



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 1994

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TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 1994

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PROPERTY PRICES TOP GOVERNOR'S AGENDA  
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PROPERTY PRICES IS A SUBJECT THAT CONCERNS EVERYONE BECAUSE IT IS A THREAT TO THE ASPIRATIONS OF ORDINARY FAMILIES AS WELL AS HONG KONG'S COMPETITIVENESS AS AN ECONOMY, THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, SAID TODAY.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (TUESDAY), THE GOVERNOR SAID PROPERTY PRICES WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE THE NUMBER ONE DOMESTIC ISSUE ON HIS AGENDA.

"IT IS NOT AN EASY PROBLEM. THERE ARE NO SIMPLE SOLUTIONS AND WE HAVE TO TAKE GREAT CARE IN ADDRESSING IT IN CASE WE CREATE SERIOUS AND DAMAGING PROBLEMS IN THE PROPERTY MARKET AS A RESULT OF INEPT ACTION," HE SAID.

"WE HAVE TO TAKE COMPREHENSIVE MEASURES BUT WE HAVE TO TAKE MEASURES THAT WON'T CREATE DIFFERENT BUT EQUALLY SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN THE SECTOR.

"BUT I DON'T WANT US TO GO OFF AT HALF-COCK, I WANT US TO COME FORWARD WITH A COMPREHENSIVE SET OF PROPOSALS. THAT IS WHAT OFFICIALS ARE WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT AND I HOPE THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE SOME ANNOUNCEMENTS IN THE EARLY SUMMER."

ASKED ABOUT THE NEW TERRITORIES LAND (EXEMPTION) BILL, MR PATTEN SAID HE HOPED THAT RESIDENTS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WOULD BE FULLY INFORMED ABOUT WHAT WAS IN THE BILL AND IN THE AMENDMENT RATHER THAN WHAT SOME PEOPLE WERE TELLING THEM WAS IN THE BILL AND IN THE AMENDMENT.

"THEY ARE NOT HAVING ANY RIGHT TAKEN AWAY, THEY ARE STILL ABLE TO MAKE WILLS IF THEY WISH TO DO SO BUT WHAT IS BEING PROVIDED FOR IS FREEDOM OF CHOICE."

HE ALSO NOTED THE RESPONSES TO THE DISCUSSION DOCUMENT ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEN AND WOMEN.

"THAT DOCUMENT RECEIVED 1,100 RESPONSES AND 90% OF THEM SAID THAT WE SHOULD ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF INHERITANCE RIGHTS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES," HE SAID.

HE STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS TRYING TO RESPOND AS POSITIVELY AS POSSIBLE TO THE COMMENTS FROM THE COMMUNITY, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME BEHAVING AS REASONABLY AS POSSIBLE TO THOSE IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WHO HAD WORRIES AND ANXIETIES ABOUT THIS PARTICULAR POINT.

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GOVERNOR SPEAKS TO PRESS AFTER EXCO MEETING

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GOVERNOR: GOOD MORNING, SINCE I AM GOING BACK TO EUROPE THIS EVENING I THOUGHT I WOULD GIVE YOU A CHANCE OF ASKING SOME QUESTIONS NOW RATHER THAN OBLIGE YOU TO COME OUT TO THE AIRPORT AT HALF-PAST TEN OR A QUARTER-TO-ELEVEN. SO I JUST GIVE YOU DUE NOTICE THAT I'LL ANSWER QUESTIONS NOW BUT I WILL GO THROUGH THE AIRPORT TONIGHT, I TRUST, LIKE A KNIFE THROUGH BUTTER.

I AM GOING BACK FOR A ROUTINE VISIT TO LONDON, VIA DUBLIN WHERE I AM DELIVERING THE SECOND INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERS' LECTURE AT TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN, TOMORROW NIGHT. I AM THEN GOING ON TO LONDON ON THURSDAY AND DURING MY VISIT TO LONDON I WILL BE SEEING THE FOREIGN SECRETARY, A NUMBER OF OTHER MINISTERS INCLUDING MR GOODLAD, I WILL BE SEEING SENIOR OFFICIALS, I WILL BE SEEING MEMBERS OF THE HONG KONG COMMUNITY IN LONDON. IT WILL BE A FAIRLY STANDARD VISIT AND AS YOU KNOW, I HAVE SET A PATTERN OF ABOUT FOUR OR FIVE OF THESE VISITS A YEAR, LIKE MY PREDECESSOR, AND THE NEXT ONE, I GUESS, WILL BE IN THE EARLY SUMMER - JUST TO SAVE YOU ANY SPECULATIVE VENTURES - I WOULD BE EXPECTING TO GO ABOUT THAT TIME.

WHEN I RETURN, CLEARLY THE NUMBER ONE DOMESTIC ISSUE ON MY AGENDA WILL BE PROPERTY PRICES. I THINK THE WHOLE COMMUNITY IS EXTREMELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE ISSUE, AS THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID IN HIS BUDGET SPEECH AND AS HE WILL SAY AGAIN IN HIS REPLY TO THE BUDGET TOMORROW. IT IS A SUBJECT WHICH CONCERNS EVERYONE BECAUSE IT IS A THREAT TO THE ASPIRATIONS OF ORDINARY FAMILIES HERE IN HONG KONG, AND WE ALL RECOGNISE, I THINK, THAT IT IS A THREAT TO OUR COMPETITIVENESS AS AN ECONOMY AS WELL. IT IS NOT AN EASY PROBLEM. THERE ARE NO SIMPLE SOLUTIONS AND WE HAVE TO TAKE GREAT CARE IN ADDRESSING IT IN CASE WE CREATE SERIOUS AND DAMAGING PROBLEMS IN THE PROPERTY MARKET AS A RESULT OF INEPT ACTION. SO WE HAVE TO TAKE COMPREHENSIVE MEASURES BUT WE HAVE TO TAKE MEASURES THAT WON'T CREATE DIFFERENT BUT EQUALLY SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN THE SECTOR.

THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE DON'T HAVE TO SHOW IMAGINATION. IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT WE DON'T HAVE TO TAKE EXCEPTIONAL MEASURES. IT IS AN EXCEPTIONAL PROBLEM AND I THINK THAT IT WILL DEMAND EXCEPTIONAL MEASURES. BUT I DON'T WANT US TO GO OFF AT HALF-COCK, I WANT US TO COME FORWARD WITH A COMPREHENSIVE SET OF PROPOSALS. THAT IS WHAT OFFICIALS ARE WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT AND I HOPE THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE SOME ANNOUNCEMENTS IN THE EARLY SUMMER. THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LAND WILL, I THINK, SAY A LITTLE MORE ON THIS SUBJECT TOMORROW, THOUGH THEY WON'T BE IN A POSITION TO SPELL OUT THE PRECISE DETAILS OF OUR PLANS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO GET RIGHT WHAT THE WHOLE COMMUNITY WANTS US, I KNOW, TO DO.

QUESTION: GOVERNOR, CHRISTINE LOH'S AMENDMENT FOR WOMEN AND MEN TO INHERIT LAND IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, ARE YOU IN FAVOUR OF IT?

/GOVERNOR: .....

