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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1993

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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1993

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SCS ON PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL ON
CIVIL SERVANTS' CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

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THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR STUART HARBINSON, TODAY (TUESDAY) SPELLED OUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF ENACTING THE PROPOSED PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL THAT SEEKS TO SUSPEND TRANSFERS OF OVERSEAS AGREEMENT OFFICERS FROM OVERSEAS TO LOCAL TERMS.

"THE PROPOSED PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL PUTS THE GOVERNMENT IN AN IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION," MR HARBINSON SAID.

"IT WOULD PUT US BACK INTO TROUBLE WITH THE BILL OF RIGHTS. THIS IS BECAUSE ITS EFFECT WOULD BE TO DENY SOME PERMANENT RESIDENTS OF HONG KONG CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE."

MR HARBINSON SAID THE ONLY WAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD AVOID THE BILL OF RIGHTS' IMPLICATIONS WOULD BE TO EXTEND THE CONTRACTS ON OVERSEAS TERMS NOT ONLY OF ANY OVERSEAS CONTRACT OFFICERS WHO ARE ALREADY PERMANENT RESIDENTS BUT ALSO OTHERS WHO CLAIM TO BE INTERESTED IN BECOMING PERMANENT RESIDENTS.

THIS WOULD HAVE A VERY SERIOUS IMPACT ON THE LOCALISATION POLICY, HE SAID.

FURTHERMORE THERE WOULD BE A POLICY VACUUM AND TREMENDOUS UNCERTAINTY WOULD ENSUE FOR BOTH LOCAL AND OVERSEAS OFFICERS.

"THE PUBLIC SERVICE PANEL SEEMS TO BE GIVING US A CHOICE BETWEEN INFRINGING THE BILL OF RIGHTS ON THE ONE HAND AND SERIOUSLY DAMAGING THE LOCALISATION PROCESS ON THE OTHER," MR HARBINSON SAID.

"I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THIS IS WHAT THEY REALLY WANT OR THAT IT IS IN HONG KONG'S LONG-TERM INTERESTS."

MR HARBINSON ALSO SAID THE MAIN ISSUE AT THE HEART OF THE CURRENT CONTROVERSY WAS WHETHER PERMANENT RESIDENTS HAD THE RIGHT OF EQUAL ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE, AS LAID DOWN IN THE BILL OF RIGHTS.

"IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT THE DEBATE HAS NOT REALLY FOCUSED ON THIS," HE SAID.

"IT IS ALSO DISAPPOINTING THAT MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE PANEL, WITH ONE EXCEPTION, HAVE NOT TAKEN A CLEAR STANCE ON SUCH AN IMPORTANT BILL OF RIGHTS ISSUE, DESPITE DISCUSSING THE SUBJECT SINCE APRIL."

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SHA COMMENTS ON NT ORDINANCE

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IN RESPONSE TO RECENT COMMENTS ON THE APPLICATION OF THE NEW TERRITORIES ORDINANCE (NTO) WITH RESPECT TO SUCCESSION RIGHTS, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, SAID TODAY (TUESDAY) THAT THERE HAD NOT BEEN ANY PROBLEMS SINCE THE ENACTMENT OF THE ORDINANCE IN 1910.

"THE LEGAL PROFESSION HAS CERTAINLY NOT SEEN THIS AS A PROBLEM UP TO NOW. THE POSITION IN LAW HAS NOT CHANGED AND THERE IS NO NEED TO BE UNDULY WORRIED ABOUT IT."

"HOWEVER, IN ORDER TO STREAMLINE PROCEDURES AND TO BRING THEM UP TO DATE, WE HAVE BEEN EXAMINING VARIOUS OPTIONS, INCLUDING THE NEED FOR REVIEWING THE NTO," HE SAID.

"BUT BECAUSE OF THE COMPLEXITY OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED, WE HAVE YET TO FINALISE OUR WORK IN THIS CONNECTION."

"NEVERTHELESS WE NOTE THE CONCERN EXPRESSED RECENTLY OVER THE MATTER CONCERNING SUCCESSION RIGHTS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, WE RECOGNISE THAT WE WILL NEED TO COME TO A CONCLUSION ON THIS IN THE NEAR FUTURE," HE SAID.

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WESTERN RECLAMATION VEHICLE PARK CLOSURES ON THURSDAY

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THE TEMPORARY OPEN VEHICLE PARK ON WESTERN RECLAMATION WILL BE CLOSED ON THURSDAY (SEPTEMBER 16) TO MAKE WAY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WESTERN HARBOUR CROSSING, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY (TUESDAY).

HE SAID THE VEHICLE PARK WAS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED TO BE HANDED OVER TO THE PROJECT CONTRACTOR ON AUGUST 1, BUT THE HANDING OVER WAS DEFERRED TO SEPTEMBER 1 AND AGAIN TO SEPTEMBER 16, TO ENABLE MORE ALTERNATIVE PARKING SPACES TO BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR GOODS VEHICLES.

AFTER ITS CLOSURE, GOODS VEHICLE DRIVERS ARE ADVISED TO MAKE USE OF PARKING SPACES AT

- * DES VOEUX ROAD WEST - WHERE ABOUT 50 SPACES ARE AVAILABLE FOR OVERNIGHT PARKING FROM 8 PM TO 7 AM;
- * KENNEDY TOWN PRAYA - WHERE ABOUT 30 SPACES ARE AVAILABLE FOR OVERNIGHT PARKING FROM 9 PM TO 7 AM;

/* HEUNG YIP

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- * HEUNG YIP ROAD - WHERE 15 SPACES ARE AVAILABLE FOR OVERNIGHT PARKING FROM 9 PM TO 7 AM;
- * FUNG MAT STREET - WHERE 78 SPACES ARE AVAILABLE FOR DAY AND NIGHT PARKING;
- * WESTERN PARK ROAD - WHERE 97 SPACES ARE AVAILABLE FOR DAY AND NIGHT PARKING;
- * PUBLIC CARGO WORKING AREA IN SAI WAN - WHERE 23 PARKING SPACES ARE AVAILABLE FOR OVERNIGHT PARKING FROM 9 PM TO 7 AM;
- * PUBLIC CARGO WORKING AREA IN SHEUNG WAN - WHERE 62 PARKING SPACES ARE AVAILABLE FOR OVERNIGHT PARKING FROM 9 PM TO 7 AM;
- * THE FORMER OPEN NIGHT CLUB SITE NEXT TO THE WATERFRONT POLICE STATION - WHERE ABOUT 35 SPACES ARE AVAILABLE.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE ABOVE LOCATIONS PROVIDED SOME 390 SPACES FOR PARKING OF GOODS VEHICLES.

OTHER AREAS BEING ACTIVELY PURSUED INCLUDE A TEMPORARY OPEN VEHICLE PARK AT SIU SAI WAN FOR MORE THAN 100 GOODS VEHICLES WHICH IS EXPECTED TO BE OPERATIONAL WITHIN A WEEK.

