND STABILITY.

"HAVING SAID THAT, I STILL BELIEVE DIRECT ELECTIONS TO A PROPORTION OF SEATS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SHOULD BE INTRODUCED IN A LATER YEAR," MR HU ADDED.

HE SAID IN HIS VIEW, A MORE APPROPRIATE TIMING MIGHT BE IN THE YEARS 1991 TO 1992 WHEN THE BASIC LAW WOULD HAVE BEEN PROMULGATED, GIVEN IT WOULD HAVE A PROVISION FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS.

"FUTURE DIRECT ELECTIONS, AS I PERCEIVE IT, SHOULD REPLACE THE EXISTING SYSTEM OF ELECTORAL COLLEGE. AND I WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS COULD BE CARRIED OUT IN TWO STAGES.

"IN THE FIRST STAGE, NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES WILL HAVE TO BE MADE BY MEMBERS OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS, URBAN COUNCIL OR THE REGIONAL COUNCIL TO ENSURE THAT THE QUALITY OF CANDIDATES HAVE REACHED A CERTAIN STANDARD.

"AT THE SECOND STAGE THERE CAN BE DIRECT NOMINATIONS FROM THE DISTRICTS TO ENSURE THAT ANYONE WHO INTENDS TO STAND FOR ELECTION WILL HAVE A FAIR CHANCE OF DOING SO."

ON THE NUMBER OF OFFICIAL MEMBERS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR HU SAID HE ENTIRELY AGREED WITH THE OBSERVATION STATED IN THE GREEN PAPER.

/MANY COLLEAGUES

"MANY COLLEAGUES HAVE SHARED THE FRUSTRATION OF HAVING OUR QUESTIONS UNSATISFACTORILY ANSWERED SINCE THE OFFICIALS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ISSUES CONCERNED ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL," HE SAID.

"IF WE FURTHER REDUCE THE NUMBER OF OFFICIAL MEMBERS, THE EFFICIENCY OF THIS COUNCIL'S OPERATION WILL INEVITABLY BE AFFECTED. I WOULD SUPPORT THE OPTION THAT THE EXISTING NUMBER OF OFFICIAL MEMBERS BE UPHELD."

IN REGARD TO APPOINTED MEMBERS, MR HU SAID THE SYSTEM HAD CONTRIBUTED VERY MUCH TO THE STABILITY AND CONTINUITY OF THE COUNCIL'S OPERATION.

"HOWEVER, AS THE GREEN PAPER HAS ALSO POINTED OUT, SUCH A SYSTEM WILL HAVE TO BE ABOLISHED EVENTUALLY. TO PREPARE FOR ITS FINAL ABOLITION, A LIMITED REDUCTION OF THE APPOINTED SEATS WILL BE DESIRABLE AT THIS STAGE."

MR HU SAID THE SEATS VACATED BY THE REDUCTION OF APPOINTED MEMBERS COULD GO TO AN EXPANDED FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES SYSTEM.

"ELECTIONS THROUGH THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES HAVE BEEN PROVED SUITABLE FOR HONG KONG'S SITUATION. ITS MERITS HAVE BOTH BEEN ACKNOWLEDGED IN THE GREEN PAPER AND WIDELY ACCEPTED BY THE PUBLIC."

"I SUPPORT OPTION (III) IN PARAGRAPH 88 THAT THE NUMBER OF SEATS ALLOCATED TO FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES SHOULD BE REASONABLY INCREASED FOR A NUMBER OF NEW CATEGORIES NEXT YEAR. BUT WHICH NEW CATEGORIES SHOULD BE CREATED HAVE TO BE DECIDED AFTER FURTHER PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS," HE SAID.

ON ELECTORAL COLLEGE, MR HU SAID MORE CAUTION WAS REQUIRED IN PLANNING FOR ITS FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.

"THE SYSTEM, INTRODUCED ONLY TWO YEARS AGO, HAS LED TO POLITICAL BICKERING WITHIN THE DISTRICT BOARDS. CHANGES WILL NOT BE PREFERABLE NEXT YEAR SINCE WE SHOULD GIVE MORE TIME TO TRY OUT THIS SYSTEM BEFORE DECIDING ON THE NEXT MOVE."

MR HU SAID HE FOUND THE IDEA OF A NEW BROADLY-BASED ELECTORAL COLLEGE TO ELECT A PROPORTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE MOST APPEALING SINCE IT WOULD BE ABLE TO SUBSTITUTE THE FUNCTION OF THE APPOINTED MEMBERS SYSTEM.

"I ENVISAGE THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF SUCH A NEW ELECTORAL COLLEGE COMPRISING A WIDE RANGE OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM ALL SECTORS AND STRATA OF THE COMMUNITY, CAN ELECT THE APPROPRIATE TALENTS TO MEET PREVAILING NEEDS AND THUS ACHIEVE A BALANCING EFFECT AS APPOINTED MEMBERS USED TO DO."

ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE GOVERNOR SHOULD REMAIN PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID HE DID NOT SEE ANY URGENCY IN MAKING CHANGES AND IT WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE TO LEAVE THE EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS INTACT AT THIS STAGE.

AS REGARDS THE THREE-TIER SYSTEM, MR HU SAID THE KEY WORD FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF HONG KONG WAS EFFICIENCY. "I HAD OBJECTED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SEPARATE REGIONAL COUNCIL ALONGSIDE THE URBAN COUNCIL TO TAKE CARE OF MUNICIPAL SERVICES IN THE RURAL AREAS. I STILL THINK THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL IS REDUNDANT AND IS A WRONG DECISION," HE SAID.

"HOWEVER, WE CANNOT PUT THE CLOCK BACK AT THIS STAGE. MY VIEW IS THAT WE SHOULD LEAVE THE EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS AS THEY ARE WITH AS LITTLE CHANGE AS POSSIBLE BEFORE 1997.

FURTHERMORE, TWO ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN THE PRESENT THREE-TIER SYSTEM, THE DISTRICT BOARDS AND THE REGIONAL COUNCIL WERE ONLY ESTABLISHED IN RECENT YEARS. THE FIRST DISTRICT BOARD ELECTION WAS HELD IN 1982 WHILE THE REGIONAL COUNCIL ONLY FORMALLY CAME INTO BEING LAST YEAR.

"WE SHOULD ALLOW MORE TIME FOR THE COMMUNITY TO FIND OUT HOW THIS SYSTEM WORKS AND REASSESS THE DIFFERENT ROLES CONCERNED.

"HOWEVER, I WOULD SUPPORT SOME FINE-TUNING OF THE SYSTEM. FOR INSTANCE, WE NEED TO STREAMLINE THE OPERATION AND IMPROVE THE COMMUNICATION AMONG THE THREE LEVELS."

MR HU SAID HE SUPPORTED THE PROPOSAL TO GIVE DISTRICT BOARDS A ROLE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF CERTAIN DISTRICT FACILITIES AS THIS WOULD PROVIDE THEM VERY USEFUL TRAINING IN DISTRICT MANAGEMENT.

"IN THE LONG RUN, WE WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER MERGING THE EXISTING THREE-TIER SYSTEM INTO A TWO-TIER ONE. HONG KONG IS SO SMALL THAT IT DOES NOT REALLY REQUIRE A COMPLICATED SYSTEM OF MANAGEMENT," HE SAID.

"ONE OF THE FUTURE TWO TIERS SHOULD BE DISTRICT-ORIENTED WHILE THE OTHER SHOULD OF COURSE BE AT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL."

HE SAID THE LAYER-IN-BETWEEN, THE PRESENT URBAN COUNCIL AND REGIONAL COUNCIL, COULD BE FADED OUT AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME.

"BUT ALL THESE CHANGES SHOULD ONLY TAKE PLACE AFTER 1997 WHEN HONG KONG HAS SETTLED IN ITS NEW MODEL OF ADMINISTRATION."

ON THE CURRENT SURVEY EXERCISE IN REGARD TO THE GREEN PAPER, MR HU SAID HE HAD CANVASSED A WIDE RANGE OF PEOPLE ABOUT THE GREEN PAPER AND HAD THE DISTINCT FEELING THAT THERE WAS A GENERAL IGNORANCE ABOUT ITS CONTENTS.

- 25 -

"BEFORE THE PUBLIC CAN HAVE A FULL GRASP OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE OPTIONS THRUSTED UPON THEM, IT WOULD BE VERY RISKY INDEED IF WE JUST ASK THEM TO SAY EITHER 'YES' OR 'NO' TO THE OPTIONS CONCERNED," HE SAID.

"HOW TO ENSURE THAT THE OUTCOME OF THE SURVEY WILL TRULY REFLECT THE PUBLIC'S WISH IS THE JOB OF THE SURVEY OFFICE. BUT I WANT TO MAKE A POINT HERE THAT IF THE SURVEY IS BASED ON UNINFORMED AND IMMATURE OPINIONS, THE FINDINGS MAY BE VERY MISLEADING."

MR HU SAID IN THE LONG RUN, A STRENGTHENED CIVIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME MIGHT HELP PROMOTE THE PUBLIC'S INTEREST IN AND UNDERSTANDING OF POLITICAL ISSUES.

"BUT AS LITTLE CAN BE DONE AT THE MOMENT CONCERNING THE SURVEY ON THE GREEN PAPER, HONG KONG SHOULD ONLY TAKE A CAUTIOUS APPROACH AT THIS STAGE," HE ADDED.

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CONTENTS OF GREEN PAPER BASED ON JOINT DECLARATION

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IT IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE TO POINT OUT THAT THE CONTENTS OF THE GREEN PAPER ARE BASED ON THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION SIGNED BY THE TWO GOVERNMENTS, THE HON K.C. CHAN, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

SPEAKING ON THE MOTION ON THE GREEN PAPER, MR CHAN SAID THOSE WHO TRIED TO MISINTERPRET ITS CONTENTS WERE TALKING NONSENSE OR RUBBISH.

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE BASIC LAW WAS NOT YET A LAW AND MIGHT NOT EVEN BE CALLED A BILL.

"HONG KONG IS EVOLVING AND DEVELOPING EVERY DAY IN ALL RESPECTS, WHAT BASIC LAW ARE WE GOING TO CONVERGE TO?" HE ASKED.

"AS THE BASIC LAW IS ONLY ONE PART OF THE JOINT DECLARATION AND CANNOT EXCEED IT, WE ONLY NOW TAKE THE WORDS CONTAINED IN THE JOINT DECLARATION FOR CONVERGENCE," MR CHAN SAID.

HE SAID THE JOINT DECLARATION SAID, INTER ALIA, THAT THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION (SAR) SHOULD BE VESTED WITH EXECUTIVE, LEGISLATIVE AND INDEPENDENT JUDICIAL POWER, INCLUDING THAT OF FINAL ADJUDICATION.

/"NOW WE

- 26 -

"NOW WE ALREADY HAVE INDEPENDENT JUDICIAL POWER BUT JUST CONVERGE TO THE FINAL ADJUDICATION.

"NOW WE HAVE A LEGISLATURE WITH LEGISLATIVE POWER AND WE JUST HAVE TO CONVERGE TO CONSTITUTION BY ELECTION.

"NOW WE HAVE AN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND THE EXECUTIVE AUTHORITIES BOTH ABIDE BY THE LAW AND WE SHALL CONVERGE INTO THE EXECUTIVE AUTHORITIES WHICH SHALL BE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE LEGISLATURE."

MR CHAN SAID THE JOINT DECLARATION ALSO STATED THAT THE SOCIALIST SYSTEM AND SOCIALIST POLICIES SHOULD NOT BE PRACTISED IN THE SAR AND THAT HONG KONG'S PREVIOUS CAPITALIST SYSTEM AND LIFE-STYLE SHOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED FOR 50 YEARS AFTER 1997.

"AS WE ARE PRACTISING THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM AND THE CAPITALIST WAY OF ELECTION IS THEREFORE IN ORDER," HE SAID.

"TO THOSE WHO SAID THAT HONG KONG IS NOT A STATE AND CANNOT HAVE DIRECT ELECTION, I JUST FAIL TO SEE WHAT AUTHORITATIVE REFERENCE THEY MAY QUOTE FROM.

"IN THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM, DIRECT ELECTION MAY BE USED TO VOTE MAYORS, GOVERNORS OR HEADS OF STATE INTO OFFICE."