GOVERNOR: IT IS VERY DIFFICULT NOT TO BE HAVING SEEN THE RESPONSES TO OUR DISCUSSION DOCUMENT ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEN AND WOMEN. THAT DOCUMENT RECEIVED 1,100 RESPONSES AND 90% OF THEM SAID THAT WE SHOULD ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF INHERITANCE RIGHTS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES. I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT AS THE BILL WHICH WE INTRODUCED - AND WHICH WE WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE SEEN THROUGH BY NOW WHICH WAS DEALING WITH THE UNFORESEEN CONSEQUENCES OF INHERITANCE RIGHTS ON PROPERTY IN THE URBAN AREAS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES - I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT THE DISCUSSIONS IN COMMITTEE WILL RESOLVE THE DIFFERENCES THAT HAVE EMERGED AND I HOPE THAT RESIDENTS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WHO PERHAPS HAVE BEEN UNDERSTANDABLY CONCERNED, WILL BE FULLY INFORMED ABOUT WHAT IS IN THE BILL AND IN THE AMENDMENT RATHER THAN WHAT SOME PEOPLE ARE TELLING THEM IS IN THE BILL AND IN THE AMENDMENT. THEY ARE NOT HAVING ANY RIGHT TAKEN AWAY, THEY ARE STILL ABLE TO MAKE WILLS IF THEY WISH TO DO SO BUT WHAT IS BEING PROVIDED FOR IS FREEDOM OF CHOICE.

BUT OBVIOUSLY, IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS WE WILL ALL BE HOPING THAT THE MATTER CAN BE RESOLVED AMICABLY AND WITHOUT THE SORT OF AGGRAVATED FEELINGS AND TENSIONS THAT HAVE EXISTED PREVIOUSLY. BUT I REPEAT WHAT I SAID EARLIER, THAT IF YOU TAKE A DISCUSSION EXERCISE SERIOUSLY, AS WE MUST DO, THEN THE FEELINGS OF THE COMMUNITY IN RESPONSE TO OUR GREEN PAPER WERE PRETTY OVERWHELMING.

QUESTION: MANY OF THE PEOPLE IN THE NEW TERRITORIES FEEL THAT THIS IS THE THIN EDGE OF THE WEDGE AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT ACTUALLY HAS IN MIND A LOT OF OTHER THINGS, INCLUDING FOR EXAMPLE, THE SMALL HOUSE POLICY, AND THAT THIS IS A WAY OF GETTING AT THOSE AND TAKING THEM AWAY. CAN YOU ASSURE THE PEOPLE IN THE NEW TERRITORIES THAT THIS IS NOT ..... ?

GOVERNOR: YES, I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE THAT REASSURANCE UNEQUIVOCALLY. THERE HAVE BEEN WORRIES EXPRESSED ABOUT SMALL HOUSES, THERE HAVE BEEN WORRIES EXPRESSED ABOUT VILLAGE BURIAL GROUNDS AND SIMILAR WORRIES, AND I HOPE THAT THEY CAN BE PUT ON ONE SIDE. THERE ARE ISSUES WHICH ARE CONTENTIOUS FROM TIME TO TIME. THE QUESTION OF INHERITANCE IS ONE OF THEM. ANOTHER ISSUE WHICH HAS BEEN CONTENTIOUS FROM TIME TO TIME IS THE APPLICATION OF PLANNING IN THE NEW TERRITORIES. AND AS YOU KNOW, WE ARE COMMITTED TO TRYING TO WORK IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WITH THE DISTRICT BOARDS AND WITH THE VILLAGERS AND WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, TO CLEAN UP THE NEW TERRITORIES BUT I DON'T THINK THAT IS SOMETHING WHICH SHOULD RAISE WORRIES OR CONCERNS. I THINK IT IS AN ENDEAVOUR IN WHICH WE SHOULD ALL BE INVOLVED. BUT YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT TO SAY THAT I THINK THERE IS A SUB-TEXT IN THIS ISSUE AND THE MORE WE CAN DENY SOME OF THE CHARGES THAT HAVE BEEN MADE, THE BETTER I THINK FOR THE DEBATE ON THE REALLY SERIOUS ISSUES.

QUESTION: YOU SAY THAT WHEN YOU COME BACK YOU ARE GOING TO MAKE THE NUMBER ONE DOMESTIC ISSUE THE PRICES OF PROPERTY. I THINK I AM SURPRISED THAT YOU ARE NOT GOING TO MAKE IT GETTING YOUR PLAN FOR CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE THROUGH LEGCO. NOW, YOU SAID A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO THAT YOU WERE GOING TO, THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO VERY VIGOROUSLY PRESS FOR THAT AND I AM SURE YOU ARE DOING THAT WITH LEGCO MEMBERS. BUT WHY DON'T WE SEE THE KIND OF PERSONAL CAMPAIGN FROM YOU THAT WE SAW AFTER YOUR SPEECH IN 1991 AND AFTER THE SECOND LEGCO --

GOVERNOR: 1992.

QUESTION: -- YES, IN 1992.

GOVERNOR: IT MAY FEEL LIKE 1991 BUT IT WAS 1992.

QUESTION: -- WELL, NONE OF US IS AS YOUNG AS WE WOULD LIKE. WHY AREN'T YOU GOING OUT YOURSELF TO PRESS THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG, TO BE SURE THAT THEY UNDERSTAND EXACTLY WHAT YOUR LAWS ARE ABOUT, SO THAT THEY CAN THEN TELL LEGCO? BECAUSE I'VE GOT THE FEELING THAT AT THE MOMENT WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS PRESSING LEGCO. I WANT TO KNOW WHY YOU'RE NOT DOING THE OLD-FASHIONED TORY CAMPAIGN OUTSIDE, TO TELL PEOPLE EXACTLY WHAT IT IS YOU WANT?

GOVERNOR: CAN I JUST MAKE A COUPLE OF CORRECTIONS. I DON'T THINK THAT I'LL RETURN FROM LONDON TO DISCOVER THAT PROPERTY PRICES ARE THE NUMBER ONE ISSUE DOMESTICALLY, I THINK THEY ARE THE NUMBER ONE ISSUE DOMESTICALLY. BUT I JUST WANTED TO CONFIRM THAT THAT IS THE WAY THE GOVERNMENT SEES THINGS AND THAT'S A PROBLEM WHICH THE GOVERNMENT, WITH THE COMMUNITY, WISHES TO ADDRESS.

CERTAINLY, I WAS MAKING A DISTINCTION BETWEEN, AS IT WERE, THE NON-POLITICAL CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES AND THE OTHERS. CERTAINLY, WE HAVE TO ENSURE THAT DURING THE COURSE OF THE SUMMER THE EXTREMELY SENSIBLE PROPOSALS THAT WE HAVE PUT TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ARE ENACTED. AND IF I LOOK BACK OVER THE LAST YEAR, THERE HAVE BEEN OCCASIONAL SQUALLS, OCCASIONAL ARGUMENTS CONDUCTED FAIRLY VOCIFEROUSLY FROM TIME TO TIME, BUT HERE WE ARE IN THE SPRING OF 1994 AND TWO-THIRDS OF OUR POLITICAL PROPOSALS ARE THROUGH AND ON THE STATUTE BOOK AND I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO THE OTHERS BEING THROUGH.

THE PROPOSALS THAT WENT THROUGH A FEW WEEKS AGO WENT THROUGH WITH, I THINK, THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATING THEM VERY THOROUGHLY AND WITH THE COMMUNITY HAVING A PRETTY GOOD NOTION OF WHAT THEY WERE ALL ABOUT. RECENT OPINION POLLS, LIKE THE POLL YESTERDAY WHICH GAVE PEOPLE'S PARTY POLITICAL PREFERENCES, DIDN'T SUGGEST THAT THE GENERAL THRUST OF OUR ARGUMENT AND OUR APPROACH WAS RUNNING INTO A BRICK WALL. SO WE WILL CONTINUE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL - AND OUTSIDE WHEN WE NEED - BUT I DON'T THINK AT THE MOMENT THAT IT REQUIRES ANY MORE HIGH PROFILE ACTIVITY ON MY PART. I'M CONFIDENT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE A SUFFICIENTLY GOOD CASE ON THESE PROPOSALS TO SEE THEM FIRMLY ENTRENCHED ON THE STATUTE BOOK. THAT'S OUR AMBITION AND OUR INTENTION AND THAT'S WHAT WE WILL BE WORKING FOR AND ARGUING FOR AFTER THE SUMMER BUT THERE ARE OTHER ISSUES THAT MATTER AS WELL.