IN ADDITION, THERE IS THE GRASS AREA IN WESTERN PARK PHASE I FOR ABOUT 50 GOODS VEHICLES. THE SITE IS SUBJECT TO THE AGREEMENT OF RELEVANT GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND MAY BE AVAILABLE NEXT MONTH.

AS A TEMPORARY MEASURE, THE WESTERN HARBOUR CROSSING CONSORTIUM HAS ALSO REOPENED ON SEPTEMBER 7 THE VEHICLE PARK WHICH WAS CLOSED ON AUGUST 1 TO FACILITATE THE PARKING OF GOODS VEHICLES UNTIL THE END OF THIS MONTH.

DRIVERS ARE ALSO ADVISED TO MAKE USE OF THE OPEN VEHICLE PARKS IN QUARRY BAY AND OTHER AREAS WHERE PARKING OF GOODS VEHICLES IS PERMITTED.

THE GOVERNMENT IS STILL LOOKING INTO OTHER POSSIBLE MEANS OF PROVIDING ALTERNATIVE PARKING SPACES FOR GOODS VEHICLES, INCLUDING SOME SHORT- TO MEDIUM-TERM LOCATIONS SUCH AS THE REFUSE COLLECTION VEHICLE DEPOT AND THE VEGETABLE WHOLESALE MARKET IN KENNEDY TOWN.

OTHER LONGER-TERM LOCATIONS INCLUDE THE BELCHER BAY RECLAMATION AND THE TELEGRAPH BAY RECLAMATION.

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LEGAL PROFESSION CAPABLE TO RESPOND TO CHANGES

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THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR JEREMY MATHEWS, TOLD AN INTERNATIONAL LAW CONFERENCE THAT HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE PRACTICE OF LAW IN HONG KONG IN THE YEAR 2000 WOULD NOT BE VASTLY DIFFERENT FROM TODAY.

"THE LEGAL PRACTICE IN HONG KONG TODAY EXHIBITS ALL THE VIGOUR AND STRENGTH OF A TRIED AND TESTED LEGAL SYSTEM, IN WHICH THE RULE OF LAW IS PARAMOUNT, BUT WHICH IS CAPABLE OF CHANGE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF AN ACTIVE, WELL-EDUCATED AND AMBITIOUS SOCIETY.

"THE LEGAL PROFESSION HAS BEEN ABLE TO RESPOND TO CHANGES IN THE BUSINESS, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT IN HONG KONG, CHINA AND ABROAD.

"THE TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY IN 1997 WILL BE JUST ANOTHER MATTER FOR THE PROFESSION TO TAKE IN ITS STRIDE," MR MATHEWS SAID.

HE TOLD PARTICIPANTS OF THE "LAWASIA CONFERENCE" IN SRI LANKA THAT HE FORESAW THE LEGAL PROFESSION IN HONG KONG AFTER 1997 WOULD HAVE TO RESPOND, AS IT HAD DONE IN THE PAST, TO MANY NEW DEMANDS.

"ONE SIGNIFICANT DEMAND WILL ARISE FROM HONG KONG'S POSITION AS PART OF CHINA.

"ALTHOUGH THE JOINT DECLARATION GUARANTEES ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS, AND THAT THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION (SAR) WILL ENJOY A HIGH DEGREE OF AUTONOMY, IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT HONG KONG WILL BE PART OF CHINA.

"BUT HONG KONG'S LEGAL SYSTEM WILL BE QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE REST OF CHINA.

"LEGAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE HONG KONG SAR AND THE REST OF CHINA WILL BE THE NORM, AND SO IT IS CRITICAL THAT THERE ARE IN PLACE MECHANISMS AND PROCEDURES FOR MUTUAL ASSISTANCE BETWEEN THE TWO LEGAL SYSTEMS," MR MATHEWS SAID.

SUCH ASSISTANCE WOULD INCLUDE ARBITRATION AWARDS, THE REGISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF JUDGMENTS, AND THE SERVICE OF WITNESS SUMMONS AND OTHER JUDICIAL DOCUMENTS, HE ELABORATED.

MEANWHILE, THE BUSINESS AND SOCIAL TIES BETWEEN THE HONG KONG SAR AND THE REST OF CHINA WOULD BE INEXTRICABLY LINKED. MR MATHEWS ADVISED LAWYERS WISHING TO PARTICIPATE IN THESE DEVELOPMENTS TO BE VERSED IN CHINA LAW.

"OBVIOUSLY, LAWYERS WORKING IN CHINA LAW WHO ARE BILINGUAL WILL HAVE AN ADVANTAGE," HE ADDED.

A FURTHER DEMAND FOR THE LEGAL PROFESSION WOULD BE FOR SPECIALISATION.

/MR MATHEWS

MR MATHEWS PREDICTED THAT THE CONTINUED GROWTH AND SUCCESS OF THE HONG KONG ECONOMY WOULD PRODUCE LEGAL WORK OF AN INCREASINGLY COMPLEX AND SOPHISTICATED NATURE.

"THIS WILL ENGENDER A NEED FOR A LEGAL PROFESSION THAT HAS A SUFFICIENT RANGE OF EXPERTISE AND TRAINING TO MEET THIS CHALLENGE.

"THE ABILITY OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION IN HONG KONG TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR A GROWING INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC CLIENT BASE WILL INEVITABLY REQUIRE ALTERATIONS TO THE STRUCTURE AND PATTERN OF SOME FIRMS IN HONG KONG," HE SAID.

LOOKING AHEAD, MR MATHEWS SAID IN THE YEAR 2000 LAWYERS AND JUDGES WOULD BE TRAINED IN THE COMMON LAW; THE JUDICIARY WOULD BE INDEPENDENT; THE LAW WOULD BE FAMILIAR AND ACCESSIBLE.

"LAWYERS WILL BE IMBUED WITH COMMON LAW TRADITIONS AND PRINCIPLES AND WILL PRACTISE IN A COMMON LAW SYSTEM.

"THE PROFESSION WILL INCLUDE SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF FOREIGN LAWYERS WHO WILL BRING THEIR OWN TRADITIONS AND PRACTICES - THIS CAN ONLY BENEFIT THE PROFESSION," HE SAID.

AT PRESENT, HONG KONG HAS ABOUT 130 JUDGES AND MAGISTRATES, 450 BARRISTERS, 2,700 SOLICITORS, AND 230 LAWYERS IN GOVERNMENT LEGAL SERVICE, 90 LEGAL ACADEMICS IN TWO LAW SCHOOLS, AND 180 FOREIGN LAWYERS AND 26 FOREIGN LAW FIRMS.

"THE PRESENCE OF SO MANY FOREIGN LAWYERS IS A REFLECTION OF HONG KONG'S POSITION IN THE REGION AS A LEADING FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS CENTRE.

"PRESENTLY, THE ADMISSION OF FOREIGN LAWYERS IS AN ADMINISTRATIVE MATTER, BUT IN MAY OF THIS YEAR, A BILL WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO PROVIDE A STATUTORY FOUNDATION FOR THE ADMISSION AND PRACTICE OF FOREIGN LAWYERS AND FOREIGN LAW FIRMS IN HONG KONG," MR MATHEWS EXPLAINED.