MR CHAN SAID THE ESSENCE OF A DEMOCRATIC ELECTION WAS FREEDOM OF CHOICE. "IT PROVIDES EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL THOSE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE AS VOTERS AND AS CANDIDATES.

"THERE IS NO FAIRER SYSTEM THAN UNIVERSAL FRANCHISE AND DIRECT ELECTION. DIRECT ELECTIONS ARE USED IN MANY POWERFUL AND PROSPEROUS COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES," HE SAID.

"I CONSIDER THAT THE TIME IS RIPE TO HAVE DIRECT ELECTION. IT IS NOW OR NEVER.

"THERE SHOULD BE ONE SEAT EACH FROM THE URBAN COUNCIL, THE REGIONAL COUNCIL AND THE 19 DISTRICT BOARDS IN 1988. WITHOUT INCREASING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF SEATS IN THE LEGISLATURE, SOME SEATS MAY BE CREATED BY REDUCING NUMBER OF APPOINTED AND FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY MEMBERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO OCCUPY SEATS IN EXCO AND LEGCO."

ON APPOINTED MEMBERS IN LEGCO, MR CHAN SAID: "WE ARE HERE TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY AND TO HAND OVER OUR EXPERIENCE TO THE ELECTED MEMBERS AND WHEN THE TIME IS RIPE, WE JUST BOW AND LEAVE WITH A SMILE ON OUR FACE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT.

"FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT AGREE, I SHALL REFER THEM TO SHAKESPEARE'S JULIUS CAESAR 'THE EVIL THAT MEN DO LIVES AFTER THEM, THE GOOD IS OFT INTERRED WITH THEIR BONES' SO LET IT BE WITH THE APPOINTED MEMBERS," HE ADDED.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 27 -

DIRECT ELECTION NOT PANACEA

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DIRECT ELECTION MUST NOT BE REGARDED AS THE PANACEA TO ALLAY FEARS ABOUT POSSIBLE INTERFERENCE FROM CHINA AFTER 1997, THE HON STEPHEN CHEONG, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING ON THE MOTION ON THE GREEN PAPER, MR CHEONG SAID BECAUSE "IT SIMPLY CANNOT REALISTICALLY PROVIDE MUCH RELIEF IF AND WHEN THE SOVEREIGN STATE DECIDED TO ACT IRRATIONALLY OR IRRESPONSIBLY."

"WE NEED ALSO TO GUARD OURSELVES AGAINST FALLING INTO AN EMOTIONAL TRAP OF SIMPLY AGREEING TO DIRECT ELECTIONS IN 1988 BECAUSE WE NEED TO SHOW SOME COLOURS TO CHINA," HE SAID.

"SUCH ACTIONS WOULD NOT BE PRODUCTIVE TOWARDS MAINTAINING STABILITY AND PROSPERITY IN HONG KONG.

"IN FACT, THE DIVISIVE ATMOSPHERE ALREADY CREATED IN HONG KONG OVER THIS ISSUE WOULD TEND TO ERECT MORE OBSTACLES TO THE CRUCIAL NEED OF DEVELOPING BETTER UNDERSTANDING AMONGST THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG. IT CERTAINLY HAS NOT HELPED IN PROMOTING A BETTER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN CHINA AND HONG KONG."

MR CHEONG POINTED OUT THAT POLITICAL CHANGE MUST FOLLOW POPULAR POLITICAL AWARENESS AND NOT PUSHING FOR CHANGE FOR THE SAKE OF CHANGE, OR FOR THE SAKE OF IDEALS OR FOR THE NOTION OF DEMOCRACY AGAINST COMMUNISM.

"IT IS A FACT THAT HONG KONG IS STILL AT A STAGE WHERE CIVIC EDUCATION IS JUST THE BEGINNING," HE SAID.

"COMPARED WITH POPULAR DEMOCRACIES OF EUROPE OR AMERICA, THE POLITICAL AWARENESS OF HONG KONG IS BARELY AWAKENING FOR THERE IS STILL WIDESPREAD APATHY WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY ON POLITICAL ISSUES."

HE SAID A RECENT SURVEY REPORTED FAIRLY WIDELY IN THE MEDIA CONFIRMED THIS REALITY.

THE SURVEY WAS CO-SPONSORED BY A DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER AND UNDERTAKEN IN A HOUSING ESTATE WHICH HOUSED OVER 19,000 PEOPLE; IT FOUND THAT OF THE 3,500 QUESTIONNAIRES SENT OUT, ONLY 52 RESPONDED, AND OF THE OVER 250 PEOPLE APPROACHED FOR STREET INTERVIEWS, ONLY 45 BOTHERED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS.

"OUT OF THE 45 WHO RESPONDED TO QUESTIONS, 36 PEOPLE EITHER DID NOT KNOW ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF THE GREEN PAPER OR THEY HAD NOT READ IT. ALSO, THEY DID NOT KNOW HOW THE PRESENT LEGCO IS BEING CONSTITUTED.

/"WHEN ASKED

"WHEN ASKED IF THEY WOULD TAKE PART IN THE VOTING IF DIRECT ELECTIONS WERE INTRODUCED IN 1988, 39 PEOPLE REPLIED THAT THEY WILL NOT VOTE."

UNDER SUCH A CLIMATE OF GENERAL POLITICAL APATHY, MR CHEONG SAID: "SHOULD WE NOT ASK OURSELVES WHETHER OR NOT IT IS ADVISABLE TO DRAW VERY FIRM CONCLUSIONS RIGHT NOW?"

"IS THE OPINION CLAMOURING FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS IN 1988 REALLY THAT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE WISHES OF THE HONG KONG PEOPLE AT LARGE?"

MR CHEONG ALSO POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG'S RETURN TO CHINESE SOVEREIGNTY WAS ANOTHER FACT.

"THE FACT WILL NOT BE ALTERED BY SUDDENLY THROWING THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS OPEN," HE SAID. "THAT FACT WILL NOT BE ALTERED NO MATTER HOW SOME OF US WOULD SINCERELY HARBOUR DISTRUSTS ON CHINA'S INTENTIONS OR HER ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT THE CONCEPT OF ONE-COUNTRY-TWO-SYSTEMS."

"WE SHOULD WORK TO EFFECT THE CHANGE OF SOVEREIGNTY WITH MINIMAL DISRUPTION TO WHAT WE PRESENTLY ENJOY. THERE IS NO POINT TO PRETENDING THAT THE 1980'S AND THE 90'S ARE AN INDEPENDENT, ISOLATED ERA IN THE HISTORY OF HONG KONG.

"THERE IS NO POINT TO SPREADING THAT FALSE ILLUSION. IT IS UNREALISTIC TO PRETEND THAT THE BASIC LAW IS NOT DIRECTLY RELEVANT TO THE PRESENT DEBATE OVER POLITICAL REFORMS."

"THIS IS A TRANSITION PERIOD, AND ANY CHANGE THAT WE MAKE, EVERY ACTION THAT WE TAKE, MUST BE DONE WITH THE AIM OF TRYING TO MAKE 1997 A NON-EVENT.

"THE ACTUAL DATE OF HANDING BACK SOVEREIGNTY TO CHINA SHOULD BE VIEWED LIKE ANY OTHER DAY IN HONG KONG, WITH PEOPLE GOING ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS OF WORKING, PLAYING, STUDYING, AND STRIVING," HE SAID.

MR CHEONG SAID HE WOULD HOPE THAT THE GOALS OF THIS SOCIETY WERE THE SAME GOALS REPEATED AGAIN AND AGAIN BY LEADERS IN BRITAIN, CHINA, AND HONG KONG, AND THE SAME GOALS WHICH ECHOED ENDLESSLY IN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF THE ORDINARY CITIZENS OF HONG KONG.

"THOSE GOALS ARE FOR STABILITY AND PROSPERITY, NOW, IN 1997, AND FAR INTO THE FUTURE." THE FUTURE OF THIS TERRITORY IS CONTAINED IN THOSE TWO WORDS. WE NEED STABILITY SO THAT OUR PEOPLE CAN HAVE PROSPERITY. WE NEED PROSPERITY SO OUR PEOPLE CAN CONTINUE TO DO THAT WHICH HAS MADE THIS CITY GREAT: STRIVE FOR EVER BETTER LIVING STANDARDS FOR THEMSELVES, THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR DESCENDANTS.

/"IT IS

"IT IS ON THESE BASIC PREMISES THAT THE BUILDING OF OUR FUTURE POLITICAL STRUCTURE MUST BE BASED. WE MUST HAVE FAITH IN THE GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SERVICE STRUCTURE THAT HAS BROUGHT SUCH GOOD RESULTS TO HONG KONG OVER THE YEARS. WE NEED TO MAINTAIN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH MORALE AND EFFICIENCY OF OPERATION.

"FOR THE BEST WAY OF MINIMISING EFFECTIVELY POSSIBLE INTERFERENCE FROM CHINA IN FUTURE LIES IN HOW WELL WE CAN PERFORM IN ACHIEVING THE TWIN GOALS OF STABILITY AND PROSPERITY," HE SAID.

"IN MY VIEW KEEPING THE PRESENT CIVIL SERVICE STRUCTURE AND EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATION IS THE KEY FOR WITHOUT THE PRESENT CIVIL SERVICE STRUCTURE HONG KONG CANNOT BE WHAT WE ARE TODAY AND WITHOUT THEM HONG KONG WILL CERTAINLY BE WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO BE IN FUTURE. THEREFORE NO SYSTEM SHOULD BE DEVELOPED IF IT WILL HAVE A DAMAGING EFFECT ON THE AUTHORITY AND EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATION."

HE SAID: "IN THE PROGRESSIVE SOCIETY THAT WE HOPE TO LIVE IN HONG KONG I RECOGNISE WE MUST HAVE A BALANCE REPRESENTATION WITHIN THE LEGISLATURE AND IT IS IN THE PRINCIPLE OF PROVIDING BALANCE IN THE LEGISLATURE THAT I PROPOSE WE SHOULD CONSIDER SERIOUSLY HAVING AN ELEMENT OF DIRECT ELECTION, SAY 25 PER CENT MAXIMUM, IN FUTURE.

"THIS ELEMENT SHOULD REPLACE A PRESENT GEOGRAPHICALLY BASED ELECTORAL COLLEGE SYSTEM. HOWEVER, THE TIMING OF DIRECT ELECTIONS SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN 1992. TO INTRODUCE THESE EARLIER WOULD NOT PROVIDE ENOUGH TIME FOR HONG KONG TO PREPARE FOR SUCH A CHANGE IN THE QUEST OF SEEKING MORE BALANCED RESULTS.

"FURTHERMORE HOLDING DIRECT ELECTIONS IN 1992 WOULD ALLOW HONG KONG MORE TIME FOR SUFFICIENT, DEVELOPED, AND DETAILED PREPARATION FOR COMMON SUFFRAGE.

"HONG KONG HAS NEVER HAD DIRECT ELECTIONS FOR ITS LEGISLATURE - ELECTIONS OF ANY KIND, IN FACT, ARE A VERY RECENT DEVELOPMENT. YET HAVING INTELLIGENT, EFFECTIVE DIRECT ELECTIONS REQUIRES AN ADVANCED STAGE OF CIVIC EDUCATION. BOTH VOTERS AND CANDIDATES MUST BE POLITICALLY MATURE.

"RELATIVE TO THE LONG TERM FUTURE WE ALL HAVE TO FACE FOUR YEARS IS VERY SHORT INDEED. IS IT THEREFORE TOO MUCH TO ASK FOR JUST A SHORT PERIOD TO PREPARE OURSELVES BETTER FOR OUR PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR FUTURE?"

MR CHEONG SAID ONE NEED NOT LOOK FAR FOR COUNTRIES WHICH PREMATURELY WENT FOR THE CONCEPT OF WESTERN DEMOCRACY. "THEIR ECONOMIES DEVELOPED INTO CHAOS BECAUSE THEY WERE THRUST TOO SOON INTO THE POLITICAL STORM."

/"ECONOMIC CHAOS,

"ECONOMIC CHAOS, OF COURSE, IS THE LAST THING THAT HONG KONG SHOULD EVER HAVE, FOR IT CERTAINLY WILL MEAN UNREST WITHIN THE SOCIETY. OUR PROSPERITY DEPENDS ON STABILITY; OUR FREEDOM DEPENDS ON OUR HAVING AN ORDERED SOCIETY.