THE REASON WHY THE POLITICAL ISSUE MATTERS SO MUCH IS BECAUSE IT IS SO INTIMATELY TIED UP WITH OUR FUTURE WELL-BEING AS A COMMUNITY, SO INTIMATELY TIED UP WITH THE FUTURE OF THE RULE OF LAW AND WITH THE FUTURE OF THE OTHER VALUES AND FREEDOMS THAT MATTER SO MUCH IN THIS COMMUNITY.

ONE FINAL POINT, THE BILLS COMMITTEE HAS STARTED TO LOOK AT THIS PARTICULAR MEASURE. THEY HAD AN EXTREMELY GOOD DISCUSSION YESTERDAY LASTING ABOUT AN HOUR-AND-A-HALF. IT WAS DETAILED AND INTELLIGENT AND THOUGHTFUL - QUIET, THERE WERE NO VERBAL FISTICUFFS - IT WAS AN INTELLIGENT DISCUSSION. I'M SURE THAT IS HOW THE DISCUSSION WILL CONTINUE AND I WAS ALSO IMPRESSED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OBVIOUSLY WANT TO MAKE PROGRESS AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE, SO WE CAN GET THIS ISSUE RESOLVED AS SOON AS MAY BE.

QUESTION: MR PATTEN, REFERRING TO MISS CHRISTINE LOH'S AMENDMENT, CAN YOU SAY WHY THE GOVERNMENT - BECAUSE THERE ARE CRITICISMS FROM THE NEW TERRITORIES RESIDENTS - WHY THE GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS THIS CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE AT THE LATTER HALF OF THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD, WITHOUT CONSULTING THE CHINESE SIDE? IS THERE A CONSPIRACY BEHIND THIS SUPPORTIVE POSITION? OR YOU, AS A GRADUATE IN HISTORY, YOU SHOULD PAY RESPECT TO THE COLONIAL HISTORY CONCERNING THE NEW TERRITORIES LEASE.

GOVERNOR: I THINK THAT IF I OR ANY OTHER GOVERNOR OR CHIEF SECRETARY HAD A TEN DOLLAR BILL FOR EVERY TIME WE HAVE BEEN SAID TO BE PART OF SOME CONSPIRACY, WE'D RETIRE EXTREMELY RICH. I THINK THAT THE SUGGESTION IS LITERALLY AND IN EVERY PARTICULAR, LUDICROUS. WE PUT FORWARD A BILL BEFORE CHRISTMAS TO DEAL WITH WHAT EVERYBODY IN THE COMMUNITY AGREED WAS A SERIOUS PROBLEM: THE UNFORESEEN APPLICATION OF TRADITIONAL INHERITANCE RIGHTS TO PROPERTY IN THE NEW TERRITORIES. IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, ASK THE 340,000 FAMILIES WHO WERE AFFECTED, IN NEW KOWLOON AND IN THE NEW TOWNS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES. THEN AFTER A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THE NEW TERRITORIES THOUGHT THE BILL HAD BECOME LAW, THIS AMENDMENT WAS PUT DOWN AND IT WAS PUT DOWN WITHIN WEEKS OF US HAVING TO RESPOND TO 1,100 COMMENTS ON OUR GREEN PAPER ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES.

IF WE HAD RESPONDED IN ANY OTHER WAY, YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN SUGGESTING THAT WE WERE INVOLVED IN SOME CONSPIRACY TO OVERLOOK THE 1,100 PEOPLE, 90% OF WHOM HAD RESPONDED TO THE GREEN PAPER IN A WAY WHICH QUESTIONED INHERITANCE RIGHTS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES. WHAT YOU HAVE HERE ISN'T A CONSPIRACY, ISN'T EVEN THE SMALLEST CONSPIRACY IN HUMAN HISTORY, WHAT YOU HAVE HERE IS A GOVERNMENT TRYING TO RESPOND AS POSITIVELY AS POSSIBLE TO THE COMMENTS FROM THE COMMUNITY, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME BEHAVING AS REASONABLY AS POSSIBLE TO THOSE IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WHO HAVE WORRIES AND ANXIETIES ABOUT THIS PARTICULAR POINT.

QUESTION: MR PATTEN, DO YOU FEEL THAT THE SETTING UP OF A HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION WOULD HELP TO RESOLVE THE QUESTION OF THE NEW TERRITORIES INHERITANCE RIGHTS?

GOVERNOR: I DON'T THINK THE SETTING UP OF A HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION WOULD MAKE VERY MUCH DIFFERENCE TO THIS ISSUE, NO. BUT THERE ARE ALL OBVIOUSLY IMPORTANT ISSUES THAT WE HAVE TO ADDRESS WHICH HAVE BEEN RAISED BY A NUMBER OF LEGISLATORS, INVOLVING DISCRIMINATION, INVOLVING A COMMISSION FOR WOMEN, INVOLVING A COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND INVOLVING OTHER MATTERS, AND WE WILL BE DISCUSSING THOSE DURING THE COURSE OF THE SUMMER.

QUESTION: DO YOU EXPECT TO DISCUSS THE PERGAU DAM AFFAIRS ?

GOVERNOR: NO.

QUESTION: REGARDING LAND, TWO THINGS: DO YOU INTEND TO BRING UP WITH THE CHINESE THE QUESTION OF ALLOWING MORE LAND TO COME ON TO THE PROPERTY MARKET IN ORDER TO EASE SOME OF THE PRESSURE? POINT NUMBER ONE. AND SECOND, PROBABLY ONE OF THE MORE CONTROVERSIAL PROPOSALS WOULD BE TO GIVE DEVELOPERS THE POWER OF RESUMPTION - ON THEIR BEHALF - DO YOU PLAN TO DO THAT?

GOVERNOR: ON THE FIRST QUESTION, I THINK IT IS AN OPEN SECRET THAT WE WILL BE TALKING TO THE CHINESE SIDE THROUGH THE USUAL CHANNELS ABOUT LAND AND THE AMOUNT OF LAND COMING ON TO THE MARKET. THERE ARE ARGUMENTS, WHICH I THINK HAVE BEEN PUT BY SOME DEVELOPERS AMONG OTHERS, AS WELL AS BY LEGISLATORS, FOR BRINGING FORWARD MORE LAND.

THERE'S ANOTHER WHOLE RANGE OF ISSUES LOCKED INTO THE QUESTION OF REDEVELOPING EXISTING LAND, REDEVELOPING URBAN AREAS, WHICH NEED TO BE ADDRESSED, INCLUDING THE EXTENT TO WHICH PRIVATE DEVELOPERS CAN MAKE CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEVELOP THE INFRASTRUCTURE RATHER THAN WAITING FOR PUBLIC EXPENDITURE INVESTMENT. THOSE ARE SOME OF THE ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED. THEY ARE ALL THE THINGS WE ARE LOOKING AT. I DARE SAY THAT THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LAND WILL BE SAYING A BIT MORE TOMORROW. BUT WHAT I DON'T WANT TO DO IS TO ANNOUNCE AN APPROACH IN DRIBS AND DRABS. I THINK THE COMMUNITY WOULD LIKE US PROBABLY TO TRY TO TIE EVERYTHING TOGETHER AND MAKE AS COMPREHENSIVE A STATEMENT AS POSSIBLE.