"THE BILL ALSO PROPOSES TO ESTABLISH AN OBJECTIVE, NON-DISCRIMINATORY SCHEME FOR THE ADMISSION OF NON-HONG KONG QUALIFIED LAWYERS AS SOLICITORS TO PRACTISE HONG KONG LAW.

"FOREIGN LAWYERS ADD TO THE IMPRESSIVE RANGE OF SERVICES OFFERED BY HONG KONG'S LAWYERS AND HAVE HELPED MAKE HONG KONG ONE OF THE LEADING CENTRES FOR LEGAL SERVICES IN THE REGION," HE SAID.

LASTLY, MR MATHEWS REITERATED THAT HE FIRMLY BELIEVED THE TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY OF HONG KONG WOULD BE A SEAMLESS TRANSITION FOR THE LEGAL SYSTEM AND LEGAL PROFESSION.

"THE SPECIFIC GUARANTEES IN THE JOINT DECLARATION AND BASIC LAW RELATING TO THE LEGAL SYSTEM, TOGETHER WITH THE EXERCISE TO LOCALISE AND ADAPT HONG KONG'S LAWS AND TO PRODUCE BILINGUAL LAWS ARE ASSURANCES OF THE CONTINUANCE OF THE COMMON LAW AND STATUTE LAW IN HONG KONG," HE SAID.

UPHOLD RULE OF LAW: MRS PATTEN

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IT IS PEOPLE WHO GIVE LIFE AND MEANING TO CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND IT IS THROUGH PEOPLE THAT CONSTITUTIONAL IDEALS ARE IMPLEMENTED, MRS PATTEN SAID TODAY (TUESDAY).

SHE SAID ANY SYSTEM, NO MATTER HOW WELL IT WAS DESIGNED, WOULD FAIL AND WOULD FALL INTO DISUSE IF IT WAS CONSTANTLY ABUSED AND NEGLECTED BY THE PEOPLE WHO USED IT.

MRS PATTEN WAS SPEAKING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG.

SHE SAID FOR HONG KONG TO CONTINUE TO PROSPER AND TO PLAY ITS CENTRAL PART IN THE WORLD ECONOMIC SCENE, IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THE LEGAL AND JUDICIAL SYSTEMS BE MAINTAINED.

THIS HAD BEEN PROVIDED FOR IN THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE BASIC LAW.

BUT SHE WAS QUICK TO ADD THAT THE PRESERVATION OF THE RULE OF LAW IN ANY COMMUNITY REQUIRED MORE THAN WORDS IN A CONSTITUTION.

"IT ALSO DEPENDS ON A POPULATION THAT UNDERSTANDS AND VALUES THE RULE OF LAW.

"BUT ABOVE ALL IT DEPENDS ON LAWYERS AND JUDGES WHO ARE WILLING TO DEFEND AND UPHOLD THE RULE OF LAW EVEN UNDER THE MOST DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES."

MRS PATTEN ALSO SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT HONG KONG HAD THE ABILITY TO UPHOLD THE RULE OF LAW AND ENSURE THE CONTINUED HEALTH AND VIGOUR OF THE LEGAL AND JUDICIAL SYSTEMS.

"TO ALL OF US WHO HAVE THE INTERESTS OF HONG KONG AT HEART, THAT IS A MESSAGE WHICH CANNOT BE REPEATED TOO OFTEN," SHE SAID.

SHE ALSO HOPED THAT THE MESSAGE WOULD INSPIRE THE LAW STUDENTS TO TACKLE WORK WITH ENERGY AND PRIDE.

"FOR IN A RATHER SPECIAL, DOWN-TO-EARTH WAY, YOU HOLD THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG IN YOUR HANDS," MRS PATTEN ADDED.

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HK'S WELFARE SYSTEM HIGHLY DEVELOPED

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HONG KONG'S COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM PROVIDES A SAFETY NET FOR THE VULNERABLE AND THE NEEDY, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, TOLD AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TODAY (TUESDAY).

THIS SYSTEM WHICH IS COMPARABLE TO ANY IN ASIA, HAS DEVELOPED FROM THE PROVISION OF BASIC RELIEF TO PROVIDING A BROAD RANGE OF SERVICES TO THOSE IN NEED OF CARE, PROTECTION AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

IN ADDITION, SHE SAID, THERE WAS A RANGE OF PREVENTIVE, DEVELOPMENTAL AND SUPPORT SERVICES, AS WELL AS REMEDIAL SERVICES FOR THOSE WHO WERE VULNERABLE AND REQUIRED SUCH ASSISTANCE.

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING OF THE ASIA REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL SECURITY, MRS WONG SAID THIS WELFARE PROGRAMME WAS COSTING THE GOVERNMENT \$9 BILLION IN TERMS OF RECURRENT EXPENDITURE IN 1993/94.

THE SYSTEM HAS THREE KEY ELEMENTS.

CENTRAL TO THIS SYSTEM IS THE COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE SCHEME, WHICH WAS ONLY INTRODUCED ON JULY 1 THIS YEAR.

"IT IS NON-CONTRIBUTORY AND IS RELATED TO A FAMILY'S MEANS AND NEEDS," MRS WONG SAID.

"PAYMENTS UNDER THE SCHEME ARE BASED ON A RANGE OF STANDARD RATES AND SPECIAL GRANTS AND SUPPLEMENTS, INCLUDING A RENT ALLOWANCE, FREE MEDICAL TREATMENT, ANNUAL LONG-TERM SUPPLEMENTS, REIMBURSEMENT OF SCHOOL FEES AND RELATED EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES, MEAL ALLOWANCE FOR STUDENTS AND OTHER GRANTS.

"THE AVERAGE PAYMENT FOR A FAMILY OF FOUR IS \$5,880 PER MONTH OR 98 PER CENT OF AVERAGE MANUFACTURING WAGE," SHE SAID.

THE SECOND COMPONENT OF THE SYSTEM IS THE SOCIAL SECURITY ALLOWANCE SCHEME UNDER WHICH, THOSE AGED BETWEEN 65 AND 69 RECEIVE AN OLD AGE ALLOWANCE OF \$450 PER MONTH WHILE THOSE AGED 70 AND ABOVE GET \$510.

ANY PERSON WHO IS SEVERELY DISABLED IS ALSO ELIGIBLE FOR EITHER A NORMAL DISABILITY ALLOWANCE OF \$900 PER MONTH OR A HIGHER DISABILITY ALLOWANCE OF \$1,800 PER MONTH.

THE THIRD ELEMENT OF THE SYSTEM IS ACCIDENT COMPENSATION AND EMERGENCY RELIEF.

THIS PROVIDES SHORT-TERM ASSISTANCE TO TIDE A FAMILY OR AN INDIVIDUAL OVER A SERIOUS AND UNFORESEEN SETBACK WHICH RESULTED IN REDUCED OR LOST EARNINGS OR ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE.