"WE MUST PRESERVE THE BEST OF WHAT HONG KONG PRESENTLY OFFERS ITS CITIZENS - FREEDOM, OPPORTUNITY, CHALLENGE, AND AN EFFICIENT, ECONOMICAL, AND REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.

"THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT CALLS FOR RADICAL CHANGE SOUND IMPRESSIVE. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT SAYING 'NOW' IS MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN SAYING 'LATER'.

"BUT HONG KONG DOES NOT NEED SUPERFICIALLY ATTRACTIVE OPTIONS. HONG KONG DOES NEED OPTIONS WHICH ARE WELL THOUGHT OUT, CONSIDERED, AND GRADUAL. IT NEEDS OPTIONS WHICH ARE PRAGMATIC YET PROGRESSIVE."

MOVING TO OTHER AREAS COVERED BY THE GREEN PAPER, MR CHEONG SAID HE HAD RESERVATIONS TO THOSE OPTIONS THAT WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF CHANGING THE ADVISORY ROLE OF DISTRICT BOARDS.

"HONG KONG THRIVES ON THE ABILITY OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH BEING ABLE TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT POLICIES WITHOUT TOO MUCH INTERFERENCE FROM POLITICAL INFLUENCES."

HE SAID IF THE ADVISORY ROLE OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS WERE CHANGED TO HAVING SOME EXECUTIVE FUNCTION, IT WOULD BE A FUNDAMENTAL DEPARTURE FROM HONG KONG'S FORMULA OF SUCCESS AND THIS WOULD HAVE INEVITABLE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON BOTH THE MORALE AND THE EFFICIENCY OF THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS.

"PERHAPS IT MAY BE TIMELY TO POINT OUT THAT A SIZEABLE MAJORITY OF THOSE HON COLLEAGUES PRESENT IN OUR IN-HOUSE MEETING WHEN WE PRELIMINARY EXAMINED AND EXCHANGED VIEWS ON THE GREEN PAPER WERE ALSO OF THE OPINION THAT THE ROLE OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS SHOULD NOT BE CHANGED."

MR CHEONG ALSO SUPPORTED THE OPTION THAT THE PRESIDENCY OF THE LEGCO SHOULD, IN 1988, STILL BE THE GOVERNOR AND THAT IT WAS ONLY FITTING THAT THE GOVERNOR MUST HAVE THE OPTION OF APPOINTING OTHER PERSONS TO ASSUME THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIR IF THE NEED AROSE.

HE ALSO SAID IT WAS A FACT THAT THERE WERE DEFICIENCIES IN CERTAIN PRACTICAL ASPECTS IN RELATION TO THE ELECTION EXPERIENCE WE HAD IN 1985. "THEREFORE I AM INCLINED TO SUPPORT THE PREFERENTIAL ELIMINATION SYSTEM FOR OUR FUTURE ELECTIONS."

"ONE WORD OF CAUTION HOWEVER IS THAT SUCH A SYSTEM WILL FALL APART UNLESS THERE ARE RULES TO STIPULATE THAT EVERY VOTING PAPER MUST BE MARKED WITH ALL THE PREFERENCES OR ELSE SUCH A VOTE WOULD NOT BE COUNTED.

/"ALSO, IN

"ALSO, IN RELATION TO THE AMOUNT OF ELECTION EXPENSES ALLOWED, THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD LOOK SERIOUSLY AND SYMPATHETICALLY TO HON SZETO WAH'S SUGGESTION WHICH I HAVE PLEASURE IN SUPPORTING. LAST BUT NOT LEAST, I SUPPORT THE IDEA OF A FOUR YEAR TERM."

MR CHEONG APPEALED TO THE SILENT MAJORITY OF HONG KONG TO SPEAK OUT AND SPELL OUT THEIR TRUE WISHES. "PLEASE DO NOT FORSAKE OUR FUTURE BY DEFAULT," HE SAID.

"IF AT THE END OF THIS EXERCISE, THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG CLEARLY AND CONSCIENTIOUSLY INDICATES WHICH ROUTE OUR DEVELOPMENT SHOULD EMBARK UPON, I FOR ONE WOULD SEE IT MY DUTY TO ABIDE BY SUCH WISHES AND WOULD FURTHER UNDERTAKE TO WORK WITH THE BEST OF MY ABILITY FOR THE LONG TERM FUTURE OF HONG KONG, A PLACE I DEARLY LOVE AND TREASURE."

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DIRECT ELECTION WITH LEAST DISRUPTION PROPOSED

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HONG KONG WILL RISK THE LEAST DISRUPTION IF THE EXISTING POPULIST BASED REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE DISTRICT BOARDS ARE EXPECTED BY DIRECT ELECTION IN 1988 WITH NO CHANGE IN ABSOLUTE NUMBER OR PROPORTION, THE HON MRS SELINA CHOW, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING ON THE MOTION ON THE GREEN PAPER, MRS CHOW SAID, HOWEVER, THAT IN ORDER TO AVOID UNNECESSARY CONFLICTS THERE MUST BE NO DUPLICATION OF POPULIST ELECTIONS.

"DIRECTLY ELECTED MEMBERS SHOULD REPLACE THOSE PRESENTLY ELECTED FROM THE DISTRICT BOARDS.

"BUT IN ORDER TO RETAIN THE SUCCESSFUL LINK BETWEEN THE DB'S AND LEGCO, NOMINATION, SHOULD REST WITH THE DB'S. IN THE ABSENCE OF PARTY POLITICS, THE DBS CAN SERVE AS EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE TRAINING GROUND FOR BUDDING POLITICANS."

MRS CHOW SAID SECONDLY, THERE MUST BE SUFFICIENT SAFEGUARD AGAINST THE ABUSE OF PUBLIC RESOURCES BY POLITICAL HOPEFULS.

"IT HAS BEEN COMMENTED OFTEN IN THE LAST FEW ELECTIONS THAT EMPLOYEES IN SUBVENTED SOCIAL SERVICES HAVE HAD UNFAIR ADVANTAGE OVER OTHER CANDIDATES IN THE RUNNING OF CAMPAIGNS BY MOBILISING PUBLIC RESOURCES FOR COURTING VOTES.

/"AFTER SEATS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 32 -

"AFTER SEATS ARE WON, SUCH ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES COULD NOT DEVOTE THE TIME THEIR ORIGINAL JOBS REQUIRE OF THEM, AND WHILE THEY WOULD STILL RECEIVE THE SAME PAY FOR THE WORK THEY ARE NOT ABLE TO DO, THEIR SENIORS WOULD HAVE TO FIND OTHER FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO PAY FOR THEIR SUBSTITUTES.

"IN THE END, THE TAXPAYERS HAVE TO PAY MORE. THIS IS AN ISSUE THAT GOVERNMENT MUST ADDRESS FAIRLY AND METICULOUSLY."

MRS CHOW SAID IT WOULD BE MISLEADING TO ADVOCATE DIRECT ELECTIONS AS THE BASIS FOR A WESTERN STYLE DEMOCRACY HERE.

"ELSEWHERE, WHERE PARTY POLITICS IN EFFECT AIMS TO CONTROL AND INFLUENCE THE CHOICE OF THE VOTING PUBLIC IN ELECTIONS, THE FINAL GOAL FOR THE PARTIES IS TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, AND WHEN ONE PARTY SUCCEEDS TO DO THIS, IT IS THE BUSINESS OF THE OPPOSITION TO UNDERMINE AND EVENTUALLY DISPLACE THE RULING PARTY.

"IN SUCH A SITUATION, THE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES FALL INTO TWO CATEGORIES, THOSE IN THE ADMINISTRATION, AND THOSE OUTSIDE OF GOVERNMENT, AND THEIR BEHAVIOUR IS LOGICALLY DICTATED BY THEIR RELATIVE POSITIONS."

IN HONG KONG, SHE SAID, THERE WAS NO PARTY POLITICS AS SUCH. ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES HERE WERE NOT BOUND BY PARTY PLATFORM AND DISCIPLINE, AND THEY WERE HELD TO THEIR INDIVIDUAL CONSTITUENCIES BY COMMON INTERESTS ARISING FROM COMMON GEOGRAPHICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS OR PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUNDS.

"BETWEEN THEM THERE IS NO COMMON GROUND EXCEPT WHAT MAY DEVELOP FROM TIME TO TIME IN RELATION TO ISSUES, PARTICULARLY CONTROVERSIAL AND SENSATIONAL ONES THAT NO ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE CAN AFFORD TO BE LEFT OUT IN ORDER THAT THEY ARE SEEN TO BE SERVING THEIR CONSTITUENCIES.

"ARE WE NOT THEN UNNECESSARILY PAYING THE PRICE OF CONFRONTATIONARY POLITICS WITHOUT THE REMOTEST POSSIBILITY OF REAPING THE BENEFITS? ARE WE NOT GIVING TO OUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES RIGHTS WITHOUT RESPONSIBILITIES? ARE WE AS A COMMUNITY LIKELY TO SACRIFICE THE PRAGMATIC JUDGMENT OF WHAT IS IN OUR OVERALL INTEREST FOR WHAT IS POPULAR TO THE MORE VOCAL SECTORS, AND CAN WE AFFORD THE PRICE?"

MRS CHOW SAID NO DOUBT SOME WOULD SAY THAT WITH THE ADVENT OF THE S.A.R. GOVERNMENT, AND WITH THE PROMISE OF AUTONOMY, THERE MUST BE CHANNELS OF PARTICIPATION FOR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES THERE TO PUT THE PUBLIC VIEWS FORWARD AND TO INFLUENCE DECISIONS.

"IN OTHER WORDS, THEY ARE THERE TO SERVE AS CHECKS AND BALANCES TO THE SYSTEM, AND TO ENSURE OPENNESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE PUBLIC.

/ "I AGREE,

"I AGREE, BUT I FAIL TO SEE HOW DIRECTLY ELECTED MEMBERS CAN DO ANY BETTER THAN WHAT OUR INDIRECTLY ELECTED MEMBERS HAVE BEEN DOING IN THE LAST TWO YEARS.

"IN FACT, I SEE THE RISK OF DIRECTLY ELECTED MEMBERS PLAYING THEIR ROLE AS THE PERMANENT OPPOSITION, DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO UNDERMINE THE CREDIBILITY AND GOOD WILL OF THE GOVERNMENT.

"IN MY VIEW, THEREFORE, THERE IS NO NEED FOR DIRECT ELECTION TO ACHIEVE A BETTER HONG KONG. BUT THAT IS NOT TO SAY THAT I DO NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THAT A LARGE PROPORTION OF OUR PEOPLE WANT IT.

"NO ONE, WHEN ASKED WHETHER HE WANTS POLITICAL RIGHTS, WOULD DENY HIMSELF THAT. AND I COULD WELL UNDERSTAND THE ACUTENESS OF THIS NEED AS A FORM OF ASSURANCE OF FREEDOM WITH THE APPROACH OF 1997 AND THE FORMATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT.

"WITH THAT IN MIND, AND HAVING BEEN ASSURED OF ACCEPTANCE OF SOME DEGREE OF DIRECT ELECTION IN 1997 BY OUR CONSERVATIVE SECTOR AS WELL AS CHINA, I AM PREPARED TO ACCEPT A SMALL PROPORTION OF DIRECTLY ELECTED MEMBERS IF HONG KONG SO WISHES IT.

"I DO NOT BELIEVE THERE IS ANY JUSTIFICATIONS IN DELAYING THE INTRODUCTION, IF HONG KONG PREFERS CHANGES TO BE GRADUAL. THE MORE WE DELAY THE BIGGER WILL EACH STEP BE.

MRS CHOW SAID EARLIER IN HER SPEECH THAT HONG KONG WAS EXPERIENCING THE BIGGEST POLITICAL CONTROVERSY IN ITS HISTORY.

"HOW WE RESOLVE IT WILL PROVE HOW DEMOCRATIC WE TRULY ARE. HOW WE ARE ALLOWED TO RESOLVE IT WILL PROVE HOW TRULY AUTONOMOUS WE ARE, AND HOW FREE OF INTERFERENCE WE MAY BE FROM CHINA AND BRITAIN.

"AND IF HONG KONG CHOOSES TO ABANDON ITS OWN SAY IN THE MATTER, WE CAN BLAME NO ONE BUT OURSELVES IF WE SUFFER FOR THE CONSEQUENCES."

SHE SAID THE 1987 REVIEW HAD BEEN PROMISED AS A REVIEW OF THE EXPERIENCE GAINED FROM THE 1984 WHITE PAPER.