QUESTION: MR PATTEN, WOULD YOU SAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS SUPPORTIVE TO THE SETTING UP OF A HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION? AS YOU SAID, IT MAY HELP IN RESOLVING PROBLEMS OF ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND MATTERS ...

GOVERNOR: WELL, THAT IS NOT ACTUALLY WHAT I SAID, IT'S ALMOST THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT I SAID. BUT WE WILL BE DISCUSSING THOSE ISSUES WITH THE LEGISLATORS WHO ARE BRINGING FORWARD THEIR PROPOSALS IN THE COMING WEEKS. THANKS VERY MUCH INDEED.

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#### CAMPAIGN TO TARGET ON 2M POTENTIAL VOTERS

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A MAJOR VOTER REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN WILL BE IMPLEMENTED BOTH AT THE CENTRAL AND DISTRICT LEVELS IN THE NEXT THREE MONTHS TO CALL ON TWO MILLION ELIGIBLE VOTERS TO REGISTER FOR THE POLLS.

SPEAKING TODAY (TUESDAY) AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE VOTER REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN 1994, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION, MR JUSTICE WOO KWOK-HING, HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE OF VOTER REGISTRATION IN THE LEAD-UP TO THE COMING ELECTIONS.

"IT IS OUR CITIZENS' RIGHT TO REGISTER AS ELECTORS, WHICH IS A PREREQUISITE FOR VOTING OR PARTICIPATION IN THE DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS ON SEPTEMBER 18 THIS YEAR AND THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS ON MARCH 5 NEXT YEAR," MR JUSTICE WOO SAID.

"THROUGH THE ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS OR COUNCILLORS, OUR EXPECTATIONS IN LIFE ARE REFLECTED TO THE GOVERNMENT," HE SAID, ECHOING THE CAMPAIGN SLOGAN "MAKE YOURSELF HEARD, REGISTER TO VOTE".

ON THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR REGISTRATION, HE SAID: "THOSE REACHING THE AGE OF 18 ON JUNE 30 THIS YEAR OR OVER, AND ARE PERMANENT RESIDENTS OR HAVE ORDINARILY LIVED IN HONG KONG FOR THE SEVEN YEARS PRECEDING THE DATE OF APPLICATION ARE ELIGIBLE."

THERE ARE 3.9 MILLION ELIGIBLE VOTERS, OF WHICH 1.94 MILLION PEOPLE HAVE BEEN REGISTERED.

A WORKING GROUP ON PUBLICITY FORMED UNDER THE COMMISSION AND CONVENED BY MR NORMAN LEUNG NAI-PANG IS TASKED TO FORMULATE THE PUBLICITY STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENT EXTENSIVE AND INTENSIVE PROGRAMMES FOR THE TWO MILLION POTENTIAL VOTERS FROM APRIL 1 TO JULY 1.

ABOUT \$6.6 MILLION WILL BE SPENT ON THESE PROGRAMMES.

"SPECIAL PUBLICITY PROGRAMMES ARE BEING ORGANISED FOR THE 200,000 ELIGIBLE VOTERS AGED BETWEEN 18 AND 21, WITH THE LOWERING OF THE VOTING AGE TO 18 FROM THIS FRIDAY (APRIL 1)," HE ADDED.

REGISTERED ELECTORS WILL ALSO BE URGED TO REPORT PROMPTLY ANY CHANGE OF HOME ADDRESS TO THE REGISTRATION AND ELECTORAL OFFICE SO THAT THEY MAY VOTE IN THE RIGHT CONSTITUENCY.

"AT THE CENTRAL LEVEL, THE CAMPAIGN WILL MAKE USE OF THE ELECTRONIC AND PRINTED MEDIA, LIGHT ELECTRONIC DISPLAY BOARDS, COUPLED WITH MTR, KCR, TRAM AND BUS ADVERTISING TO DISSEMINATE THE VOTER REGISTRATION MESSAGE TO PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE," MR JUSTICE WOO SAID.

AMONG THE PUBLICITY ITEMS ARE A SERIES OF TELEVISION AND RADIO ANNOUNCEMENTS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST AND PROGRAMMES, NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENTS, AS WELL AS SOUVENIRS.

"REGISTRATION FORMS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED AT OVER 1,500 OUTLETS, AND APPEAL LETTERS SENT TO THE POTENTIAL ELECTORATE.

"VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES WILL ALSO BE LAUNCHED IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, TERTIARY AND POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS AND YOUTH ORGANISATIONS. PLANS ARE ALSO IN HAND FOR A VOTER REGISTRATION AMBASSADOR SCHEME," HE ADDED.

PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES BEING ORGANISED BY DISTRICT OFFICES INCLUDE PUTTING UP OF POSTERS AND SIGNBOARDS, WINDOW DISPLAY, BUS PARADES, CARNIVALS, VARIETY SHOWS, DISTRIBUTION OF SOUVENIRS, SETTING UP OF TEMPORARY REGISTRATION COUNTERS AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, HOUSEHOLD VISITS BY TEMPORARY STAFF.

TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 1994

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DAMAGED SEAWALL INSPECTED

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THE BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT TODAY (TUESDAY) INSPECTED THE DAMAGED SEAWALL AND THE NEARBY SEA-FRONTING BUILDINGS ALONG THE PROMENADE AT HENG FA CHUEN, CHAI WAN.

THE INSPECTION, CARRIED OUT BY THE DEPARTMENT'S PROFESSIONAL STAFF, HAS CONFIRMED THAT THE BUILDINGS ARE SAFE.

"NO STRUCTURAL DANGER OR ANY MOVEMENT HAS BEEN DETECTED," A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT EMPHASISED.

STRUCTURAL PLANS SHOW THAT THE BUILDINGS STAND ON "BORE PILE ON ROCK".

THE DEPARTMENT'S STAFF MET WITH ENGINEERS OF MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION (MTRC) ON THE SITE THIS AFTERNOON TO DISCUSS THEIR REMEDIAL REPAIR WORK ON THE SEAWALL.

THE DEPARTMENT WAS SATISFIED THAT THE SITUATION HAS BEEN BROUGHT UNDER PROPER CONTROL BY THE MTRC AND EMERGENCY REPAIR WORK IS PROGRESSING WELL.

MTRC WILL SUBMIT A REPORT ON THE INCIDENT TO THE BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT IN DUE COURSE.

MEANWHILE, THE DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION IN THE INTEREST OF PUBLIC SAFETY.

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EFFORTS TO MAKE CONSTRUCTION SITES SAFE

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THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING TO ADOPT A THREE-PRONGED APPROACH TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS RELATING TO CONSTRUCTION HEAVY MACHINERY IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, WHICH CLAIMED 20 LIVES LAST YEAR.

THIS WAS REVEALED BY THE SECRETARY FOR WORKS, MR JAMES BLAKE, TODAY (TUESDAY) WHEN HE ADDRESSED A SEMINAR ON THE SAFE USE OF HEAVY MACHINERY ON CONSTRUCTION SITES.

HE SAID THE THREE-PRONGED APPROACH, THAT IS ENFORCEMENT, EDUCATION/TRAINING AND PROMOTION, WAS RECOMMENDED BY A WORKING GROUP SET UP LAST YEAR TO CONSIDER HOW REGULATIONS AND CONTROL OF CONSTRUCTION SITE HEAVY MACHINERY CAN BE TIGHTENED UP.

THE WORKING GROUP CONSISTS OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS.

/IT HAS .....

IT HAS BEEN EXPANDED TO INCLUDE PRIVATE SECTOR'S PARTICIPATION THROUGH THE CONSTRUCTION ADVISORY BOARD, WHICH RECEIVES DIRECTLY THE VIEWS OF THE HONG KONG REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS ASSOCIATION, THE HONG KONG CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION, AND THE HONG KONG ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL ASSOCIATION BY WAY OF MEMBERS OF THE BOARD.