MRS WONG SAID THE COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE SCHEME AND THE SOCIAL SECURITY ALLOWANCE SCHEME WERE BOTH FUNDED ENTIRELY BY THE GOVERNMENT.

ABOUT 65 PER CENT OF THE 86,200 COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE CASES ARE ELDERLY PERSONS WHILE THE OTHER MAJOR GROUPS INCLUDE THE DISABLED, THE MENTALLY ILL, THE CHRONICALLY ILL AND SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES.

"IN THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR, SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS WILL COMPRISE 67 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT," SHE SAID.

"TOTAL PAYMENTS WILL AMOUNT TO \$4.9 BILLION."

MRS WONG ALSO NOTED THAT THE GREATEST CHALLENGE TO HONG KONG'S SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM WAS POPULATION AGING.

THE PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS AGED 65 YEARS AND ABOVE IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE FROM 9.4 PER CENT OF TOTAL POPULATION IN 1993 TO 11.8 PER CENT BY 2001, WITH A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PERSONS AGED 75 AND OVER.

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TRADE DIRECTOR WELCOMES CHINESE MOVES TO CURB INFLATION

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THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF TRADE, MR TONY MILLER, TODAY (TUESDAY) WELCOMED CURRENT EFFORTS TO SLOW PRICE INFLATION IN CHINA.

IN A SPEECH AT A ROTARY CLUB LUNCH, HE SAID SOOTHSAYERS HAD FORETOLD A PROBLEM FOR SOME TIME.

HONG KONG TRADE STATISTICS ALONE SIGNALLED TREMENDOUS INCREASES IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY: HONG KONG RE-EXPORTS OF CHINA-MADE GOODS UP OVER 30 PER CENT IN 1991, NEARLY 30 PER CENT AGAIN IN 1992.

HE SAID THAT KIND OF GROWTH AND THE INVESTMENT IT EXCITED WERE BOUND TO CREATE STRAINS.

"MANY COUNTRIES MAKING A BID FOR GROWTH HAVE EXPERIENCED HIGH INFLATION RATES; CHINA'S INFLATION STILL LOOKS QUITE MODEST BY COMPARISON TO SOME," MR MILLER SAID.

"ALL CREDIT TO THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT THAT IT HAS TAKEN THE ISSUE SO SERIOUSLY, AND HAS RESPONDED WITH A BROAD RANGE OF STEADY ADJUSTMENTS. JUST HOW SUCCESSFUL THEY WILL BE REMAINS TO BE SEEN."

"WHAT IS CLEAR, IS THE DETERMINATION TO GET THE SITUATION UNDER FIRM CONTROL WITHOUT CAUSING RECESSION. THIS MUST BE GOOD NEWS FOR HONG KONG," HE ADDED.

"IT MAY MEAN A SLIGHT LOWERING IN OUR EXPECTATIONS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE SHORT TERM, THOUGH THE TRADE FIGURES SHOW LITTLE EFFECT SO FAR, AND THE GDP GROWTH FORECAST THIS YEAR STILL STANDS AT 5.5 PER CENT."

/"IT CERTAINLY

"IT CERTAINLY SHOULD MEAN A BETTER CHANCE OF ACHIEVING HONG KONG'S LONG-TERM ANNUAL ECONOMIC GROWTH FORECAST OF 5 PER CENT IN THE YEARS AHEAD, GIVEN STEADIER, MORE CONTROLLED GROWTH ACROSS THE BORDER."

ON CHINA'S MOST FAVOURED NATION STATUS, MR MILLER CAUTIONED THAT 1994 WOULD BE A DIFFICULT YEAR FOR HONG KONG.

HE SAID: "PRESIDENT CLINTON'S EXECUTIVE ORDER MAKES THIS MORE OF A BILATERAL ISSUE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA THAN EVER BEFORE."

"AS THE ANNUAL JUNE 3 DEADLINE APPROACHES YET AGAIN, AND HONG KONG NERVES BECOME TAUT, THE TEMPTATION TO INDULGE IN HIGH-PROFILE LOBBYING GESTURES WILL INCREASE. BUT THEY RISK HONG KONG BEING ASKED TO SPEAK ON CHINA'S BEHALF, SOMETHING CHINA MIGHT REASONABLY RESENT.

"THERE IS A GOOD DEAL WE MUST DO, QUIETLY TALKING TO U.S. BUSINESSES WITH MUTUAL INTERESTS IN THIS REGION. WE WILL CONTINUE OUR FAR-RANGING EFFORTS TO REMIND U.S. OFFICIALS AND POLITICIANS OF THE POTENTIAL DAMAGE TO HONG KONG. AND HONG KONG BUSINESSMEN WILL BE TALKING TO THEIR CONTACTS IN BEIJING.

"BUT VITAL TO THE SUCCESS OF ALL THESE EFFORTS WILL BE A LOW-PROFILE APPROACH AND A SENSITIVE MESSAGE."

STRESSING THE UNITED STATES' VITAL ROLE IN THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM, MR MILLER SAID PRESIDENT CLINTON HAD PUT A HIGH PRIORITY ON TRADE ISSUES.

"HE IS PUSHING TO DEVELOP THE ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION FORUM; HE HAS INVESTED CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL CAPITAL IN THE NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT; AND HE ACHIEVED A STRONG VOTE OF CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL FOR RENEWING HIS NEGOTIATING AUTHORITY IN THE URUGUAY ROUND."

"HE HAS SAID OF THE URUGUAY ROUND THAT 'WORLD ECONOMIC PROSPERITY DEPENDS UPON IT. IT'S THE FOUNDATION OF THE GLOBAL TRADING SYSTEM.' HE IS RIGHT. AND WE NEED THE MORAL LEADERSHIP WHICH ONLY THE U.S. SEEMS CAPABLE OF PROVIDING TO PULL OFF THIS AGREEMENT SUCCESSFULLY."

"URUGUAY ROUND FAILURE WOULD BE A SLOW-MOTION DISASTER. NOTHING IMMEDIATE. NO SUDDEN JOB LOSSES. BUT A STEADY BUILD UP IN TRADE DISPUTES, TRADE HARASSMENT, INCREASED PROTECTION AND TRADE RETALIATION, CHOKING-OFF PROSPECTS OF REVIVING THE WORLD'S FLAGGING ECONOMY."

MR MILLER SAID: "THE URUGUAY ROUND IS TEETERING ON A KNIFE-EDGE. THE PROBLEM IS THIS: THE SHORT-TERM POLITICAL COSTS ARE IMMEDIATE AND OBVIOUS; THE BENEFITS WILL TAKE LONGER TO MATERIALISE."

"TO POLITICIANS IN THE WORLD'S DEMOCRACIES THAT IS NOT EASY TO SELL. VAGUELY DEFINED PROMISES OF IMPROVEMENTS BY SOME UNSPECIFIED FUTURE DATE WEIGH LITTLE AGAINST THE PROSPECT OF JOB LOSSES IN PROTECTED INDUSTRIES SUDDENLY FACED WITH DIRECT INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION.