"BUT APART FROM LOOKING BACK, WE MUST BE CONSCIOUS OF PARAMETERS FOR THE FUTURE WHICH WERE LAID DOWN AND AGREED BY THE TWO SOVEREIGN POWERS IN THE JOINT DECLARATION AS THE PRINCIPLES THAT UNDERLIE THE S.A.R. GOVERNMENT IN 1997.

"SO LONG AS THE REVIEW RECOGNISES AND ADHERES TO THESE TERMS OF REFERENCE, IT SHOULD BE FREE TO DISCUSS AND EXAMINE VIEWS ON ALL OPTIONS INCLUDED IN THE GREEN PAPER.

"AND IT WOULD ONLY BE REGARDED AS A GENUINE REVIEW IF THE RESULTS BY-AND-LARGE REFLECTS THE WISHES OF OUR PEOPLE, INCLUDING THOSE OF THE SILENT MAJORITY.

/MRS CHOW

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 34 -

MRS CHOW SAID NEXT TO STABILITY AND PROSPERITY, THE WORD CONVERGENCE HAD BEEN MOUTHED MOST OFTEN IN LAST FEW MONTHS, INITIALLY WHEN MR TIMOTHY RENTON VISITED HONG KONG, BUT MORE SO SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF THE GREEN PAPER.

"IT HAS BEEN STRESSED, FAR TOO OFTEN IN MY VIEW, HOW THE DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONVERGE WITH THE BASIC LAW, WITHOUT IT BEING EQUALLY STRESSED THAT CONVERGENCE TAKES TWO SIDES, THAT THE BASIC LAW IS BY NO MEANS FINALISED AND THEREFORE COULD BE FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO TAKE IN THE CURRENT POSITION OF OUR REFORMS, BUT MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, THAT CONVERGENCE COMES NATURALLY IF OUR REFORMS AND THE BASIC LAW BOTH ABIDE BY THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION AND THE WISHES OF OUR PEOPLE.

"IT IS TOTALLY INCONCEIVABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE THAT CERTAIN OPTIONS IN THE GREEN PAPER SHOULD BE OFF LIMITS JUST BECAUSE THE BASIC LAW DRAFTING COMMITTEE HAS NOT MADE UP ITS MIND. THAT ARGUMENT COULD ONLY BE INTERPRETED AS INTERFERENCE THROUGH THE BASIC LAW INTO THE PRE-1997 AFFAIRS OF HONG KONG," SHE SAID.

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INTRODUCTION OF DIRECT ELECTION NEXT YEAR PREMATURE

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DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT INTRODUCING DIRECT ELECTION IN 1988 WAS AS PREMATURE AS PRESCRIBING A NEW DRUG FOR A YET UNDIAGNOSED ILLNESS.

SHE ADDED THAT PREOCCUPATION WITH DIRECT ELECTION ALONE WAS LIKE TREATING AN ILLNESS WITH A SINGLE DRUG AND FORGETTING THAT A COMPREHENSIVE CURE REQUIRED A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH.

"WHENEVER THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE, A WELL TRIED DRUG IS ALWAYS SAFER," SHE SAID.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE MOTION ON THE GREEN PAPER, DR IP SAID SHE HAD MORE FAITH IN INDIRECT ELECTIONS.

SHE SAID SHE HAD THE GREATEST ADMIRATION AND RESPECT FOR THOSE INDIRECTLY ELECTED MEMBERS FROM THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES AND ELECTORAL COLLEGES IN THE WAY THEY HAD FAITHFULLY REPRESENTED AND FOUGHT FOR THE INTERESTS OF THEIR ELECTORATES.

FURTHERMORE, THEY HAD BROUGHT HUMOUR AND NEW IDEAS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, SHE ADDED.

/ "AS THE

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 35 -

"AS THE PUBLIC CAN SEE, WE HAVE LIVELY DEBATES WHICH CONCLUDES WITH MOST MEMBERS RECOGNISING THAT THE MAJORITY RULES," SHE NOTED.

DR IP POINTED OUT THAT REPRESENTATIVENESS WAS ONLY ONE OF MANY IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

"A BALANCE MUST ALSO BE SORT FOR ABILITY, EXPERTISE, CONSTRUCTIVE CONTRIBUTION, TRACK RECORD, RESPECT FROM ONE'S PEERS, AND CONTINUOUS FEEDBACK AND ANSWERABILITY TO A WORKABLE NUMBER OF PEOPLE," SHE SAID.

DR IP SAID SHE WOULD ONLY CONSIDER SUPPORTING DIRECT ELECTIONS UNDER THREE PROVISOS.

FIRSTLY, IT SHOULD PRODUCE ONLY A SMALL PROPORTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS, SECONDLY, IT SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED AFTER 1988 IF THIS WAS ALSO THE DIRECTION OF THE BASIC LAW, AND THIRDLY, CANDIDATES WERE NOMINATED FOR ELECTION BY A DEFINITIVE BODY WHICH COULD ASSESS THE QUALITIES OF THE CANDIDATE.

DR IP SAID SHE SAW THE 1988 ELECTIONS TO BE A PHASE OF CONSOLIDATION AND FINE TUNING OF THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES AND ELECTORAL COLLEGES WHILE PERHAPS PREPARING THE GROUNDS FOR DIRECT ELECTION TO COME.

SHE SAID HER STANCE NOW REMAINED THE SAME IN ITS ENTIRETY AS WHEN SHE SPOKE IN THE 1985 DEBATE ON REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.

IN 1985, SHE SPOKE ON STREAMLINING AND FINE TUNING OF THE VARIOUS ELECTIONS, INCREASING THE NUMBER OF LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS TO BETWEEN 60 TO 70 IN NUMBER AS A FINAL OBJECTIVE, INCREASING THE NUMBER OF FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES AND ELECTORATE COLLEGES IN THE EXPENSE OF THE APPOINTED MEMBERS, KEEPING THE NUMBER OF OFFICIAL MEMBERS, AND CREATING FOUR YEAR LEGISLATIVE TERMS.

SHE HAD ALSO POINTED OUT THE NEED TO STANDARDIZE THE METHOD OF ELECTION FROM FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES AND TO INCLUDE PROFESSIONS SUCH AS THE ACCOUNTANTS, DENTISTS AND PARAMEDICAL PROFESSION.

FINALLY, SHE SAID STAGGERING ELECTIONS HAD ITS ADVANTAGES OF CONTINUITY, BUT SUCH ADVANTAGES WOULD BE OFFSET BY THE MAGNIMOSITY OF THE WORK IF DONE ANY SHORTER THAN TWO YEARS APART.

THE URBAN COUNCIL ELECTIONS SHOULD BE MADE MORE LIKE THAT OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL; AND THAT THE GOVERNOR SHOULD REMAIN AS PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, UNTIL THE MAJOR CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COUNCIL HAD STABILISED SHORTLY PRIOR TO 1997, SHE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 36 -

CHINA SHOULD HAVE FAITH IN HK PEOPLE

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THE HON MRS RITA FAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT CHINESE OFFICIALS SHOULD HAVE FAITH IN HONG KONG PEOPLE'S KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITY AND AVOID MAKING COMMENTS WHICH MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS ACTS OF INTERVENTION.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE MOTION ON THE GREEN PAPER, MRS FAN SAID MUTUAL TRUST BETWEEN THE PEOPLE IN CHINA AND THOSE IN HONG KONG WAS THE BASIS OF A HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIP IN FUTURE.

SHE SAID THAT WHEN CONSIDERING THE VARIOUS OPTIONS IN THE GREEN PAPER, SHE ADHERED FIRMLY TO THREE PRINCIPLES. FIRST, ECONOMIC FACTORS PLAYED A LEADING ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HONG KONG. SECOND, POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE GRADUAL AND STEP BY STEP. THIRD, OVERLAPPING REPRESENTATION SHOULD BE KEPT TO A MINIMUM, SHE ADDED.

TURNING TO DIRECT ELECTIONS, SHE SAID THE INTRODUCTION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS WAS A LOGICAL STEP TO PROCEED GIVEN THE EXPERIENCE ACQUIRED FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF INDIRECT ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN 1985.

THIS WOULD PROVIDE EVERY CITIZEN WITH A RIGHT TO VOTE AND ENABLE THE PUBLIC TO ELECT MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WHICH WAS PART OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE.

"THIS WILL ENHANCE THE PEOPLE'S SENSE OF BELONGING AND HELP TO ENSURE MORE PUBLIC SUPPORT ON GOVERNMENT POLICIES," SHE SAID.

THEREFORE, SHE BELIEVED DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON A 'ONE MAN ONE VOTE' BASIS COULD BE INTRODUCED IN 1988. MEMBERS SO ELECTED SHOULD CONSTITUTE 15 PER CENT TO 18 PER CENT OF THE WHOLE COUNCIL. AS TO WHETHER THERE WAS A PROBLEM OF CONVERGENCE WITH THE BASIC LAW, SHE DID NOT THINK THERE WOULD BE ANY PROBLEM.

REGARDING THE TWO OPTIONS RELATED TO DIRECT ELECTIONS MENTIONED IN PARAGRAPH 107 OF THE GREEN PAPER, SHE SAID THE INTRODUCTION OF A DIRECTLY ELECTED ELEMENT IN ADDITION TO THE EXISTING CATEGORIES OF MEMBERS WOULD POSSIBLY RESULT IN OVERLAPPING REPRESENTATION BETWEEN MEMBERS RETURNED FROM GEOGRAPHICAL ELECTORAL COLLEGES AND THOSE RETURNED FROM DIRECT ELECTIONS.

"THE SUGGESTION TO REPLACE MEMBERS RETURNED FROM GEOGRAPHICAL ELECTORAL COLLEGES BY DIRECTLY ELECTED MEMBERS IS ACCEPTABLE," SHE SAID.

/HOWEVER, ITS

HOWEVER, ITS IMPLEMENTATION MIGHT CUT OFF THE EXISTING LINKAGE BETWEEN DISTRICT BOARDS AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL UNLESS DISTRICT BOARDS WERE INVOLVED IN THE NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES STANDING FOR LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS, THAT WAS, CANDIDATES MUST BE NOMINATED BY A FIXED NUMBER OF DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS.

THE PROCESS OF DISTRICT BOARD NOMINATION SHOULD HELP TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF CANDIDATES, TO CONTROL THEIR NUMBER AND TO ENHANCE THE CANDIDATES' IMAGE AS WELL AS THE CONFIDENCE OF VOTERS, SHE SAID.

ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE VOTING AGE SHOULD BE LOWERED FROM 21 TO 18, MRS FAN NOTED THAT THOSE IN FAVOUR OF LOWERING THE VOTING AGE MAINTAINED THAT SINCE THE LAW REFORM COMMISSION HAD RECOMMENDED TO LOWER THE AGE OF MAJORITY TO 18 WHICH MEANT THAT YOUNGSTERS WHO HAD REACHED THAT AGE COULD ENTER INTO CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS OR OBTAIN A LOAN FROM OTHERS, IT WOULD BE ILLOGICAL TO DEPRIVE THEM OF THE RIGHT TO VOTE.

IF THE AGE OF MAJORITY WAS FIXED AT 18, THERE DID NOT SEEM TO BE A STRONG CASE FOR NOT ALLOWING PERSONS AGED 18 TO VOTE OR TO STAND FOR ELECTIONS, SHE SAID.

NONETHELESS, SHE SAID THERE WERE TWO KINDS OF CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH SHE WOULD OBJECT TO LOWERING THE VOTING AGE IN 1988. FIRST, THE AGE OF ENTITLEMENT TO VOTE SHOULD NOT BE LOWERED BEFORE THE AGE OF MAJORITY WAS LOWERED TO 18.

SECOND, IF DIRECT ELECTIONS WERE TO BE INTRODUCED IN 1988, WHICH WOULD BRING ABOUT A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN HONG KONG'S SYSTEM, OTHER CHANGES SUCH AS THE LOWERING OF VOTING AGE SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED AT A LATER STAGE IN LINE WITH THE SPIRIT OF PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT.

ON FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY ELECTIONS, MRS FAN SAID THAT JUDGING FROM THE EXPERIENCE GAINED OVER THE PAST 20 MONTHS OR SO, THIS ARRANGEMENT HAD PROVED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN ENABLING THE VIEWPOINT OF VARIOUS TRADES AND PROFESSIONS TO BE DULY REFLECTED IN THIS COUNCIL, THUS CONTRIBUTING TO THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS.