AS FOR ENFORCEMENT, MR BLAKE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT ARE ACTIVELY CONSIDERING THE NEED TO CONTROL BUILDER'S LIFTS IN THE SAME MANNER AS OTHER LIFTS IN DOMESTIC AND COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS, SINCE EACH OF THEM CARRY PASSENGERS.

"NEW LEGISLATION WILL BE INTRODUCED TO EMPOWER THE DIRECTOR OF ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES AS THE ENFORCING AUTHORITY FOR BUILDER'S LIFTS AND TOWER WORKING PLATFORMS.

"FOR CRANES AND OTHER HEAVY PLANTS, STRINGENT REQUIREMENTS, SUCH AS REQUIRING THE 'COMPETENT EXAMINER' TO BE A REGISTERED ENGINEER, AND THE CERTIFICATION OF PLANT OPERATORS, WHICH WILL IMPROVE THE SAFE OPERATION OF SUCH EQUIPMENT, ARE BEING CONSIDERED."

AS FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING, HE SAID VARIOUS SAFETY COURSES WOULD CONTINUE TO BE RUN BY CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TRAINING ASSOCIATION, HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC AND THE INDUSTRY SAFETY TRAINING CENTRE.

"GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO ACTIVELY TAKE PART IN IMPROVING THE OVERALL CO-ORDINATION OF TRAINING RESOURCES."

MR BLAKE SAID THE GOVERNMENT, BEING THE LARGEST DEVELOPER, WOULD TAKE THE LEAD BY COMMITTING MORE TO SAFETY AND SAFETY PUBLICITY, SUCH AS THE ISSUANCE OF GUIDANCE NOTES FOR TESTING AND EXAMINATION OF BUILDER'S LIFTS, TO ENCOURAGE THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO FOLLOW SUIT.

"THE PROMOTION PROGRAMME HELPS SPREAD THE SAFETY MESSAGE WIDE AND FAST, PARTICULARLY WITH THE USE OF MASS MEDIA LIKE TELEVISION.

"WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT BY THIS THREE-PRONGED APPROACH RECOMMENDED BY THE WORKING GROUP, WE CAN GRADUALLY DEVELOP A SITE SAFETY CULTURE ON PRIVATE SITES, SIMILAR TO WHAT WE HAVE ALREADY STARTED IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR," HE SAID.

EXPERTS TO GIVE ADVICE  
ON SAFE USE OF HEAVY CONSTRUCTION MACHINERY

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SAFETY PROFESSIONALS FROM JAPAN AND HONG KONG GAVE TALKS ON "SAFE USE OF HEAVY CONSTRUCTION MACHINERY" AT A SEMINAR HELD TODAY (TUESDAY) WITH A VIEW TO FURTHER CUT DOWN ACCIDENTS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY.

THE SEMINAR IS AIMED AT IMPROVING SAFETY PROFESSIONALS' TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE SAFE INSTALLATION, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF HEAVY CONSTRUCTION MACHINERY SUCH AS MOBILE CRANES, TOWER CRANES, PASSENGER HOISTS, LIFTS AND ESCALATORS.

IT IS JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT, THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH COUNCIL AND THE WORKING COMMITTEE ON SYMPOSIUM ON SAFETY AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT.

OTHER CO-ORGANISERS INCLUDE THE HONG KONG OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ASSOCIATION, HONG KONG INDUSTRIAL SAFETY ASSOCIATION, SOCIETY OF REGISTERED SAFETY OFFICERS AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY SAFETY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION.

ATTRACTING SOME 400 CONTRACTORS, ENGINEERS, SAFETY CONSULTANTS, SAFETY OFFICERS AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT CONSTRUCTION SITES, THE SEMINAR WAS HELD AT THE GRAND BALLROOM OF HOTEL NIKKO IN TSIM SHA TSUI EAST, KOWLOON.

FOLLOWING THE WELCOMING SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR WORKS, MR JAMES BLAKE, OVERSEAS PRODUCT SUPPORT MANAGER OF THE KOBE STEEL LIMITED IN JAPAN, MR YUKI SATO, TALKED ON "SAFETY IN THE OPERATION, INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE MOBILE CRANES".

OTHER EXPERTS INCLUDE MR WILLIAM TAM CHUN-PONG, GENERAL SERVICES MANAGER OF THE MANTA EQUIPMENT SERVICES LIMITED; MR MATS HEDLUND, EXPORT MANAGER OF ALIMAK AB; MR CHRIS HARDY OF HEK MANUFACTURING AND MR MAK CHE-MIN, MANAGER OF THE MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT OF RYODEN LIFT AND ESCALATOR COMPANY LIMITED.

THEY GAVE THEIR VIEWS ON THE SAFETY DESIGN, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF POTAIN TOWER CRANE; SAFETY IN THE EXAMINATION, INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF PASSENGER HOISTS; WORK PLATFORMS WHICH IS A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO SAFETY IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY; AND SAFETY IN THE INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE OF LIFTS AND ESCALATORS.

DURING THE SEMINAR, OPEN FORUMS WERE ALSO ARRANGED FOR PARTICIPANTS TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES AND EXCHANGE THEIR VIEWS IN PROMOTING THE CULTURE OF SITE SAFETY.

GREEN SLOPES TO REPLACE SHEK O QUARRY FACES

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A MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IN SHEK O OFFICIALLY GOT UNDER WAY TODAY (TUESDAY) WHEN CONTRACT DOCUMENTS WERE SIGNED BY THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL ENGINEERING, DR E W BRAND.

THE 10-YEAR CONTRACT IS FOR THE REHABILITATION OF THE SHEK O QUARRY, WHICH HAS BEEN OPERATED SINCE 1964 UNDER HONG KONG GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

OVER THIS PERIOD IT HAS PROVIDED ABOUT 12 PER CENT OF THE TERRITORY'S ANNUAL ROCK AND AGGREGATE REQUIREMENTS, BUT THE QUARRYING OPERATIONS HAVE RESULTED IN A VISUAL SCAR ON THIS OTHERWISE PRISTINE STRETCH OF THE CAPE D'AGUILAR COASTLINE.

THE CONTRACT IS A COMPONENT OF THE GOVERNMENT METROPLAN LANDSCAPE STRATEGY FOR THE URBAN FRINGE AND COASTAL AREAS, AND WILL RESULT IN THE PRESENT STEEP QUARRY FACES BEING REPLACED OVER THE NEXT DECADE BY WOODED SLOPES TO MATCH THE SURROUNDING NATURAL TOPOGRAPHY.

THE SCHEME WILL ALSO CREATE A NATURAL-LOOKING MARINE INLET WHERE THE FLOOR OF THE QUARRY IS NOW LOCATED. AN ACCESS ROAD WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE SHORES OF THE INLET, MAKING THE AREA SUITABLE FOR RECREATIONAL USE.

THE QUARRY LIES JUST OUTSIDE THE TAI TAM COUNTRY PARK. IT HAS BEEN PROPOSED THAT THE COUNTRY PARK BOUNDARY COULD LATER BE EXTENDED TO INCLUDE THE RESTORED AREA.

THE REHABILITATION PROCESS WILL INVOLVE THE EXCAVATION OF SOME 10 MILLION CUBIC METRES OF MATERIAL IN ORDER TO CUT BACK THE STEEP QUARRY FACES TO A MORE NATURAL GRADIENT.