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"THE URUGUAY ROUND IS FACED WITH ITS FIRST REAL DEADLINE," HE ADDED. "IF THE DETAILS OF AN AGREEMENT ARE NOT REPORTED TO THE U.S. CONGRESS BY DECEMBER 15, THE GAME IS OVER. I SIMPLY CANNOT SEE THE U.S. CONGRESS EXTENDING THE PRESIDENT'S NEGOTIATING AUTHORITY YET AGAIN."

MR MILLER ALSO COMMENTED ON TEXTILES ISSUES.

"OUR TALKS WITH THE VISITING U.S. CHIEF TEXTILE NEGOTIATOR AND HER TEAM LAST WEEK WENT WELL," HE SAID. "WE EMPHASISED OUR COMMITMENT TO COMBATING FRAUDULENT TRANSHIPMENT AND SHOWED THEM OUR SYSTEM. THEY SEEMED IMPRESSED, PARTICULARLY SO BY THE NEW TEXTILES TRADER REGISTRATION SCHEME WE INTRODUCED ON JULY 1."

"THE NEW SCHEME HAS BEEN WELCOMED BY A GREAT MANY TRADERS," MR MILLER ADDED. "ABOUT 18,000 HAVE REGISTERED SO FAR. IT INVOLVES SHIPPERS AND FREIGHT FORWARDERS IN SOME EXTRA WORK. NOT EASY WE KNOW. BUT THE FACT IS, THE NEW SCHEME IS PROVING A VERY VALUABLE ADDITION TO THE DEFENCE OF HONG KONG'S COMMERCIAL INTEGRITY."

MR MILLER ENDED HIS SPEECH ON AN OPTIMISTIC NOTE:

"I HAVE NEVER KNOWN HONG KONG WITHOUT SOME DAUNTING CHALLENGES AHEAD; CERTAINLY NO EXCEPTION TODAY. BUT THE POSSIBILITIES FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH ARE TREMENDOUS.

"A RECENT ARTICLE ON HONG KONG'S PROSPECTS BY THE FORMER EDITOR OF THE TIMES, LORD REES MOGG, REPRODUCED IN THE SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST RANG TRUE FOR ME. AND ITS HEADLINE IS THE THOUGHT I WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE YOU WITH TODAY: 'THIS WILL BE THE RICHEST CITY THE WORLD HAS SEEN'," HE SAID.

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POPULATION FIGURE UPDATES

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THE ESTIMATED POPULATION OF HONG KONG AT THE END OF JUNE THIS YEAR WAS 5,919,000, ACCORDING TO FIGURES RELEASED TODAY (TUESDAY) BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

THIS REPRESENTS AN INCREASE OF 107,500 PERSONS OR 1.8 PER CENT OVER MID-1992 WHEN THE ESTIMATED POPULATION WAS 5,811,500.

BETWEEN MID-1992 AND MID-1993, THERE WERE 72,400 BIRTHS AND 29,900 DEATHS IN HONG KONG. THE BALANCE OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS THUS AMOUNTED TO 42,500.

DURING THE SAME PERIOD, THE BALANCE OF TOTAL ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES SHOWED A NET INFLOW OF 65,000 PERSONS.

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TARIFF DATABASE DEMONSTRATION SESSIONS

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THREE DEMONSTRATION SESSIONS OF A TARIFF DATABASE SYSTEM CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE ASIA PACIFIC ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (APEC) WILL BE ARRANGED LATER THIS WEEK FOR TRADERS AND CIVIL SERVANTS.

THE TARIFF DATABASE HAS BEEN ENDORSED BY APEC SUBJECT TO A VIABILITY STUDY IN ALL 15 MEMBER ECONOMIES. HONG KONG IS A MEMBER OF APEC.

IT IS AN ELECTRONIC NETWORK FOR THE PROVISION OF COMPUTERISED INFORMATION ON TARIFF SCHEDULES OF APEC MEMBERS BASED ON THE HARMONISED COMMODITY DESCRIPTION AND CODING SYSTEM.

SUBJECT TO THE VIABILITY STUDY, THE DATABASE WILL BE OPENED FOR USE BY THE TRADE COMMUNITY, GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS OR OTHER PRIVATE SECTORS THAT HAVE INTERESTS IN THE TARIFF STRUCTURES OF OTHER APEC MEMBER ECONOMIES.

ORGANISED BY THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT, THE DEMONSTRATION SESSIONS WILL BE HELD AT THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT CONFERENCE HALL, NEW ANNEXE TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES, LOWER ALBERT ROAD.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO COVER THE DEMONSTRATION SESSION TO BE HELD AT 2.30 PM ON FRIDAY (SEPTEMBER 17) IN THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT CONFERENCE HALL, NEW ANNEXE TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES.

FURTHER ENQUIRIES MAY BE MADE OF SENIOR INSPECTOR MS LINDA TSUI LOK-YEE ON TEL 852 3503.

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ACC MEMBERS BRIEFED ON PROGRESS OF WEST KOWLOON ROAD WORKS

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MEMBERS OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT OF THE AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WERE TODAY (TUESDAY) BRIEFED ON THE LATEST PROGRESS OF THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME ROAD WORKS IN WEST KOWLOON, FOLLOWED BY A SITE VISIT THERE.

MEMBERS WERE FIRST BRIEFED BY CHIEF ENGINEER OF THE HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT, MR ROBERT LLOYD, ON THE SCOPE AND ALIGNMENT OF THE FUTURE WEST KOWLOON EXPRESSWAY AND ASSOCIATED TRAFFIC INTERCHANGES.

/THE WEST

THE WEST KOWLOON EXPRESSWAY, TO BE BUILT ENTIRELY ON THE RECLAIMED LAND OF THE WEST KOWLOON RECLAMATION, WILL LINK THE WESTERN HARBOUR CROSSING TOLL PLAZA WITH THE KWAI CHUNG VIADUCT OF ROUTE 3.

MEMBERS NOTED THAT WORKS FOR THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN SECTIONS OF THE EXPRESSWAY STARTED ON AUGUST 2 AND AUGUST 31 RESPECTIVELY. BOTH ARE SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION IN LATE 1996.

THE CONTRACTS INCLUDE THE CONSTRUCTION OF TWO INTERCHANGES AT YAU MA TEI AND LAI WAN, A DUAL THREE-LANE ROAD RUNNING ALONG THE EXPRESSWAY, AN UNDERPASS AT CHERRY STREET, A RAILWAY TRACK DRAINAGE AND FORMATION, TWO FOOTBRIDGES AND RECLAMATION DRAINAGE CULVERTS.

MEMBERS WERE ALSO TOLD THAT THE WESTERN HARBOUR CROSSING, THE OTHER MAJOR ROAD PROJECT ON THE WEST KOWLOON RECLAMATION, STARTED CONSTRUCTION ON AUGUST 2, WITH THE AIM OF COMPLETING THE WORKS WITHIN 47 MONTHS.