SHE THEREFORE FELT THAT THE NUMBER OF FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES COULD BE INCREASED SLIGHTLY WHILST AT THE SAME TIME, THE SCOPE OF SOME EXISTING FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES COULD BE FURTHER EXTENDED.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE ACCOUNTING PROFESSION AND THE TOURIST INDUSTRY WHICH HAD BOTH CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO THE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY OF HONG KONG SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR INCLUSION AS NEW FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES.

ON THE OTHER HAND, SINCE CITY DEVELOPMENT COULD NOT BE SEPARATED FROM THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, PERHAPS PROFESSIONALS SUCH AS ARCHITECTS, LAND SURVEYORS, ETC. WHO WERE CLOSELY RELATED TO THE CONSTRUCTION AND PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT TRADES SHOULD ALSO BE CATEGORISED AS A NEW FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY.

"HOWEVER, SINCE IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY WILL OVERLAP WITH THE ENGINEERS CONSTITUTENCY, FURTHER THOUGHTS SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE WAY IN WHICH VOTERS ARE TO BE ALLOCATED BETWEEN THE TWO FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES," SHE SAID.

SHE ADDED THAT IF THE NUMBER OF SEATS IN THE EDUCATION CONSTITUENCY WAS TO BE INCREASED IN FUTURE, PRIORITY CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO ALLOWING EACH SCHOOL/EDUCATION INSTITUTION TO BE GIVEN A VOTE AND SELECT A MEMBER TO REPRESENT THE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES OF VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN ORDER TO REFLECT THEIR VIEWS AND TO FORMALLY RECOGNISE THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION IN HONG KONG.

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LEGCO SEAT FOR ACCOUNTANTS URGED

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THE HON PETER POON TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ADVOCATED THE INCLUSION OF ACCOUNTANTS AS A NEW FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY.

SPEAKING ON THE MOTION ON THE GREEN PAPER, MR POON SAID THE ACCOUNTANCY PROFESSION FULFILLED ALL THE CRITERIA OR GUIDELINES FOR NEW FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES LISTED IN THE GREEN PAPER.

"THE NON-INCLUSION OF ACCOUNTANTS AS A FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY IN 1985 WAS A GLARING OMISSION WHICH SHOULD BE REMEDIED," HE ADDED.

HE NOTED THAT HONG KONG WAS ONE OF THE LARGEST FINANCIAL CENTRES AND THAT DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS ECONOMY, ACCOUNTANTS HAD MADE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY.

THE HONG KONG SOCIETY OF ACCOUNTANTS HAD A MEMBERSHIP OF OVER 3,000 AND OVER 10,000 STUDENTS, AND THAT ITS MEMBERS SERVED IN PUBLIC PRACTICE, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID.

MR POON POINTED OUT THAT SINCE 1985, MEMBERS REPRESENTING FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES HAD MADE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. THEREFORE, HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE CREATION OF SOME NEW CONSTITUENCIES.

/HE ALSO

HE ALSO SUPPORTED THE RETENTION OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS, THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

"UNTIL A BETTER OR MORE SUITABLE CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM CAN BE DEvised, THERE SEEMS TO BE NO REAL NECESSITY TO MAKE CHANGES IN THIS REGARD," HE SAID.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE PRESENT ROLE OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS SHOULD BE MAINTAINED BUT IT SHOULD BE ENSURED THAT THEIR ADVICE WAS ACCEPTED WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND ACTED UPON PROMPTLY.

HE ADDED THAT THE PRESENT PROPORTION OF APPOINTED AND ELECTED MEMBERS SEEMED TO WORK WELL AND DID NOT WARRANT ANY CHANGE.

AS REGARDS THE COMPOSITION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR POON SAID HE WAS IN FAVOUR OF SOME REDUCTION OF THE NUMBER OF APPOINTED MEMBERS.

IN ADDITION, HE SAID HE SUPPORTED THE OPTION PROPOSING THAT THE GOVERNOR SHOULD BE ABLE TO APPOINT SOME OTHER PERSON TO PRESIDE IN HIS ABSENCE FOR SPECIAL SITTINGS OR PARTS OF SITTINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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CALL FOR EXPANSION OF FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES

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DR THE HON KIM CHAM TODAY (WEDNESDAY) CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO EXPAND THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES TO INCLUDE OTHER SECTORS IN THE LEGISLATURE.

ON DIRECT ELECTIONS, DR CHAM SHARED THE VIEWS OF MANY BUSINESSMEN WHO PREFERRED A SLOWER PACE OF CHANGE.

HOWEVER, IF THE GENERAL CONCENSUS WAS THAT DIRECT ELECTIONS SHOULD BE INTRODUCED IN 1997, IT WAS LOGICAL TO START WITH ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF DIRECTLY ELECTED SEATS IN 1988. "THIS WILL HELP US TO GAIN EXPERIENCE FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS," HE SAID.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GREEN PAPER, DR CHAM SUGGESTED THAT THE ACCOUNTING PROFESSION SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES WHILE THE FINANCIAL CONSTITUENCY SHOULD GET A SECOND SEAT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE SAID THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ACCOUNTING PROFESSION TO THE HONG KONG ECONOMY WAS BEYOND DOUBT. ACCOUNTANTS NOT ONLY SERVED AS INDEPENDENT AUDITORS TO SAFEGUARD THE INTEREST OF SHAREHOLDERS IN HONG KONG'S FREE ENTERPRISE ECONOMY BUT ALSO SERVE DIRECTLY IN MANAGERIAL POSITIONS IN BUSINESS.

/"IT IS

"IT IS TIME THAT AN INDISPENSABLE SECTOR OF OUR ECONOMY SHOULD BE RECOGNISED BY CREATING A FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY IN ACCOUNTING," DR CHAM SAID.

TURNING TO THE FINANCIAL CONSTITUENCY, DR CHAM NOTED THAT AT PRESENT IT HAD ONLY ONE SEAT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

"UNDOUBTEDLY, HONG KONG IS THE THIRD LARGEST FINANCIAL CENTRE IN THE WORLD AND IT IS NOT THE BANKS ALONE WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO OUR SIZE AND IMPORTANCE," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT HONG KONG'S STOCK MARKET WAS THE SECOND LARGEST IN ASIA. THE LOCAL STOCK INDEX FUTURES MARKET AND THE GOLD MARKET BOTH RANKED AS THE THIRD LARGEST MARKETS IN THE WORLD.

FURTHERMORE, THE FINANCIAL SECTOR WAS ONE WHICH BOOSTED A HIGH RETURN TO THE LABOUR INPUT REPRESENTING HIGHER WAGES TO ITS EMPLOYEES. THE NEED FOR VENTURE CAPITAL HAD BEEN POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED WITH THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY AND DIVERSIFICATION FOR OUR MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY.

HE SAID HONG KONG MUST RECOGNISE THE HARD WORK WHICH THE ORGANISERS OF FINANCIAL MARKETS HAD PUT IN TO NURTURE ITS MARKETS, TO INTERNATIONALISE THESE MARKETS AND TO BUILD UP THE CONFIDENCE THE WORLD HAD IN HONG KONG. HONG KONG MUST ALSO REALISE THE SPEED AND PACE OF DEVELOPMENT IN THIS SECTOR WHICH HONG KONG WOULD HAVE TO MEET IN FACE OF KEEN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION.

"FOR OUR LEGISLATIVE PROCESS, WE NEED THOSE WHO ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE IN THE TRADE, WITHOUT WHOM THIS WILL RESULT IN THE BLIND LEADING THE SOPHISTICATED," HE SAID.

HE URGED THAT SERIOUS CONSIDERATIONS BE GIVEN TO CREATE A SECOND SEAT FOR THE FINANCIAL CONSTITUENCY CONSISTING OF MEMBERS OF THE STOCK EXCHANGE OF HONG KONG, MEMBERS OF THE CHINESE GOLD AND SILVER SOCIETY AND MEMBERS OF THE HONG KONG FUTURES EXCHANGE.

"THIS WILL GIVE THE NECESSARY LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT FOR OUR FINANCIAL MARKETS AND IN TUNE WITH OUR EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN HONG KONG AS ONE OF THE THREE LEADING FINANCIAL CENTRES OF THE WORLD," HE SAID.

TURNING TO THE DISTRICT BOARD SYSTEM, HE NOTED THAT SOME DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS CONSIDERED THAT THEIR ADVICE WAS NOT ACTED UPON BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY WOULD WISH. HE SAID THIS WAS UNDERSTANDABLE AS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR ADVICE MAY INVOLVE COMPLICATED CO-ORDINATION OF DIFFERENT GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

HE SAID THE PROPOSAL TO ELECT A REPRESENTATIVE FROM EACH URBAN DISTRICT BOARD TO THE URBAN COUNCIL MAY NOT BE AN EFFECTIVE SOLUTION TO THE FRUSTRATION WHICH THE DISTRICT BOARDS HAD. IN HIS OPINION, IT WAS MORE IMPORTANT FOR THE DISTRICT BOARD TO BE REPRESENTED IN THE DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.

/HE SAID

HE SAID THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DISTRICT BOARD, TOGETHER WITH THE CHAIRMEN OF THE VARIOUS DISTRICT BOARD COMMITTEES, SHOULD JOIN THE DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FIRST AS MEMBERS. LATER ON, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DISTRICT BOARD SHOULD TAKE OVER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE TO ENSURE THAT WORK WAS CARRIED OUT AND PROBLEMS SOLVED IN LINE WITH THE WISHES OF THE DISTRICT BOARD CONCERNED.

"SUCH MANAGERIAL PARTICIPATION IS VITAL TO THE HARMONIOUS FUNCTIONING OF THE DISTRICT BOARD, THE URBAN COUNCIL AND THE VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS," HE SAID.

REFERRING TO THE REPEATED BALLOT SYSTEM IN ELECTORAL COLLEGE ELECTIONS, DR CHAM SAID HE FELT THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR A CANDIDATE TO RECEIVE MAJORITY SUPPORT IN HIS CONSTITUENCY.

HE NOTED THAT TWO CRITICISMS OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM HAD BEEN ADVANCED IN THE GREEN PAPER. THE FIRST WAS THE TIME TAKEN FOR VOTING AMONG SEVERAL CANDIDATES AND THE SECOND WAS THE DISCERN OF VOTER IDENTITY.

TO OVERCOME THE LENGTH OF TIME TAKEN TO SECURE A RESULT AND IN PARTICULAR TO AVOID FIVE BALLOTS IN SEVEN HOURS, HE SUGGESTED THAT CANDIDATES WHO RECEIVED LESS THAN 15 PER CENT OF THE VOTES IN THE PRELIMINARY ROUND OF VOTING SHOULD BE ELIMINATED. AFTER THE PRELIMINARY BALLOT, IF THERE WERE MORE THAN THREE CANDIDATES REMAINING, ONLY THE LEADING THREE CANDIDATES WOULD PROCEED TO A SECOND ROUND. HENCE A TOTAL OF THREE ROUNDS OF VOTING WOULD BE NECESSARY.

ON THE DISCERN OF VOTER IDENTITY, THAT WAS WHETHER CANDIDATES WOULD KNOW WHO VOTED FOR WHOM, DR CHAM SAID THE ELECTORS IN AN ELECTORAL COLLEGE MUST ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CHOOSING THE BEST CANDIDATE WITHOUT FEELING EMBARRASSED IN AN ELECTION. THERE MUST BE A WINNER AND A LOSER. EVERYONE MUST WORK TOGETHER AFTER A FAIR ELECTION AND SENTIMENTS DURING AN ELECTION MUST BE SET ASIDE. WE MUST ALL ACCEPT THIS.

HE ALSO SAID THAT FEW WOULD DISAGREE THAT THE EXPECTATION OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG IS FOR CONTINUED ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY. AS SUCH, HONG KONG NEEDED A GOOD GOVERNMENT RATHER THAN A HIGH SOUNDING GOVERNMENT.

"TO PRESERVE THE INCENTIVE AND ENTERPRISE QUALITIES OF OUR SOCIETY, WE MUST HAVE LEADERS WHO MAKE SENSE AND NOT JUST NEWS.