THIS WORK WILL BE CARRIED OUT BY SHEK O QUARRY LIMITED, A SUBSIDIARY OF PIONEER QUARRIES (HONG KONG) LTD, WHO WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO CRUSH THE EXCAVATED ROCK TO PRODUCE AGGREGATES FOR CONCRETE AND OTHER PRODUCTS.

"THE SCHEME HAS A NUMBER OF BENEFITS," DR BRAND SAID AFTER THE CONTRACT WAS SIGNED WITH THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE PIONEER GROUP, MR J G MCDONALD.

"APART FROM RESTORING THE SCENERY OF THE AREA AT NO DIRECT COST TO HONG KONG TAXPAYERS, THE EXCAVATIONS WILL PROVIDE A RELIABLE SUPPLY OF AGGREGATES, WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL TO HONG KONG'S INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT," HE SAID.

THE WORKS WILL ALSO INCLUDE THE REALIGNMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF A SECTION OF SHEK O ROAD ADJACENT TO THE QUARRY, ELIMINATING THE TIGHT HAIRPIN BEND AT WINDY GAP (TAI FUNG AU).

"WHEN THE RESTORATION IS FINISHED, THE PUBLIC WILL HAVE A NEW AREA FOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY IN THE MARINE INLET," HE SAID.

FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS, THE FLOOR OF THE QUARRY WILL BE USED AS A CASTING BASIN FOR THE SUBMERSIBLE CONCRETE TUNNEL UNITS USED TO CONSTRUCT THE WESTERN HARBOUR CROSSING.

AFTER THIS WORK IS COMPLETED, THE CASTING BASIN WILL BE DEEPEMED AND FLOODED TO FORM THE MARINE INLET CONNECTED TO TAI TAM BAY.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF ALL ASPECTS OF THE WORK HAVE BEEN STUDIED, AND MITIGATION MEASURES WILL BE ADOPTED DURING CONSTRUCTION TO MINIMISE ANY EFFECTS ON THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT.

SITE TRIALS HAVE ALSO BEEN CARRIED OUT TO TEST THE TECHNIQUES TO BE ADOPTED TO ENSURE SUCCESSFUL ESTABLISHMENT OF VEGETATION ON THE FINAL SLOPES.

THE FINAL RESTORATION SCHEME AT SHEK O WAS ADOPTED AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT BOARD. THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LANDS AND WORKS PANEL HAS ALSO BEEN FULLY BRIEFED ON THE PROJECT.

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#### PUBLICITY DRIVE AGAINST MOSQUITO BREEDING

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WITH THE APPROACH OF THE SUMMER, THE HEALTH EDUCATION UNIT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH WILL LAUNCH A CAMPAIGN NEXT MONTH AGAINST MOSQUITO BREEDING.

DURING THE MONTH, THE UNIT'S 24-HOUR HOTLINE - 723 0013 - WILL CARRY A TWO-MINUTE MESSAGE IN CANTONESE ON MOSQUITO PREVENTION.

"AFTER LISTENING TO THE TAPED MESSAGE, CALLERS MAY LEAVE THEIR QUESTIONS WITH THE ANSWERING MACHINE. STAFF OF THE UNIT WILL CALL BACK," A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID.

ENTITLED "REMOVE STAGNANT WATER, NO MOSQUITO BREEDING", THE CAMPAIGN IS SPONSORED BY THE URBAN AND REGIONAL COUNCILS.

IT AIMS AT REMINDING BUILDING CONTRACTORS AND HOUSEHOLDS TO TAKE PREVENTIVE MEASURES TO REDUCE MOSQUITO NUISANCE AND PREVENT MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASES SUCH AS MALARIA.

"TO PREVENT MOSQUITO INFESTATION, IT IS IMPORTANT TO ELIMINATE ALL STAGNANT WATER WHICH IS THE POTENTIAL BREEDING GROUND FOR MOSQUITOES," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"CONTRACTORS SHOULD INSPECT THEIR CONSTRUCTION SITES REGULARLY TO ENSURE THAT THERE ARE NO ABANDONED CONTAINERS AND EMPTY TINS HOLDING WATER.

"THEY SHOULD PUMP AND DRAIN STAGNANT WATER IN HOLES, TRENCHES AND HOLLOW SPACES AND FILL THEM UP WITH SOIL.

"SPRAY A THIN LAYER OF DIESEL OIL ON THE WATER SURFACE IF DRAINING OF STAGNANT WATER IS IMPOSSIBLE," HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN ADVISED HOUSEHOLDS TO COVER TIGHTLY ALL WATER CONTAINERS, STORAGE TANKS AND WELLS AND LEAVE NO WATER IN FLOWER POT TRAYS.

"KEEP ALL DRAINS FREE FROM CHOKING.

"IT IS AN OFFENCE UNDER THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES ORDINANCE TO ALLOW THE ACCUMULATION OF WATER LIABLE TO MOSQUITO BREEDING. THE MAXIMUM FINE FOR THE OFFENCE IS \$10,000," HE SAID.

IN 1992, A TOTAL OF 515 PROSECUTIONS WERE MADE. THE FIGURE INCREASED TO 589 LAST YEAR.

DURING THE CAMPAIGN PERIOD, EXHIBITION BOARDS WILL BE PUT ON PUBLIC DISPLAY AT THE UNIT'S RESOURCE CENTRE ON THE EIGHTH FLOOR OF THE URBAN COUNCIL FA YUEN STREET COMPLEX IN MONG KOK.

THE CENTRE ALSO PROVIDES PREVIEW AND LOAN SERVICE FOR EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS LIKE TAPES AND VIDEO TAPES.

A VARIETY OF PRINTED MATERIAL SUCH AS POSTERS, LEAFLETS AND STICKERS MAY ALSO BE OBTAINED FREE FROM THE CENTRE, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

MEANWHILE, THE DEPARTMENT WILL BE SENDING ADVISORY LETTERS, AND EDUCATIONAL LEAFLETS AND POSTERS TO OWNERS INCORPORATIONS, MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES, MANAGEMENT OFFICES OF LARGE PRIVATE HOUSING ESTATES AND BUILDING CONTRACTORS TO ENLIST SUPPORT.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SEEKING ADVICE OR HELP IN MOSQUITO PREVENTION MAY ALSO CONTACT THE RESPECTIVE DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE OFFICES OF THE URBAN SERVICES OR REGIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENTS.

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#### HK HOSTS WORLD WHEELCHAIR FENCING CHAMPIONSHIP

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HONG KONG IS HOSTING THE 1994 WORLD WHEELCHAIR FENCING CHAMPIONSHIP WHICH IS HELD OUTSIDE EUROPE FOR THE FIRST TIME.

SPEAKING AT ITS OPENING CEREMONY, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, MRS ANSON CHAN, SAID THROUGH SPORT AND CULTURE, THE OLYMPIC IDEAL AIMED TO PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING AMONG THE YOUTH OF THE WORLD.

THUS A BETTER AND MORE PEACEFUL WORLD IS TO BE BUILT, SHE ADDED.

TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 1994

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"THE WORLD WHEELCHAIR FENCING CHAMPIONSHIP, WITH ITS 11 PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES, PROVIDES A VERY SUITABLE MEDIUM FOR THE REALISATION OF THIS IDEAL," SHE SAID.

NOTING THAT THE PROMOTION OF WHEELCHAIR SPORT REQUIRED EXCEPTIONAL DEDICATION, MRS CHAN PRAISED THE CO-ORDINATED EFFORTS OF THE ATHLETES, THEIR FAMILIES AND COACHES, AND THE COMMUNITY.

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THREE LOTS FOR AUCTION

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THE LANDS DEPARTMENT WILL AUCTION THREE LOTS OF GOVERNMENT LAND ON MARCH 31 (THURSDAY).

