



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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CONTENTS

PAGE NO.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING:

MAKE PRESENT WORK FOR FUTURE -- DUNN	1
GOVT DETERMINED TO IMPLEMENT PROSPERITY, STABILITY	5
HK NEEDS TO FIND RIGHT POLITICAL FRAMEWORK	7
REGIONAL COUNCIL WILL FUNCTION WELL, SAYS CHEUNG	11
WARNING AGAINST STAGNATION AND RETROGRESSION	13
RIGHT PACE FOR PROGRESS OF POLITICAL REFORMS	15
CALL TO INTRODUCE POLITICAL REFORMS CAUTIOUSLY	17
CALL TO INTRODUCE DIRECT ELECTION IN 1988	19
'PEOPLE PREFER TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN SPOUSE'	22
SOLVE FLAG QUESTION AT EARLY OPPORTUNITY	25
IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS NEED TO BE TACKLED FIRST	27
HEALTHY ECONOMY SHOULD BE GIVEN HIGHEST PRIORITY	29
GOVT URGED TO TACKLE PROTECTIONISM POSITIVELY	31
'CONFIDENCE IS KEY FACTOR IN HK'S FUTURE'	33
TRAINING FOR IN-HOUSE PROFESSIONALS URGED	36
FUTURES MARKET LEGISLATION RAISES AMBIGUITIES	37
BUSINESS CONFIDENCE RESTS ON GOVT PERFORMANCE	40
STRENGTHENED PRUDENTIAL SUPERVISION WELCOMED	43
MORE COMPREHENSIVE INDUSTRIAL POLICY NEEDED	45
RIGHT OF ABODE ENDORSEMENT SIGNIFICANT	47
UPKEEP OF POLICE MORALE CALLED FOR	49
LAW AND ORDER CRUCIAL DURING TRANSITIONAL PERIOD	51
LESS ROAD DEATHS WITH SAFETY MEASURES -- CS	53
LADY HOWE VISITS TAI PO	54
RSD SERVICES IN TUEN MUN DISTRICT	54
FISHERMEN COMPLETE NAVIGATION TRAINING	56
TENDERS CALLED FOR STORAGE SITE	56
PARKING SPACES SUSPENDED	57
SALT WATER CUT	57

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1985

- 1 -

MAKE PRESENT WORK FOR FUTURE -- DUNN
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IF WE DO NOT MAKE THE PRESENT WORK WE SHALL NOT HAVE A FUTURE, THE HON LYDIA DUNN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

LEADING THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS, SHE SAID: +IT IS RIGHT THAT WE SHOULD HAVE AN EYE TO THE FUTURE BUT WE MUST NOT LET IT DOMINATE OUR THOUGHTS TO THE EXCLUSION OF THE MORE PEDESTRIAN PROBLEMS OF THE PRESENT.+

MISS DUNN SUGGESTED THREE AREAS OF PRIORITY CONCERN FOR THE WORK OF THE LEGISLATURE IN THIS SESSION.

SHE SAID THE FIRST CONCERNED THE MANAGEMENT OF COUNCIL BUSINESS AND THIS INVOLVED BRINGING THE STANDING ORDERS UP TO DATE.

+WE ALSO NEED TO REVIEW OUR USE OF THE STANDING ORDERS IN PRACTICE TO ENABLE US TO DESPATCH EXPEDITIOUSLY THE MUCH EXPANDED BUSINESS OF A COUNCIL WHOSE CHARACTER AND COMPOSITION ARE VERY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF THE SIXTIES.

+WE SUGGEST, THEREFORE, A SELECT COMMITTEE SHOULD BE SET UP TO REVIEW AND REVISE THE STANDING ORDERS,+ SHE SAID.

SHE ALSO SAW THE NEED TO APPOINT MORE SELECT COMMITTEES WITH POWER TO CALL FOR PAPERS, TO QUESTION WITNESSES AND TO CONDUCT HEARINGS PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY IN ORDER TO DEVELOP GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY.

THIS WOULD REQUIRE REINFORCEMENT OF THE CLERK'S OFFICE JUST AS IN THE CASE WITH THE SECRETARIAT OF THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, MISS DUNN ADDED.

ON THE NEXT PRIORITY -- ECONOMY, SHE OBSERVED THAT WE MUST CONTINUE TO FIGHT PROTECTIONISM IN OUR PRINCIPAL MARKETS.

SHE SAID FOR YEARS NOW WE HAD HAD TO COPE WITH STEADILY INCREASING RESTRICTIONS ON OUR ACCESS TO MARKETS, OFTEN BY SWITCHING PRODUCTS AND MARKETS.

+TO A LARGE EXTENT OUR SUCCESS HAS MASKED THE FACT THAT THE SCREW WAS BEING TIGHTENED ALL THE TIME,+ SHE SAID.

SHE SAID SHE FELT THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S OVERSEAS OFFICES HAD GIVEN THE IMPRESSION THAT THEY HAD BEEN ABLE TO DO LITTLE MORE THAN REACT TO EACH SUCCESSIVE BLOW.

SHE QUESTIONED WHAT WAS OUR OVERSEAS STRATEGY. WAS IT JUST TO REACT?