"INDEED, FUTURE LEADERS OF HONG KONG SHOULD BE DOERS RATHER THAN DREAMERS, FOR THE PRAGMATISTS WILL ACHIEVE RESULTS WHILE DREAMERS WHO CONCENTRATE ON WINNING POWER WILL GIVE US ONLY FANTASIES," HE SAID.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 42 -

FURTHER MAJOR CHANGES TO PRESENT SYSTEM DUBIOUS

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THE HON CHENG HON-KWAN TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT HE FELT EXTREMELY DUBIOUS ABOUT THE WISDOM OF EMBARKING ON FURTHER MAJOR CHANGES TO THE SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT NOW.

SPEAKING DURING THE MOTION ON THE GREEN PAPER, MR CHENG SAID HE WAS OPPOSED TO MAKING MAJOR CHANGES TO A SYSTEM WHICH HAD NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY TESTED.

"HAVE WE ADEQUATELY TESTED THE STRUCTURES OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT WHICH HAVE ONLY BEEN IN USE FOR TWO YEARS?" HE QUESTIONED.

HE SAID TWO YEARS WAS AN ABNORMALLY SHORT TESTING TIME IN THIS FIELD.

"I AM AWARE OF THE PRESSURES ON US TO TRY TO GET AN AGREED, VIABLE AND ENDURING SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IN PLACE AND IN OPERATION TOWARDS 1997.

"BUT IF WE WERE TO APPLY NORMAL TIME STANDARDS TO THE STRUCTURES WE ARE NOW USING, FOLLOWING THE MAJOR INNOVATIONS IMPLEMENTED IN 1985, I BELIEVE WE WOULD STILL REGARD THEM AS BEING IN THE 'SHAKEDOWN' PHASE," HE NOTED.

MR CHENG ADDED THAT HE WAS CAUTIOUS ABOUT STARTING MAJOR CHANGES TO THE PRESENT SYSTEM BECAUSE OF THREE OTHER FACTORS.

FIRSTLY, WHILE NO POLITICAL SYSTEM MIGHT BE FUNCTIONING PERFECTLY, HE WAS NEVERTHELESS CONSCIOUS OF THE BEST FEATURES OF OUR FRAMEWORK WHICH HAD BROUGHT A SUCCESSFULLY DEVELOPED COMMUNITY WITH PROSPERITY AND STABILITY.

SECONDLY, IMMEDIATE RADICAL CHANGE WOULD NOT BE CONSISTENT WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION WHICH PLACED GREAT STRESS, EXPLICITLY AND IMPLICITLY, ON CONTINUITY AND A STEP-BY-STEP EVOLUTION OF OUR STRUCTURES.

THIRDLY, AND MOST IMPORTANT, HE BELIEVED THAT IF SUBSTANTIAL OR SWEEPING INNOVATIONS WERE INTRODUCED SOON SUCH A MOVE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE INTERPRETED AS PRE-EMPTING THE PROCESS OF DRAFTING THE BASIC LAW FOR HONG KONG -- A PROCESS WHICH WOULD NOT BE COMPLETED UNTIL 1990.

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR, MR CHENG SAID THIS WOULD BE A MAJOR INNOVATION.

"THE ISSUE, AS I SEE IT, IS WHETHER IN INTRODUCING THIS ELEMENT WE WOULD BE PUTTING THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS AT RISK," HE SAID.

/HE SAID

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 43 -

HE SAID TIMING WAS ALL-IMPORTANT AND THAT IN PRINCIPLE, HE WAS NOT AGAINST DIRECT ELECTION WHICH HE BELIEVED WOULD EVENTUALLY FORM PART OF THE ELECTION SYSTEM IN THE LEGISLATURE.

"BUT DIRECT ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR WOULD NOT BE A NATURAL EVOLUTIONARY PROGRESSION," HE NOTED.

HE SAID: "FOR ONE THING, WE SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWING OURSELVES ANYTHING LIKE ENOUGH TIME TO WORK OUT THE ELECTORAL DETAILS.

"FOR ANOTHER, TIME WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE FOR INTENSIFYING THE PROCESS OF CIVIC EDUCATION -- A PROCESS WHICH I BELIEVE IS AN ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITE TO DIRECT ELECTIONS."

HE SAID HONG KONG PEOPLE REALLY MUST MAKE UP THEIR MINDS ABOUT HOW SERIOUSLY THEY REGARDED THE BUSINESS OF HARMONISING THEIR POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS WITH THE SYSTEM THAT WOULD BE PROPOSED IN THE BASIC LAW.

"SURELY IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE GO ALL-OUT TO ACHIEVE HARMONISATION, OR CONVERGENCE," HE NOTED.

MR CHENG FOUND THE WORDS "CONVERGENCE" AND "EVOLUTION" PRACTICALLY INTERCHANGEABLE IN SUCH CONTEXT.

"IF YOU IMPERIL CONVERGENCE, THEN YOU'RE ENDANGERING THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS, AND VICE VERSA," HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT FOUR PROFESSIONAL GROUPS IN THE ENGINEERS AND ASSOCIATED PROFESSIONS CONSTITUENCY HAD BEEN SEEKING THE VIEWS FROM THEIR MEMBERS ON THE GREEN PAPER.

SO FAR, TWO GROUPS OF SURVEY HAD BEEN COMPLETED BY THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF SURVEYORS AND A CONCERNED GROUP ON 1987 POLITICAL REVIEW, SHOWING THAT 39 PER CENT AND 60 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY OF THOSE RESPONDED SUPPORTED DIRECT ELECTIONS IN 1988.

MR CHENG SAID THE VIEWS ON THIS ISSUE WERE SPLIT AND UNFORTUNATELY BOTH GROUPS HAD RECEIVED VERY POOR RESPONSE. "THE SILENT MAJORITY STILL REMAIN SILENT," HE NOTED.

TURNING TO THE ROLE OF THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES, MR CHENG SAID MEMBERS REPRESENTING THESE CONSTITUENCIES HAD MADE NOTABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS AND THAT THEIR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE HAD PROVED VERY VALUABLE IN THE PROCESS.

HE FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT ELECTIVE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES HAD BEEN INTRODUCED HERE AS A NATURAL PROGRESSION FROM A PREVIOUS INFORMAL SYSTEM OF APPOINTING MEMBERS AND THAT THEY HAD NOW PROVED THEMSELVES WELL WORTH RETAINING.

/MR CHENG

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 44 -

MR CHENG SAID HE SUPPORTED THE REQUEST BY NON-ENGINEERS OF THE ENGINEERS AND ASSOCIATED PROFESSIONS CONSTITUENCY FOR A MORE IDENTIFIABLE REPRESENTATION.

HE SAID MEMBERS OF THE BUILDING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION AND THE REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS ASSOCIATION WHO HAD MADE A VERY SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF HONG KONG BUT WERE NOT ENFRANCHISED IN THEIR OWN RIGHT, SHOULD BE REPRESENTED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

ON OTHER OPTIONS LISTED IN THE GREEN PAPER, MR CHENG SAID THAT THE NUMBER OF OFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SHOULD BE MAINTAINED; THAT THE NUMBER OF APPOINTED MEMBERS MIGHT BE FURTHER REDUCED TO ALLOW A CORRESPONDING INCREASE IN FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY MEMBERS; AND THAT THE GOVERNOR SHOULD CONTINUE TO PRESIDE OVER THE COUNCIL.

MR CHENG ALSO DID NOT FAVOUR RADICAL CHANGE AT THE DISTRICT BOARD OR MUNICIPAL COUNCIL LEVELS OR TO THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE SYSTEM, AND SAID THE THREE-TIER STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE RETAINED.

NOTING THAT THE DISTRICT BOARD SHOULD REMAIN ADVISORY IN CHARACTER, HE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE NECESSARY STEPS TO SEE THAT THEIR ADVICE WAS CAREFULLY HEEDED AND PROMPTLY ACTED UPON.

IN ADDITION, HE SAID HE WAS IN FAVOUR OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE URBAN DISTRICT BOARDS BEING ELECTED TO THE URBAN COUNCIL TO ENHANCE CROSS-MEMBERSHIP.

FINALLY, HE SAID: "I HOPE IN THIS POLITICAL REVIEW GOVERNMENT WILL SENSIBLY ASSESS THE COLLECTED VIEWS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND ENSURE THAT ANY CHANGES WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT OUR CONTINUING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND SOCIAL STABILITY WHICH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO MAINTAIN AND PRESERVE UNDER THE TERMS OF THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION."

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HK PEOPLE'S WISHES SHOULD BE MET

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THE HON HILTON CHEONG-LEEN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT SHOULD THE REPORT OF THE SURVEY OFFICE INDICATE A STRONG MAJORITY FAVOURING A NUMBER OF DIRECTLY ELECTED SEATS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN 1988, IT WOULD BE UP TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION TO MEET THE WISHES OF HONG KONG PEOPLE.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON THE MOTION ON THE GREEN PAPER, MR CHEONG-LEEN SAID THAT FROM THE STATEMENT MADE IN LONDON LAST WEEK BY AMBASSADOR KE ZAISHUO, HEAD OF THE CHINESE SIDE OF THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP, IT WAS NOW CLEAR THAT CHINA WAS NOT OPPOSED TO AN ELEMENT OF DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND THAT IF SUCH WERE A PART OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN HONG KONG, CHINA WOULD SUPPORT AND PROMOTE SUCH DEMOCRATIC PROCESS.

HE RECALLED THAT LAST YEAR HE HAD CALLED FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF 12 DIRECTLY ELECTED SEATS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN 1988 FROM LARGE REGIONAL CONSTITUENCIES WITH HONG KONG ISLAND GETTING THREE SEATS, KOWLOON EAST THREE SEATS, KOWLOON WEST THREE SEATS AND THE NEW TERRITORIES THREE SEATS.

HE HAD ALSO SAID LAST YEAR THAT THE NUMBER OF DIRECTLY ELECTED LEGCO SEATS BE PROGRESSIVELY INCREASED WITH EVERY ELECTION UNTIL BY THE YEAR 1997, THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DIRECTLY ELECTED SEATS REACHED A MAXIMUM OF 30 PER CENT OF THE LEGISLATURE.

"THERE IS HOWEVER MUCH DIVERGENCE OF VIEWS IN HONG KONG AS TO WHETHER THERE SHOULD BE DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN 1988. IT IS OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE THEREFORE THAT WE AWAIT THE REPORT OF THE SURVEY OFFICE WHICH IS EXPECTED TO BE AVAILABLE BY THE END OF OCTOBER," MR CHEONG-LEEN NOTED.

AS REGARDS THE NUMBER OF INDIRECTLY ELECTED SEATS, HE WAS IN FAVOUR OF AN INCREASE OF SIX SEATS FROM 24 TO 30 MEMBERS IN THE ELECTORAL COLLEGES OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS, THE URBAN COUNCIL, THE REGIONAL COUNCIL, AND THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES.

ON THE QUESTION OF THE AGE OF ENTITLEMENT TO VOTE, HE SAID THAT MOST OF THE PEOPLE TO WHOM HE TALKED WERE IN FAVOUR OF LOWERING THE VOTING AGE FROM 21 TO 18, NOT IN 1988 BUT IN 1991.

THE MAIN REASON PUT FORWARD WAS THAT MORE CIVIC EDUCATION NEEDED TO BE PROMOTED IN ORDER TO MAKE THE YOUNG PEOPLE, WHO WERE UNDOUBTEDLY BETTER EDUCATED TODAY THAN THE PREVIOUS GENERATION, MORE ACTIVELY AWARE OF THEIR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

/IN REGARD

IN REGARD TO THE URBAN COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DISTRICT BOARDS, WHILE A NUMBER OF DISTRICT BOARDS HAD PROPOSED THAT THEY ELECTED THEIR REPRESENTATIVES TO THE URBAN COUNCIL, MR CHEONG-LEEN DID NOT BELIEVE THAT IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THIS TO TAKE PLACE IN 1988, SINCE ELECTED URBAN COUNCILLORS WERE EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS OF DISTRICT BOARDS, AND THEY WERE A CONSTRUCTIVE AND EFFECTIVE CHANNEL BETWEEN THE URBAN COUNCIL AND THE DISTRICT BOARDS.

"I THEREFORE URGE GOVERNMENT NOT TO PREMATURELY RUSH INTO GRAFTING THE REGIONAL COUNCIL STRUCTURE ON TO THE URBAN COUNCIL, SINCE CONDITIONS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES ARE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE IN THE URBAN AREA," HE SAID.