AFTER THE BRIEFING, ACC MEMBERS VISITED THE WEST KOWLOON AREA FOR A CLOSE-UP VIEW OF THE ROAD WORKS THERE.

OVERLOOKING THE RECLAMATION AREA FROM A VANTAGE POINT, MEMBERS WERE AGAIN BRIEFED BY MR LLOYD ON FEATURES OF THE FUTURE ROADS AND INTERCHANGES IN RELATION TO THE EXISTING TOPOGRAPHY.

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SPORT DRIVE TO PROMOTE HEALTHY LIFESTYLE FOR STUDENTS

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MANY PEOPLE THINK THAT EDUCATION IS ONLY CONCERNED WITH THE ACQUISITION OF ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE.

IT IS NOT SO SIMPLE, THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR DOMINIC S W WONG, SAID TODAY (TUESDAY).

IN LAUNCHING THE "GO! SPORT" PROGRAMME, MR WONG SAID EDUCATION ALSO PLACED EMPHASIS ON THE PROCESS THROUGH WHICH YOUNG PEOPLE DEVELOPED AS INDIVIDUALS AND LEARNED TO ADAPT TO SOCIETY.

HE SAID THE PROGRAMME WAS AIMED AT PROMOTING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE AMONG STUDENTS AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN SPORTS FOR FUN.

SPONSORED BY HONG KONG TELECOM AND ORGANISED BY THE HONG KONG SPORTS DEVELOPMENT BOARD, THE PROGRAMME WAS ALSO AIMED AT HELPING STUDENTS RELIEVE LEARNING PRESSURES AND BUILDING UP THEIR CHARACTER.

POINTING OUT THAT SPORT WAS AN INTEGRAL PART OF EDUCATION, MR WONG SAID IT WOULD NOT ONLY PROMOTE HEALTH BUT ALSO TEACH PEOPLE TO:

* WORK AS A TEAM;

/* HONOURABLY ACCEPT

* HONOURABLY ACCEPT SUCCESS AND DEFEAT; AND

* LEARN TO APPRECIATE PRAISE AND CRITICISM FROM OTHERS.

"THE SUBJECT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IS, THEREFORE, AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM AT VARIOUS LEVELS OF SCHOOLING IN HONG KONG," MR WONG SAID.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, HE SAID, ENCOURAGED A WIDE RANGE OF SPORT ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS, AND CASH SUPPORT WAS GIVEN TO SCHOOLS FOR ORGANISING EXTRACURRICULAR SPORT ACTIVITIES.

THE DEPARTMENT ALSO SUBSIDISES THE HONG KONG SCHOOLS SPORTS COUNCIL, THE HONG KONG SPORTS ASSOCIATION AND THE NEW TERRITORIES SCHOOLS SPORTS ASSOCIATION, ALL OF WHICH ORGANISE REGULAR SPORTS PROGRAMMES FOR SCHOOLS.

"WE LIAISE ALSO WITH OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS IN ORDER TO ORGANISE TRAINING COURSES AND COMPETITIONS FOR OUR STUDENTS," HE SAID.

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MATERNITY PROTECTION FOR FEMALE WORKERS

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A FEMALE WORKER, WHO HAS BEEN EMPLOYED FOR NOT LESS THAN 12 WEEKS, IS PROTECTED UNDER THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE (EO) FROM TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT FROM THE DATE SHE GIVES NOTICE OF HER INTENTION TO TAKE MATERNITY LEAVE UNTIL THE DATE SHE RETURNS TO WORK.

TO HELP WORKERS UNDERSTAND IN SIMPLE TERMS THE MATERNITY PROTECTION PROVISIONS OF THE EO, THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT HAS PREPARED A NEW LEAFLET FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION AT ITS LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICE OFFICES.

INCLUDED IN THE LEAFLET WAS A STANDARD FORM OF NOTICE SPECIFYING THE EXPECTED DATE OF CONFINEMENT AND THE DATE ON WHICH THE MATERNITY LEAVE IS TO START, TO HELP EMPLOYEES COMPLY WITH THEIR OBLIGATION UNDER THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE.

THERE IS ALSO A DECLARATION FORM TO ENABLE FEMALE WORKERS TO MAKE STATUTORY DECLARATION TO VERIFY THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN SHE HAS IN ORDER TO CLAIM MATERNITY LEAVE PAY.

SENIOR LABOUR OFFICER, MR FRANCIS HO, SAID TODAY (TUESDAY) THAT UNDER THE EO, A FEMALE EMPLOYEE WHO HAD WORKED FOR THE SAME EMPLOYER UNDER A CONTINUOUS CONTRACT FOR A PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN 26 WEEKS WAS ENTITLED TO MATERNITY LEAVE.

"IF A FEMALE WORKER HAS WORKED CONTINUOUSLY FOR THE EMPLOYER FOR A PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN 40 WEEKS BEFORE THE EXPECTED DATE OF HER STARTING THE MATERNITY LEAVE AND SHE HAS NO MORE THAN TWO SURVIVING CHILDREN, SHE IS ALSO ENTITLED TO MATERNITY LEAVE PAY," MR HO SAID.

THE MATERNITY LEAVE PAY IS CALCULATED AT THE RATE OF TWO THIRDS OF HER MONTHLY SALARY.

IF A FEMALE WORKER IS EMPLOYED ON PIECE RATE OR WHERE HER DAILY WAGES VARY FROM DAY TO DAY, THE RATE IS TWO THIRDS OF HER DAILY AVERAGE WAGE DURING EVERY COMPLETE WAGE PERIOD, COMPRISING NOT LESS THAN 28 DAYS AND NOT MORE THAN 31 DAYS, PRECEDING THE LEAVE.

MR HO REMINDED EMPLOYERS THAT THEY WERE NOT ALLOWED TO PAY WAGES IN LIEU OF MATERNITY LEAVE.

"IT IS ALSO AN OFFENCE IF THE EMPLOYER TERMINATES THE FEMALE WORKER'S CONTRACT DURING THE PERIOD FROM THE DATE SHE GIVES NOTICE OF HER INTENTION TO TAKE MATERNITY LEAVE UNTIL THE DATE ON WHICH SHE IS DUE TO RETURN TO WORK," HE SAID.

IN OTHER WORDS, AN EMPLOYEE IS PROTECTED FROM DISMISSAL ONCE THE NOTICE IS GIVEN TO HER EMPLOYER AND THE PROTECTION IS NOT DEPENDENT ON THE IMMEDIATE PROVISION OF A MEDICAL CERTIFICATE.

"THIS IS BECAUSE UNDER THE EO, THERE IS NO REQUIREMENT THAT AT THE TIME THE NOTICE IS LODGED WITH THE EMPLOYER, IT HAS TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY A MEDICAL CERTIFICATE."