THE PUBLIC AUCTION WILL BEGIN AT 2.30 PM IN THE JADE BALLROOM OF HOTEL FURAMA-KEMPINSKI, CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL, HONG KONG.

THE FIRST LOT, LOCATED AT 665 KING'S ROAD, HAS AN AREA OF ABOUT 2,661 SQUARE METRES FOR NON-INDUSTRIAL USE, EXCLUDING PETROL-FILLING STATION, GODOWN, WAREHOUSE AND PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL USE.

THE SECOND LOT IS SITUATED AT AREA 11, TUEN MUN, COVERING AN AREA OF ABOUT 3,781 SQUARE METRES.

IT IS FOR NON-INDUSTRIAL USE, EXCLUDING GODOWN, RESIDENTIAL, HOTEL, SERVICE APARTMENT AND PETROL-FILLING STATION, BUT INCLUDING MULTI-STOREY PUBLIC CAR PARK.

THE THIRD LOT IS LOCATED AT AREA 11, ON YOU STREET, SHA TIN, HAVING AN AREA OF ABOUT 6,515 SQUARE METRES FOR INDUSTRIAL OR GODOWN (WITH ANCILLARY OFFICE) USE.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO COVER THE AUCTION.

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SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS GIVEN OUT ON TIME

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IN RESPONSE TO PRESS ENQUIRIES ABOUT THE POSSIBLE DELAY IN SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS CAUSED BY A COMPUTERISATION SYSTEM, A SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN CONFIRMED THAT CUSTOMERS WOULD BE GETTING THEIR MONEY ON TIME.

HE SAID WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SYSTEM ON APRIL 1, PAYMENTS WOULD BE GIVEN TO SOME 90,000 FAMILIES ON THE COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE SCHEME THROUGH THE BANK AUTOPAY.

"INSTEAD OF ASKING THEM TO COLLECT VARIOUS KINDS OF PAYMENTS AT BANKS AND POST OFFICES, WE HAVE STREAMLINED OUR PAYMENT SYSTEM FOR THE BETTER CONVENIENCE OF OUR CUSTOMERS.

"OUR PRIMARY CONCERN IS TO ENSURE THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THEIR PAYMENTS ON TIME," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THERE WERE BOUND TO BE SOME TEETHING PROBLEMS WITH THE COMPUTERISATION OF ANY MAJOR PROJECT. SOME HAD ARISEN DURING MARCH WHEN THE NEW COMPUTERISATION SYSTEM FOR THE SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENT WAS BEING TESTED.

"WE ARE PLEASED TO HAVE IDENTIFIED THESE PROBLEMS BEFORE THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHEME SO THAT WE HAVE TIME TO RECTIFY AND TO ENSURE ITS SMOOTH RUNNING IN APRIL, WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

"WE ARE ALSO WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE STAFF ON WAYS TO RESOLVE THESE TEETHING PROBLEMS, INCLUDING ARRANGEMENT OF OVERTIME PAYMENT AND OTHER BACK-UP TO STAFF," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT DURING THE TEST RUN SINCE THE BEGINNING OF MARCH SOME 200,000 CUSTOMERS ON COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE SCHEME, OLD AGE ALLOWANCE SCHEME AND DISABILITY ALLOWANCE SCHEME WERE PAID THROUGH THE AUTOPAY SYSTEM AT THE BANKS.

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DISTRICT OFFICER BANS HAWKING

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ACTING CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICT OFFICER, MR HOWARD LEE, TODAY (TUESDAY) REMINDED VISITORS AND FOREIGN DOMESTIC HELPERS NOT TO ENGAGE IN ILLEGALLY HAWKING IN THE CHATER ROAD PRECINCT AREA DURING THE EASTER HOLIDAYS.

MR LEE SAID THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND THE POLICE WOULD TAKE FIRM ACTION TO ARREST AND PROSECUTE THOSE BREAKING THE LAW.

IMMIGRATION OFFICERS WILL ALSO BE PRESENT TO HELP INVESTIGATE ANY SUSPECTED BREACH OF THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE, HE ADDED.

"HAWKING MIGHT BREACH THE CONDITION OF STAY IMPOSED BY THE DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION ON VISITORS AND FOREIGN DOMESTIC HELPERS," MR LEE SAID.

"ANY CONTRAVENTION OF THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE MIGHT RENDER THE INDIVIDUAL LIABLE TO BE REMOVED FROM HONG KONG," HE SAID.

AS TO ILLEGAL HAWKING, HE POINTED OUT THAT THE MAXIMUM PENALTY IS A \$2,500 FINE PLUS ONE MONTH'S IMPRISONMENT ON FIRST CONVICTION AND A \$5,000 FINE PLUS SIX MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT ON SUBSEQUENT CONVICTIONS.

ALL HAWKING COMMODITIES AND PARAPHERNALIA SEIZED WILL ALSO BE CONFISCATED UPON CONVICTION, HE SAID.

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BUDGET DEBATE TO RESUME TOMORROW

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, FINANCIAL SECRETARY, ATTORNEY GENERAL AND SEVEN BRANCH SECRETARIES WILL SPEAK IN THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE APPROPRIATION BILL 1994 AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TOMORROW (WEDNESDAY).

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY WILL ALSO PRESENT AT THE MEETING THE ESTIMATES FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 1995 WHICH SHOWS THE SUMMARIES OF REVENUE BY HEADS AND SUBHEADS OF THE GENERAL REVENUE ACCOUNT.

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WILL ASK 20 QUESTIONS AND CONSIDER NINE BILLS.

OF THEM, TWO BILLS -- SUPREME COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994 AND LAND SURVEY BILL -- WILL BE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS. DEBATES ON THEM ARE DUE TO BE ADJOURNED.

DEBATE ON THE SEVEN OTHER BILLS WILL BE RESUMED. THEY ARE DUE TO GO THROUGH THE COMMITTEE STAGE AND BE GIVEN A THIRD READING.

THEY ARE: THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL COMMISSION BILL, APPROPRIATION BILL 1994, THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION BILL, LAYOUT-DESIGN (TOPOGRAPHY) OF INTEGRATED CIRCUITS BILL, TELECOMMUNICATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994, AIR POLLUTION CONTROL (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1993 AND LAND DRAINAGE BILL.

IN ADDITION, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WILL MOVE A MOTION UNDER OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE.

THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER WILL PROPOSE TWO MOTIONS UNDER FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE.

ALSO, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE WILL MOVE A MOTION UNDER HONG KONG ACADEMY OF MEDICINE ORDINANCE.

THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT WILL PROPOSE THREE MOTIONS. ONE UNDER MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION ORDINANCE, AND TWO UNDER KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION ORDINANCE.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO OBSERVE THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING FROM THE PUBLIC GALLERY.

THEY MAY RESERVE SEATS BY CALLING 869 9492.

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CHING MING HOLIDAY REMINDER

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THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT TODAY (TUESDAY) REMINDED EMPLOYERS THAT APRIL 5 (TUESDAY), THE CHING MING FESTIVAL DAY, IS ONE OF THE 11 STATUTORY HOLIDAYS.

UNDER THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE, ALL EMPLOYEES IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR WAGE LEVELS ARE ENTITLED TO THE HOLIDAY AND MUST BE PAID FOR THE DAY OFF IF THEY HAVE WORKED CONTINUOUSLY FOR AN EMPLOYER FOR THREE MONTHS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE STATUTORY HOLIDAY.

HOLIDAY PAY SHOULD BE EQUIVALENT TO AN EMPLOYEE'S EARNINGS ON A FULL WORKING DAY AND SHOULD INCLUDE BASIC WAGES AS WELL AS ALLOWANCES THAT CAN BE EXPRESSED IN MONEY TERMS SUCH AS MEALS AND COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCES.