MR CHEONG-LEEN SAID THE REGIONAL COUNCIL HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED ONLY RECENTLY AND IT WOULD REQUIRE SOME TIME FOR THE STRUCTURE THERE TO BE ASSESSED BEFORE DETERMINING WHETHER WHAT WAS SUITABLE FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES WAS EQUALLY SUITABLE FOR THE URBAN COUNCIL, WHICH HAD A VERY GOOD RECORD IN MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION AND THE PROVISION OF MUNICIPAL FACILITIES IN THE URBAN AREA.

"I WOULD THEREFORE URGE THAT THE PRESENT STRUCTURE OF THE URBAN COUNCIL IN RELATION TO THE DISTRICT BOARDS REMAIN AS IT IS AT PRESENT WITHOUT ANY CHANGE FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE 1987 GREEN PAPER REVIEW," HE SAID.

HOWEVER, SHOULD AN ELEMENT OF DIRECT ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BE DECIDED UPON FOR 1988, THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL/MUNICIPAL COUNCILS/DISTRICT BOARDS WOULD HAVE TO BE CAREFULLY REVIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF CHANGING POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES, HE ADDED.

PEOPLE OF HONG KONG HAD THE RIGHT AND THEY MUST TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE OF SHAPING THEIR OWN FUTURE WITHIN THE TERMS OF THE JOINT DECLARATION AND IN PARALLEL WITH CHINA'S MODERNISATION AND OPEN POLICY TO THE WORLD FOR THE UPLIFTING OF LIVING STANDARDS OF ITS 1,000 MILLION PEOPLE, HE SAID.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 47 -

TWO BILLS PASSED

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TWO BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY ARE THE HONG KONG COUNCIL ON SMOKING AND HEALTH BILL 1987 AND THE BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987.

MEANWHILE, TWO MOTIONS, ONE ON THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND THE OTHER ON THE NORTH-WEST RAILWAY BY-LAWS, WERE ALSO APPROVED.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY, MR DAVID FORD, MADE A STATEMENT ON THE RECENT BOMBING INCIDENTS IN THE MEETING.

A TOTAL OF 21 MEMBERS SPOKE TODAY ON A MOTION MOVED BY THE SENIOR MEMBER, MISS LYDIA DUNN, ON THE GREEN PAPER. ANOTHER 24 WILL SPEAK WHEN THE COUNCIL RESUMES TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 48 -

POLITICAL DEBATE CRUCIAL IN SHAPING FUTURE SYSTEM

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ONE OF THE MOST ABSORBING AND IMPORTANT MATTERS FACING HONG KONG AT PRESENT IS TO DECIDE ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT AND ITS ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY, THE SPECIAL ADVISER TO THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID AKERS-JONES SAID TODAY (JULY 15).

SPEAKING ON "HONG KONG: YEARS OF TRANSITION" AT A LUNCH AT THE ROYAL OVERSEAS LEAGUE IN LONDON, SIR DAVID SAID THAT THERE WAS A VIGOROUS DEBATE GOING ON IN HONG KONG AT THE PRESENT TIME AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF THE GREEN PAPER: THE 1987 REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.

"FROM THIS DEBATE, AND FROM THE DELIBERATIONS ON THE BASIC LAW THE PRINCIPLES WILL HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED ON THE PROCEDURES WHICH WILL ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION TO BE FORMED AND THE SHAPE IT WILL TAKE IT," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID THE SUCCESS OF HONG KONG WAS DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE INDUSTRY AND VERSATILITY OF ITS PEOPLE WERE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO FLOURISH BY CONSISTENT GOVERNMENT POLICIES TO PROVIDE THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE INFRASTRUCTURE TO ALLOW PEOPLE THE OPPORTUNITY TO THRIVE AND TO PROSPER.

"THE ECONOMY HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO BREATHE FREELY, ECONOMIC STRAINS ARE DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT THE SYSTEM, PEOPLE PAY THE PROPER UNSUBSIDISED PRICE FOR GOODS AND SERVICES AND THE SYSTEM IS DESIGNED TO ALLOW PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND INITIATIVE TO FLOURISH," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE LOW TAXATION ATTRACTED INVESTMENT AND ENCOURAGED ENTERPRISE. PROFITS WERE MADE BUT WERE AGAIN PLOUGHED BACK INTO FUTURE GROWTH.

SIR DAVID SAID RECENT EMIGRATION AND TALK OF EMIGRATION IN HONG KONG HAD TO BE SEEN IN PERSPECTIVE.

"BOTH CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES HAVE THIS YEAR INCREASED THEIR QUOTAS OF IMMIGRANTS FROM HONG KONG AND THERE ARE SUBSTANTIAL CHINESE COMMUNITIES IN MANY OF THE CITIES OF NORTH AMERICA, FOR EXAMPLE, 250,000 IN TORONTO ALONE."

HE ADMITTED THERE WAS UNDOUBTEDLY A VERY STRONG "PULL-FACTOR" AND MANY PEOPLE WERE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THESE HIGHER IMMIGRANT QUOTAS. HE ALSO NOTED THAT THERE WERE BETWEEN 40,000 TO 50,000 HONG KONG STUDENTS STUDYING OVERSEAS, THE VAST MAJORITY OF THEM WOULD RETURN.

"THERE IS NOT, THEN, SO MUCH AS A BRAIN DRAIN, BUT A FLOW IN BOTH DIRECTIONS.

/ "ULTIMATELY THE

"ULTIMATELY THE TEST WILL BE -- HOW WELL THE ECONOMY PERFORMS IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS AND HOW STRONG OTHER PARTS OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE FUTURE ARE CONSTRUCTED, SUCH AS THE BASIC LAW, TOGETHER WITH ALL THOSE COMPONENTS WHICH WILL INSTILL CONFIDENCE IN THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG," HE SAID.

TURNING TO THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG, SIR DAVID POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE MANY GROUNDS FOR CONFIDENCE.

IN ADDITION TO THE JOINT DECLARATION ITSELF AND THE MEASURES WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT IT, HE SAID PRACTICAL STEPS HAD BEEN TAKEN AND WERE BEING TAKEN STEADILY TO PUT IN PLACE THOSE VERY IMPORTANT LINKS BETWEEN HONG KONG WITH WORLD ORGANISATIONS AND ITS TRADING PARTNERS.

"THERE IS THE VISIBLE PRESENCE IN HONG KONG OF 75 OUT OF 100 LEADING BANKS IN THE WORLD; THERE ARE OUR GROWING TRADING AND INVESTMENT LINKS WITH MAINLAND CHINA; AND THERE IS THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS MEETING PLACE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST TO THE REST OF THE WORLD," SIR DAVID NOTED.

"IT IS A CHALLENGE FOR THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG AND OPPORTUNITY FOR THE WORLD," HE STRESSED.

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UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT STATISTICS FOR MARCH - MAY 1987

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BOTH THE UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE UNDEREMPLOYMENT SITUATION REMAINED STABLE IN THE THREE MONTHS MARCH - MAY 1987, COMPARED WITH THE THREE MONTHS ENDING FEBRUARY 1987, ACCORDING TO THE LATEST LABOUR FORCE STATISTICS RELEASED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

THE SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR MARCH - MAY 1987 WAS AT A VERY LOW LEVEL OF 1.9 PER CENT, COMPARED WITH 2 PER CENT FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDING FEBRUARY 1987 AND 3 PER CENT FOR THE SAME PERIOD A YEAR EARLIER. THE DECREASE OF 0.1 PERCENTAGE POINT BELOW THE PREVIOUS THREE MONTH PERIOD IS STATISTICALLY NOT SIGNIFICANT, WHILE THE DECREASE OF 1.1 PERCENTAGE POINTS BELOW THE SAME PERIOD A YEAR EARLIER IS STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT.

THE NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED PERSONS IN MARCH - MAY 1987 WAS ESTIMATED AT 50,500, LESS THAN THE FIGURES OF 52,600 FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDING FEBRUARY 1987 AND OF 80,300 FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDING MAY 1986.

/THE UNDEREMPLOYMENT

THE UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATE FOR MARCH - MAY 1987 WAS 1.1 PER CENT WHICH COMPARES WITH 1 PER CENT FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDING FEBRUARY 1987. THE RATE FOR MARCH - MAY 1986 WAS 2.4 PER CENT. THE INCREASE OF 0.1 PERCENTAGE POINT OVER THE PREVIOUS THREE MONTH PERIOD IS STATISTICALLY NOT SIGNIFICANT, WHILE THE DECREASE OF 1.3 PERCENTAGE POINTS BELOW THE SAME PERIOD A YEAR EARLIER IS STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT.

THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF UNDEREMPLOYED PERSONS FOR MARCH - MAY 1987 WAS 29,600, COMPARED WITH THE NUMBER OF 27,400 FOR THE THREE MONTH PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 1987 AND OF 64,200 FOR THE THREE MONTH PERIOD ENDING MAY 1986.

CONSISTENT WITH THE CURRENT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION (ILO), PERSONS WHO WORKED LESS THAN 35 HOURS A WEEK DUE TO ECONOMIC REASONS (SUCH AS SLACK WORK, MATERIAL SHORTAGE, MECHANICAL BREAKDOWN AND INABILITY TO FIND FULL-TIME WORK) WERE REGARDED AS UNDEREMPLOYED ONLY IF THEY WERE EITHER SEEKING OR AVAILABLE FOR MORE WORK.

COMMENTING ON THESE FIGURES, THE COMMISSIONER FOR CENSUS AND STATISTICS SAID THAT BECAUSE THE PROPORTION OF FIRST-TIME JOB-SEEKERS (E.G. PEOPLE WHO HAVE JUST LEFT SCHOOL) VARIES FROM MONTH TO MONTH, UNEMPLOYMENT RATES THAT HAD BEEN SEASONALLY ADJUSTED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE VARIATIONS IN THE NUMBER OF FIRST-TIME JOB-SEEKERS SHOULD BE USED IN MAKING COMPARISONS OVER TIME.

THE COMMISSIONER ADDED THAT, BASED ON A SYSTEM OF MANUAL EXTRACTION OF INFORMATION FROM SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THE LATEST MONTH, PROVISIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATES COVERING THE LATEST THREE MONTH PERIOD COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE WITHIN TWO WEEKS AFTER THE SURVEY.

THESE PROVIDE AN EARLY INDICATION OF THE LATEST TREND IN THE UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT SITUATION. THE PROVISIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED, FOR APRIL - JUNE 1987 WAS 1.7 PER CENT AND THE PROVISIONAL UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATE WAS 1.1 PER CENT.

THE UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT STATISTICS WERE OBTAINED FROM A CONTINUOUS GENERAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

THIS SURVEY COVERS A QUARTERLY SAMPLE OF SOME 14,000 HOUSEHOLDS OR 51,000 PERSONS, SELECTED SCIENTIFICALLY TO REPRESENT THE LAND-BASED CIVILIAN NON-INSTITUTIONAL POPULATION IN HONG KONG.

PERSONAL AND LABOUR FORCE DATA WERE OBTAINED IN THE SURVEY BY INTERVIEWING EACH INDIVIDUAL MEMBER AGED 15 AND ABOVE IN THE HOUSEHOLDS SAMPLED.

IN THE SURVEY, THE DEFINITIONS USED IN MEASURING UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT FOLLOW CLOSELY THOSE RECOMMENDED BY THE ILO.

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF LABOUR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS IS GIVEN IN THE REPORT ON THE GENERAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY WHICH IS PUBLISHED FOUR TIMES A YEAR. THE NEXT REPORT COVERING THE QUARTER ENDING JUNE 1987 SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FROM THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE AROUND SEPTEMBER 20, 1987 AT \$9.50 PER COPY.

EASY TRAVEL SCHEME PHASE TWO STARTS ON AUGUST 1
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WHEN THE SECOND PHASE OF THE EASY TRAVEL SCHEME (ETS) BECOMES OPERATIONAL ON AUGUST 1, TRAVELLERS USING THEIR HONG KONG IDENTITY CARDS (HKIC) AT LO WU AND HUNG HOM IMMIGRATION CONTROL POINTS WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO FILL IN ARRIVAL-DEPARTURE CARDS.