NOR DOES THE LAW SET A TIME LIMIT FOR THE EMPLOYEE TO PRODUCE THE CERTIFICATE CERTIFYING THE PREGNANCY AND SPECIFYING THE EXPECTED DATE OF CONFINEMENT, HE ADDED.

EMPLOYERS BREACHING THE PROVISIONS WOULD BE LIABLE TO A MAXIMUM FINE OF \$10,000.

THE EMPLOYER WILL ALSO HAVE TO PAY THE SUM WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN PAYABLE IF THE CONTRACT HAS BEEN TERMINATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS TERMS, THE MATERNITY LEAVE PAY FOR 10 WEEKS AND A FURTHER SUM EQUIVALENT TO SEVEN DAYS' WAGES.

"TO AVOID UNNECESSARY MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND DISPUTES, EMPLOYEES INTENDING TO TAKE MATERNITY LEAVE SHOULD CONSIDER USING THE STANDARD FORM OF NOTICE AS FAR AS PRACTICABLE," HE ADDED.

MR HO ALSO APPEALED TO PREGNANT EMPLOYEES TO MAKE DECLARATION, USING THE ATTACHED FORM IN THE LEAFLET, AT THE 11 LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICE OFFICES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BECAUSE THEY MUST PRODUCE TO THEIR EMPLOYERS A STATUTORY DECLARATION VERIFYING THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN AT THE TIME WHEN THE NOTICE OF INTENTION TO TAKE LEAVE IS SERVED.

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PROPER LABELLING FOR PREPACKAGED FOOD REQUIRED

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FOOD WHOLESALERS AND RETAILERS MUST PROPERLY LABEL OR MARK PREPACKAGED FOOD ITEMS, WHETHER COMPLETELY OR PARTIALLY PACKED, AS STIPULATED BY THE THIRD SCHEDULE TO THE FOOD AND DRUGS (COMPOSITION AND LABELLING) REGULATIONS.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SAID TODAY (TUESDAY) THAT OFFENDERS WERE SUBJECT TO A MAXIMUM FINE OF \$25,000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR SIX MONTHS UPON CONVICTION.

THE REMINDER WAS ISSUED FOLLOWING TWO COURT CASES IN WESTERN MAGISTRACY IN WHICH TWO FOOD SHOP OPERATORS IN SHEUNG WAN WERE FINED A TOTAL OF \$3,100 AFTER THEY PLEADED GUILTY OF SELLING IMPROPERLY LABELLED PREPACKAGED SWEETENED LOTUS SEED, PRESERVED RAISIN AND PRESERVED MELON.

THE COURT WAS TOLD THAT THE FOOD SOLD BY THE TWO DEFENDANTS WERE NOT MARKED OR LABELLED WITH THE NAME OR DESIGNATION OF THE FOOD, THE LIST OF INGREDIENTS, AN INDICATION OF ITS MINIMUM DURABILITY, NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE MANUFACTURER AND THE NUMERICAL COUNT OF THE CONTENTS OR THE NET WEIGHT OF THE FOOD AS REQUIRED BY THE REGULATIONS.

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GOVT TO STRENGTHEN SERVICES IN TA KWU LING

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY, HEALTH AND WELFARE SERVICES IN TA KWU LING, THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR NEW TERRITORIES, MR ALBERT LAM, SAID TODAY (TUESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE TA KWU LING RURAL CENTRE GOVERNMENT BUILDING IN NORTH DISTRICT, MR LAM SAID THE NEW STRUCTURE COULD WELL SERVE THIS END AND WAS A SOLID PROOF OF THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO LOCAL COMMUNITY PROJECTS.

THE THREE-STOREY BUILDING WILL PROVIDE A RANGE OF COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES WITH GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS RENDERING WELFARE, MEDICAL AND POSTAL SERVICES, HE SAID.

THE SUB-OFFICE FOR THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION'S NORTH DISTRICT WILL ENHANCE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE DISTRICT OFFICE AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY WHILE THE COMMUNITY HALL WILL ENABLE LOCAL GROUPS TO ORGANISE CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

APART FROM A SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT WELFARE SUB-OFFICE, AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC AND A POST OFFICE, THE BUILDING ALSO ACCOMMODATES A LIBRARY-CUM-READING ROOM AND A JUNIOR POLICE CALL ACTIVITIES CENTRE.

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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1993

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AIR QUALITY REPORT FOR AUGUST

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT TODAY (TUESDAY) RELEASED AIR QUALITY INFORMATION FOR AUGUST.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID THE PURPOSE OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS TO KEEP THE PUBLIC INFORMED OF THE AIR QUALITY LEVELS IN THE TERRITORY AND TO EXPLAIN THE MEASUREMENTS.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT NORMALLY CONTAINS MONITORING RESULTS OBTAINED AT ITS MONG KOK, CENTRAL/WESTERN AND KWAI CHUNG MONITORING STATIONS.

THE LOCATIONS ARE TYPICAL OF THREE OF THE IMPORTANT LAND USE TYPES FOUND IN THE TERRITORY:

- * LOCATIONS CLOSE TO ROAD TRAFFIC IN BUILT-UP URBAN DISTRICTS,
- * COMBINED COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS, AND
- * DISTRICTS CLOSE TO INDUSTRIAL AREAS.

THE REPORTED AIR POLLUTANTS INCLUDE SULPHUR DIOXIDE (SO₂), NITROGEN DIOXIDE (NO₂), RESPIRABLE SUSPENDED PARTICULATES (RSP) AND TOTAL SUSPENDED PARTICULATES (TSP).

THE GASEOUS POLLUTANTS ARE MONITORED CONTINUOUSLY WHILE PARTICLE SAMPLES ARE COLLECTED FOR 24 HOURS, NORMALLY ONCE EVERY SIX DAYS.

FOR A PERIOD OF THREE DAYS STARTING FROM AUGUST 24, HONG KONG EXPERIENCED SIGNIFICANT DEGRADATION OF VISIBILITY AND INCREASED AIR POLLUTION LEVELS.

THE VISIBILITY REDUCTION WAS WIDESPREAD, WITH REPORTS FROM AIRCRAFT AND OTHER OBSERVATIONS INDICATING THAT HAZY CONDITIONS PREVAILED OVER COASTAL AREAS MORE THAN 100 KILOMETRES FROM HONG KONG AND UP TO HEIGHTS OF TWO KILOMETRES ABOVE THE SEA.

IN THIS EXTENSIVE AREA OF STAGNATION, CALM WIND CONDITIONS COUPLED WITH A VERY STABLE ATMOSPHERE INHIBITED DISPERSION OF AIR POLLUTANTS AND CAUSED AN AIR POLLUTION EPISODE IN HONG KONG.

ELEMENTAL ANALYSIS OF SAMPLES COLLECTED SHOWED A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF CARBON IN THE PARTICULATES, A RESULT OF DIRECT EMISSION FROM URBAN COMBUSTION SOURCES SUCH AS DIESEL ENGINES.

AN INCREASE IN SULPHATE CONTENT WAS ALSO NOTICED, MAINLY BECAUSE OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF SULPHUR DIOXIDE EMITTED BY FUEL BURNING SOURCES INTO SULPHATE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF VERY STABLE ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS.