WHERE THE EARNINGS VARY FROM DAY TO DAY, HOLIDAY PAY SHOULD BE THE AVERAGE DAILY EARNINGS DURING EVERY COMPLETE WAGE PERIOD, WHICH COULD BE BETWEEN 28 DAYS AND 31 DAYS, PRECEDING THE HOLIDAY.

IF AN EMPLOYEE IS REQUIRED TO WORK ON A STATUTORY HOLIDAY, HE MUST BE GIVEN AN ALTERNATIVE DAY OFF WITHIN 60 DAYS BEFORE OR AFTER THAT DAY.

ENQUIRIES ABOUT STATUTORY HOLIDAYS MAY BE MADE AT THE GENERAL ENQUIRY TELEPHONE SERVICE OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT ON 717 1771.

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EARLY WELFARE PAYMENTS

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RECIPIENTS OF COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE AND SOCIAL SECURITY ALLOWANCE UNDER THE BANK PAYMENT SYSTEM MAY RECEIVE PAYMENTS EARLIER IF THEIR PAYDAY FALLS ON THE COMING EASTER AND CHING MING PUBLIC HOLIDAYS.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY (TUESDAY) THAT PAYMENTS SCHEDULED BETWEEN APRIL 1 (FRIDAY) AND APRIL 5 (TUESDAY) WOULD BE ADVANCED TO MARCH 31 (THURSDAY).

IN CASE OF DOUBT, RECIPIENTS ARE ADVISED TO CONTACT THEIR RESPECTIVE SOCIAL SECURITY FIELD UNITS.

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INTEREST ON TAX RESERVE CERTIFICATES UP  
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THE ANNUAL RATE OF INTEREST PAYABLE ON TAX RESERVE CERTIFICATES WILL BE INCREASED TO 3.84% (TAX FREE) FROM TOMORROW (WEDNESDAY).

THE CURRENT RATE IS 3% (TAX FREE).

A LEGAL NOTICE TO THE EFFECT THAT THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY HAS AUTHORISED THE INCREASE WAS GAZETTED YESTERDAY (MONDAY).

INTEREST ON TAX RESERVE CERTIFICATES IS CALCULATED IN MONTHLY STEPS AND THE NEW RATE WILL BE \$0.32 PER MONTH PER \$100.

INTEREST WILL BE CREDITED AS BEFORE IN RESPECT OF COMPLETE MONTHS BETWEEN PURCHASE AND SURRENDER IN PAYMENT OF TAX.

INTEREST IS ONLY CREDITED WHEN CERTIFICATES ARE USED TO PAY TAX AND NO INTEREST IS DUE WHERE THE PRINCIPAL VALUE OF A CERTIFICATE IS REPAYED BY A CHEQUE.

THE NEW RATE WILL APPLY TO ALL CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER MARCH 30.

CERTIFICATES WHICH WERE ISSUED BEFORE MARCH 30 WILL CONTINUE TO EARN INTEREST AS FOLLOWS:

- 7.08% PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER MARCH 7, 1990 AND BEFORE APRIL 4, 1990;
- 8.04% PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER APRIL 4, 1990 AND BEFORE AUGUST 15, 1990;
- 7.56% PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER AUGUST 15, 1990 AND BEFORE OCTOBER 24, 1990;
- 7.08% PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER OCTOBER 24, 1990 AND BEFORE JANUARY 30, 1991;
- 6.60% PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER JANUARY 30, 1991 AND BEFORE MAY 29, 1991;
- 7.56% PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER MAY 29, 1991 AND BEFORE JULY 3, 1991;
- 6.60% PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER JULY 3, 1991 AND BEFORE AUGUST 14, 1991;
- 6.00% PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER AUGUST 14, 1991 AND BEFORE SEPTEMBER 18, 1991;
- 5.52% PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER SEPTEMBER 18, 1991 AND BEFORE NOVEMBER 6, 1991;
- 5.04% PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER NOVEMBER 6, 1991 AND BEFORE MAY 6, 1992;

/4.56% .....

- 4.56% PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER MAY 6, 1992 AND BEFORE MAY 27, 1992;
- 3.60% PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER MAY 27, 1992 AND BEFORE JULY 8, 1992; AND
- 3.00% PER ANNUM FOR CERTIFICATES ISSUED ON OR AFTER JULY 8, 1992 AND BEFORE MARCH 30, 1994.

BUT THEY ARE ALWAYS SUBJECT TO THE GENERAL RULE THAT INTEREST CEASES TO ACCRUE AFTER 36 COMPLETE MONTHS WITHOUT SURRENDER FOR PAYMENT OF TAX.

FOR EXAMPLE:

\$1,000 CERTIFICATES PURCHASED ON MARCH 30, 1994, APRIL 30, 1994 AND MAY 30, 1994 RESPECTIVELY, SURRENDERED IN PAYMENT OF TAX DUE ON JUNE 29, 1994 WILL HAVE INTEREST CALCULATED AS FOLLOWS:

ON \$1,000, MARCH 30, 1994 TO JUNE 29, 1994 THREE COMPLETE MONTHS AT \$3.20 PER MONTH	=	\$9.60
ON \$1,000, APRIL 30, 1994 TO JUNE 29, 1994 TWO COMPLETE MONTHS AT \$3.20 PER MONTH	=	\$6.40
ON \$1,000, MAY 30, 1994 TO JUNE 29, 1994 ONE COMPLETE MONTH AT \$3.20 PER MONTH	=	\$3.20
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		\$19.20
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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND  
TENDER RESULTS

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TENDER DATE	29 MAR 94	29 MAR 94
PAPER ON OFFER	EF BILLS	EF BILLS
ISSUE NUMBER	Q413	H461
AMOUNT APPLIED	HKD4,140 MN	HKD1,680 MN
AMOUNT ALLOTTED	HKD1,500 MN	HKD500 MN
AVERAGE YIELD ACCEPTED	3.73 PCT	3.98 PCT
HIGHEST YIELD ACCEPTED	3.73 PCT	3.99 PCT
PRO RATA RATIO	ABOUT 98 PCT	ABOUT 44 PCT
AVERAGE TENDER YIELD	3.75 PCT	4.01 PCT

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## HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

TENDERS TO BE HELD IN THE WEEK BEGINNING 4 APR 94 -

TENDER DATE	6 MAR 94
PAPER ON OFFER	BF BILLS
ISSUE NUMBER	Q414
ISSUE DATE	7 APR 94
MATURITY DATE	6 JUL 94
TENOR	90 DAYS
AMOUNT ON OFFER	HKD1,500 + 300 MN

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HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY  
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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	\$ MILLION	TIME (HOURS)	CUMULATIVE CHANGE (\$ MILLION)
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OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,837	0930	+607
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	2,991	1000	+671
CHANGE ATTRIBUTABLE TO :		1100	+841
MONEY MARKET ACTIVITY	+1,154	1200	+1,154
LAF TODAY	NIL	1500	+1,154
		1600	+1,154
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER	TWI 125.1	*-0.3*	29.3.94

/HONG KONG .....

TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 1994

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HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY

EF BILLS

EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS

TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	3.16	17 MONTHS	2508	4.625	99.76	4.86
1 MONTH	3.36	20 MONTHS	2511	4.15	98.61	5.10
3 MONTHS	3.73	23 MONTHS	2602	4.40	98.54	5.29
6 MONTHS	3.96	31 MONTHS	3610	4.20	96.51	5.75
12 MONTHS	4.45	34 MONTHS	3701	4.60	96.89	5.89

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 13,097 MN

CLOSED 29 MARCH 1994

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