"HOLDERS OF HKIC BEARING THE '***' SYMBOL WILL FURTHER BENEFIT FROM THE SECOND PHASE OF THIS SCHEME BY BEING EXEMPTED FROM REQUIRING A HONG KONG RE-ENTRY PERMIT FOR JOURNEYS TO CHINA VIA THE TWO CONTROL POINTS," A SPOKESMAN FOR THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT SAID.

"AT THIS STAGE, WE WILL ONLY EXTEND THE SERVICE TO COVER LO WU AND HUNG HOM," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THIS SIMPLIFICATION IN PROCEDURES IS THE RESULT OF THE GRADUAL COMPUTERISATION OF THE TERRITORY'S IMMIGRATION CONTROL POINTS WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN FOUR PHASES AS FROM MAY 1.

"THE FIRST PHASE WHICH PROVIDES SUCH SERVICE FOR TRAVELLERS TO MACAU AT THE MACAU FERRY TERMINAL AND SHAM SHUI PO PIER HAS BEEN IN OPERATION SINCE MAY 1, 1987," HE SAID.

DETAILS OF SUBSEQUENT PHASES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

PHASE	IMMIGRATION CONTROL POINTS	DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION
2	LO WU AND HUNG HOM TERMINALS	AUGUST 1, 1987
3	MAN KAM TO AND SHA TAU KOK TERMINALS	NOVEMBER 1, 1987
4	HONG KONG AIRPORT	MID 1988
	SHA TIN - MEI SHA AND HONG KONG - CHINA TERMINALS	MID 1988
	LOK MA CHAU TERMINAL	MID 1989

THE SPOKESMAN SAID, "ALL CHILDREN AGED BELOW 18 AND SOME ADULT TRAVELLERS WILL STILL NEED TO OBTAIN HONG KONG RE-ENTRY PERMITS WHEN TRAVELLING TO AND FROM CHINA AND MACAU."

"THESE ADULT PERSONS INCLUDE THOSE WHOSE HKIC'S *** HAVE BEEN PERFORATED, DEFACED, LOST OR THOSE WHO ARE EXEMPTED FROM OBTAINING HKIC," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE EXISTING HONG KONG RE-ENTRY PERMIT MAY CONTINUE TO BE USED WITHIN ITS VALIDITY AND CHILDREN INCLUDED IN THE PERMIT MUST TRAVEL WITH THE PRINCIPAL HOLDER.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 52 -

\$181 M. CONTRACT FOR NT CIRCULAR ROAD TO BE SIGNED TOMORROW

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THE DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS, MR HAROLD BEATON, WILL SIGN A \$181 MILLION CONTRACT WITH THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF CHINA FUJIAN CORPORATION FOR INTERNATIONAL TECHNO-ECONOMIC COOPERATION, MR HUANG XUNGENG, FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A FURTHER SECTION OF THE NEW TERRITORIES CIRCULAR ROAD TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE NEW SECTION, FROM MAI PO TO FAIRVIEW PARK, IS PHASE III OF THE NEW TERRITORIES CIRCULAR ROAD IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT WHICH INCLUDES A 12-KILOMETRE-LONG HIGH-CAPACITY TRUNK ROAD FROM FAN KAM ROAD TO AU TAU.

UPON FULL COMPLETION, THE PROJECT WILL REDUCE CONGESTION IN CASTLE PEAK ROAD AND BECOME PART OF A DIRECT ROUTE FOR TRAFFIC BETWEEN HONG KONG AND CHINA.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE CONTRACT SIGNING WHICH WILL BE HELD AT THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS ON THE NINTH FLOOR OF EMPIRE CENTRE, 68, MODY ROAD, TSIM SHA TSUI EAST, AT 10.30 AM.

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GOVERNMENT SITE TO LET

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A NON-INDUSTRIAL SITE IN CENTRAL IS TO BE LET ON SHORT TERM TENANCY BY THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT.

THE SITE, AT 23 - 25 WING LOK STREET, IS ALSO FOR OPEN STORAGE, BUT EXCLUDING RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES.

THE TENANCY FOR THE 180-SQUARE-METRE LOT IS TWO YEARS, RENEWABLE QUARTERLY AFTERWARDS.

TENDERS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY NOON ON JULY 31.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 53 -

FORUMS ON TRAFFIC STUDY TO BE DISCUSSED

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MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICT BOARD'S TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE WILL CONSIDER ORGANISING OPEN FORUMS ON THE WESTERN DISTRICT TRAFFIC STUDY AT THEIR MEETING ON FRIDAY (JULY 17).

THE HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT WILL SUBMIT A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE STUDY TO THE COMMITTEE.

MEMBERS WILL ALSO DISCUSS THE WYNDHAM STREET TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT SCHEME AND REVIEW MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE DISTRICT'S PEDESTRIAN BLACK SPOTS.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE COMMITTEE MEETING TO BE HELD AT 2.30 PM ON FRIDAY (JULY 17) AT THE DISTRICT BOARD CONFERENCE ROOM, 14/F., HARBOUR BUILDING, 38 PIER ROAD, CENTRAL.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS

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THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IS TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO SPECIAL SCHOOLS TO ENABLE THEM TO IMPROVE THEIR SERVICES TO MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN, THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR Y.T. LI, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE JOINT SPEECH DAY OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS OF THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED, MR LI SAID ADDITIONAL TEACHERS HAD BEEN PROVIDED TO SPECIAL SCHOOLS UNDER A PILOT SCHEME LAUNCHED IN SEPTEMBER 1983 TO HELP THE AUTISTIC CHILDREN TO DEVELOP THEIR LANGUAGE AND LEARNING SKILLS.

FROM SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR, 17 SPECIAL SCHOOLS FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN WOULD BE ABLE TO EMPLOY ONE TO TWO MORE REMEDIAL TEACHERS FOR INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP TEACHING OF AUTISTIC CHILDREN, MR LI ADDED.

IN ADDITION, FROM APRIL THIS YEAR, SPONSORING BODIES OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS OPERATING 30 OR MORE CLASSES WERE ALLOWED TO EMPLOY AN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST TO PROVIDE SERVICE FOR THE REVIEW AND REASSESSMENT OF PUPILS IN THEIR OWN SCHOOL, MR LI SAID.

/FOR SPECIAL

FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS WITH FEWER CLASSES, SUPPORT SERVICE WOULD BE PROVIDED BY EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION SECTION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, MR LI ADDED.

HE PRAISED THE ASSOCIATION FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED PARTICULARLY THE OPERATION OF 12 SPECIAL SCHOOLS FOR 1,500 MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN.

WITH THE ASSISTANCE FROM THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, THE ASSOCIATION WOULD BUILD THREE MORE SCHOOLS IN THE NEW TOWNS IN THE NEAR FUTURE, SAID MR LI, ADDING THAT THE NEW SCHOOL AT LAI KING IN KWAI CHUNG WOULD BE OPERATIONAL IN THE COMING SCHOOL YEAR WHILE THE TWO OTHERS IN YUEN LONG AND TUEN MUN WOULD OPEN IN 1989 WITH A TOTAL PROVISION OF 700 SCHOOL PLACES FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN.

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ISLANDERS GET HEALTH ADVICE

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ELDERLY RESIDENTS AT THE SOUTHERN TIP OF HONG KONG -- THE PO TOI ISLAND -- OBTAINED FREE MEDICAL CHECK-UPS FROM A MEDICAL TEAM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ISLANDERS AGED 60 AND OVER, WHO MIGHT HAVE DIFFICULTY TRAVELLING A LONG DISTANCE TO SEEK HEALTH ADVICE WERE ACCORDED THE PRIORITY TO GET THE SERVICE.

AS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE AND DIABETES ARE COMMON DISEASES FOR THAT AGE GROUP, THE MEDICAL TEAM CONCENTRATED ON CHECKING BLOOD PRESSURE AND SCREENING DIABETES FOR THE ISLANDERS AT A SERVICE CENTRE SET UP AT THE PO TOI VILLAGE OFFICE.

THE PROGRAMME WAS A 'HEALTH DAY' PROJECT ORGANISED BY THE ISLANDS DISTRICT OFFICE WITH THE ASSISTANCE FROM THE HEALTH COMMITTEE OF THE MEDICAL SOCIETY, HONG KONG UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE ISLANDS DISTRICT OFFICE SAID: "THE HEALTH DAY PROJECT IS PART OF THE DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME AND IT IS THE THIRD TIME THAT SIMILAR PROJECT HAS BEEN ORGANISED, FOLLOWING TWO SUCCESSFULL ONES AT TUNG CHUNG AND SHA LO WAN PREVIOUSLY."

"ISLANDERS LIVING AT THE REMOTE AREAS OF THE DISTRICT, REGARDLESS OF HOW DISTANT THEY ARE, WILL NOT BE LEFT OUT IN OUR CONSIDERATION TO PROVIDE THIS KIND OF SERVICES," HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 55 -

EASTBOUND TUBE OF AIRPORT TUNNEL CLOSED

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SPECIAL TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED FROM 10 AM ON SUNDAY (JULY 19) FOR ABOUT A MONTH TO TIE IN WITH THE CLOSURE OF THE EASTBOUND TUBE OF THE AIRPORT TUNNEL.

THIS IS THE SECOND STAGE OF THE CLOSURE OF THE AIRPORT TUNNEL AND IS TO FACILITATE THE RENEWAL OF FIRE MAINS AND OTHER MAINTENANCE WORK.

DURING THE CLOSURE, THE WESTBOUND TUBE OF THE TUNNEL WILL BE CONVERTED TO TWO-WAY TRAFFIC. HOWEVER, OWING TO THE CLOSURE OF THE EASTBOUND TUBE, VEHICLES ON EAST KOWLOON WAY NORTHBOUND WILL NOT BE ABLE TO TRAVEL VIA THE AIRPORT TUNNEL SLIP ROAD TO SUNG WONG TOI ROAD. THEY WILL BE DIVERTED VIA THE EAST KOWLOON WAY TO KOWLOON CITY ROAD AND SUNG WONG TOI ROAD.

ALTHOUGH TWO-WAY TRAFFIC WILL BE MAINTAINED AT THE TUNNEL, TRAFFIC CONGESTION IS EXPECTED TO OCCUR ON THE APPROACH ROADS TO THE TUNNEL DURING PEAK PERIODS. TO AVOID ANTICIPATED TRAFFIC CONGESTION, MOTORISTS ARE STRONGLY ADVISED TO USE ALTERNATIVE ROUTES.

MOTORISTS TRAVELLING FROM HUNG HOM TO KWUN TONG MAY USE CHATHAM ROAD NORTH, MA TAU WAI ROAD, MA TAU CHUNG ROAD, PRINCE EDWARD ROAD EAST AND KWUN TONG ROAD; OR VICE VERSA FROM KWUN TONG TO HUNG HOM.

MEANWHILE, MOTORISTS TRAVELLING FROM HUNG HOM TO HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT MAY USE CHATHAM ROAD NORTH, MA TAU WAI ROAD, CHE KIANG STREET, TO KWA WAN ROAD, SUNG WONG TOI ROAD AND OLYMPIC AVENUE.

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS ON HONG KONG ISLAND

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THE SPEED LIMIT ON TWO SECTIONS OF WONG CHUK HANG ROAD IN ABERDEEN WILL BE CHANGED FROM 50 TO 70 KILOMETRES PER HOUR FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (JULY 18).

THEY ARE THE EASTBOUND CARRIAGEWAY OF WONG CHUK HANG ROAD FROM A POINT ABOUT 15 METRES WEST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH AP LEI CHAU BRIDGE ROAD TO A POINT ABOUT 30 METRES EAST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH HEUNG YIP ROAD, AND THE WESTBOUND CARRIAGEWAY OF WONG CHUK HANG ROAD FROM A POINT ABOUT 30 METRES WEST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH HEUNG YIP ROAD TO A POINT ABOUT 55 METRES WEST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH AP LEI CHAU BRIDGE ROAD.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1987

- 56 -

AT THE SAME TIME, THE EXISTING 7 AM TO 10 AM AND 4 PM TO 7 PM DAILY URBAN CLEARWAY RESTRICTION ON THE NORTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF EASTBOUND CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL BETWEEN CONNAUGHT PLACE (EAST) AND CONNAUGHT PLACE (WEST) WILL BE EXTENDED TO OPERATE FROM 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY.

THE MEASURE IS TO LAST FOR ABOUT TWO MONTHS TO FACILITATE PUBLIC UTILITY DIVERSION WORKS.

NO VEHICLE EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS WITHIN THE RESTRICTED AREA.

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