LOCAL WINDS GRADUALLY PICKED UP ON AUGUST 27 AND BETTER DISPERSION CONDITIONS SUBSEQUENTLY BROUGHT DOWN POLLUTANT LEVELS.

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AT THE BEGINNING OF THE AIR POLLUTION EPISODE, THE DEPARTMENT TOOK IMMEDIATE ACTION TO ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL PARTICULATE SAMPLES AT SOME SELECTED STATIONS.

ASSOCIATED WITH THE EPISODE, THERE WERE EXCEEDANCES OF THE DAILY NO₂ OBJECTIVE OF 150 UG PER CUBIC METER AT MONG KOK AND TSP LIMIT OF 260 UG PER CUBIC METER AT KWAI CHUNG ON AUGUST 25.

AT MONG KOK, A DAILY NITROGEN DIOXIDE CONCENTRATION OF 154 UG PER CUBIC METER WAS RECORDED, WHICH WAS SLIGHTLY ABOVE THE 24-HOUR OBJECTIVE WHILE THE LEVELS AT CENTRAL/WESTERN WERE CLOSE TO THE OBJECTIVE VALUE.

NO OBSERVATION OF NO₂ WAS AVAILABLE AT KWAI CHUNG. THE ADDITIONAL PARTICULATE SAMPLE AT KWAI CHUNG ON THAT DAY REVEALED THAT TSP LEVELS EXCEEDED THE DAILY LIMIT BY 23 PER CENT AND RSP VALUES APPROACHED THE OBJECTIVE VALUE.

THE FOUR POLLUTANTS DISCUSSED HAVE DIFFERENT ORIGINS. SO₂ MOSTLY ORIGINATES FROM THE COMBUSTION OF SULPHUR CONTAINING FOSSIL FUELS.

NO₂ IS FORMED EITHER DIRECTLY DURING COMBUSTION OR, BY THE ATMOSPHERIC OXIDATION OF NITRIC OXIDE (NO) WHICH IS ALSO PRODUCED DURING COMBUSTION.

VEHICLE EXHAUST IS A MAJOR SOURCE OF NO AND NO₂. IT IS ALSO A MAJOR SOURCE OF AIRBORNE PARTICLES, OTHER SOURCES INCLUDE INDUSTRY, FURNACES AND BOILERS, CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES, THE SEA AND SOIL DUST.

THE DEPARTMENT CURRENTLY MONITORS AIR QUALITY CONTINUOUSLY AT 11 STATIONS, INCLUDING THE THREE MENTIONED ABOVE. SHORT-TERM MEASUREMENT CAMPAIGNS ARE ALSO UNDERTAKEN AS AND WHERE THE NEED ARISES.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

FURTHER ENQUIRIES CAN BE DIRECTED TO PRINCIPAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OFFICER, MR RAYMOND LEUNG ON TELEPHONE 594 6401.

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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1993

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AUCTION OF LUCKY CAR REGISTRATION MARKS

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WILL HOLD ANOTHER AUCTION OF LUCKY VEHICLE REGISTRATION MARKS ON SATURDAY (SEPTEMBER 18) AT 9.30 AM AT THE LECTURE HALL, SHEUNG WAN CIVIC CENTRE, FIFTH FLOOR, URBAN COUNCIL SHEUNG WAN COMPLEX AT 345 QUEEN'S ROAD CENTRAL, HONG KONG.

A TOTAL OF 50 LUCKY VEHICLE REGISTRATION MARKS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR BIDDING. THEY ARE:

FJ968	FH911	FJ3228	FJ338	FJ835
FH1038	FJ8288	AW8300	DR2389	FJ106
*FJ2882	*DL12	*DL8888	*FN8	*ED1122
AA7428	FJ316	FH228	HK3222	FJ7992
FG822	AR175	BL338	FJ870	FH6783
FK448	FG928	FJ3839	AA4568	FJ744
DF885	XX170	FJ322	FJ7789	FH1966
*FR4	*1230	*FK10	*FR400	*FR242
FK163	FJ1112	EB280	FJ1125	FJ594
FJ837	FH8898	FK3283	FH6661	FJ5489

* SPECIAL VEHICLE REGISTRATION MARK (NOT TRANSFERABLE)

SUCCESSFUL BIDDERS MUST PAY BY CHEQUE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE BIDDING.

A TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN REMINDED BIDDERS THAT THE VEHICLE REGISTRATION MARK WOULD BE ASSIGNED ONLY TO A VEHICLE REGISTERED IN THE NAME OF THE SUCCESSFUL BIDDER WITHIN 12 MONTHS OF THE AUCTION.

THE CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION MUST BE PRODUCED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE AUCTION IF THE VEHICLE REGISTRATION MARK IS TO BE REGISTERED UNDER THE NAME OF BODY CORPORATE.

PROCEEDS OF THE AUCTION, AFTER DEDUCTION OF EXPENSES INCURRED, WILL AS USUAL GO TO THE GOVERNMENT LOTTERIES FUND.

THE COMING AUCTION WILL BE THE 202ND ORGANISED BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SINCE MAY 1973.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
TENDER RESULTS
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TENDER DATE	14 SEPT 93	14 SEPT 93
PAPER ON OFFER	EF BILLS	EF BILLS
ISSUE NUMBER	Q337	H373
AMOUNT APPLIED	HKD4,455 MN	HKD2,170 MN
AMOUNT ALLOTTED	HKD1,000 MN	HKD400 MN
AVERAGE YIELD ACCEPTED	2.88 PCT	3.05 PCT
HIGHEST YIELD ACCEPTED	2.88 PCT	3.05 PCT
PRO RATA RATIO	ABOUT 100 PCT	ABOUT 65 PCT
AVERAGE TENDER YIELD	2.93 PCT	3.08 PCT

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

TENDERS TO BE HELD IN THE WEEK BEGINNING 20 SEPT 1993-

TENDER DATE	21 SEPT 93
PAPER ON OFFER	EF BILLS
ISSUE NUMBER	Q338
ISSUE DATE	22 SEPT 93
MATURITY DATE	22 DEC 93
TENDOR	91 DAYS
AMOUNT ON OFFER	HKD1,000 + 200 MN

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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1993

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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	\$ MILLION -----
OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	2,000
REVERSAL OF LAF	NIL
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	2,000
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	-475
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,525
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER	TWI 112.1 *+0.0* 14.9.93

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS

EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS

TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	2.86 PCT	14 MONTHS	2411	4.625	101.47	3.36
1 MONTH	2.83 PCT	17 MONTHS	2502	4.75	101.71	3.53
3 MONTHS	2.85 PCT	20 MONTHS	2505	3.75	100.05	3.75
6 MONTHS	3.00 PCT	23 MONTHS	2508	4.625	101.44	3.88
12 MONTHS	3.27 PCT					

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 11,206 MN

CLOSED 14 SEPTEMBER 1993

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