+IF WE ARE TO SUCCEED IN INFLUENCING EVENTS, SURELY WE MUST ANTICIPATE, NOT JUST REACT,+ SHE SAID.

/+WHAT ARE

+WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW TO PREPARE THE GROUND FOR THE DIFFICULT NEGOTIATIONS REQUIRED BEFORE THE FUTURE OF THE MULTI-FIBRE ARRANGEMENTS COMES UNDER FORMAL REVIEW NEXT YEAR?+ SHE ASKED.

MISS DUNN SAID THE TASK OF INFLUENCING OPINION IN OUR MARKETS WOULD NOT BE TOO COSTLY BECAUSE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE VITAL DECISIONS WAS QUITE SMALL AND THEY WOULD NOT COST MILLIONS TO GET AT.

+WE NEED TO STEP UP SHARPLY OUR EFFORTS TO KEEP ABREAST OF POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN OUR PRINCIPAL MARKETS IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO CONVINCED THOSE WHO TAKE THE DECISIONS OF THE MERITS OF RECOGNISING AND OBSERVING OUR GATT RIGHTS,+ SHE SAID.

SHE ADDED THAT OUR STANDING IN THE BATTLE FOR UNDERSTANDING WOULD BE MUCH STRENGTHENED WHEN OUR LONG TERM POSITION IN THE GATT WAS SETTLED AND SHE SUGGESTED THAT THIS SHOULD BE PUT BEYOND DOUBT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

SHE SAID AFTER THE COMPLETION OF NEGOTIATIONS IN THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP IT WOULD STILL BE NECESSARY TO SECURE FORMAL GATT ACCEPTANCE OF, AND RECOGNITION FOR, WHATEVER IT WAS THAT BRITAIN AND CHINA AGREED UPON.

SHE HOPED THAT THIS IMPORTANT MATTER WOULD BE SETTLED DEFINITELY VERY SOON.

TURNING TO HER THIRD PRIORITY WHICH CONCERNED HONG KONG'S INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION, MISS DUNN SAID WE WERE GETTING A REPUTATION FOR EXPENSIVE AND SHODDY FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK IN WHICH THE FINANCIAL AND ALLIED SERVICE INDUSTRIES OPERATE WAS A COMPLEX MATTER BUT SHE SAID WE MUST BE SEEN TO BE DOING OUR BEST TO PUT OUR HOUSE IN ORDER AS A MATTER OF URGENCY.

+WE CANNOT EXPECT REPUTABLE PEOPLE TO INVEST HERE UNLESS THEY CAN HAVE CONFIDENCE IN OUR REGULATORY SYSTEMS,+ SHE SAID.

MISS DUNN ALSO SAID THE SERVICE OFFERED BY THE CORRUPTION PREVENTION ADVISORY SERVICES GROUP SHOULD BE MARKETED MUCH MORE WIDELY THAN JUST HAVING IT +DRAWN TO THE ATTENTION OF GOVERNMENT-LISTED CONTRACTORS AND SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS+.

+IT IS A MAJOR TASK TO CONVINCED MANAGERS THAT EVEN IF THEY HAVE NO CORRUPTION IN THEIR OWN ORGANISATION THEY SHOULD STILL LOOK AT THEIR PROCEDURES TO SEE IF THEY CAN BE IMPROVED.

+THESE SERVICES SHOULD NOT ONLY BE AVAILABLE TO EVERY FIRM IN BUSINESS BUT EVERY FIRM IN BUSINESS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THEM,+ SHE SAID.

+THE GROWTH IN COMMERCIAL CRIME AND IN PRIVATE SECTOR CORRUPTION REPORTS SPELL DANGER TO EVERYONE IN BUSINESS AND, IF NOT CHECKED, FOR THE WHOLE OF OUR SOCIETY,+ SHE WARNED.

MISS DUNN ALSO STRESSED THAT OUR OWN TAX SYSTEM SHOULD NOT PROVIDE NEW AND UNNECESSARY OPPORTUNITIES OR INCENTIVES TO BREAK THE LAW.

SHE SAID IT WAS UNLIKELY FOR COMPLICATED TAX LAWS TO ENHANCE THE REVENUE BY MUCH BUT FAR MORE LIKELY TO DRIVE NEW INVESTMENT AWAY AND TO BREED COMPLICATED SCHEMES FOR TAX AVOIDANCE AND EVASION AMONG THOSE WHO REMAINED.

IN CARRYING OUT THE WORK IN THESE PRIORITY AREAS, MISS DUNN SAID SHE SHOULD LIKE TO ASSURE THE GOVERNOR AND THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG THAT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS WERE ALL DETERMINED TO WORK TOGETHER AND FOR THE GOOD OF HONG KONG.

+WE SHALL HAVE OUR DISAGREEMENTS. WE ARE, AFTER ALL,
46 INDIVIDUALS. WE SHALL MAKE OUR OWN JUDGEMENTS.

+IN DOING SO WE SHALL ALL DO OUR BEST TO PUT ANY PARTICULAR INTERESTS WE REPRESENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GENERAL INTEREST OF THE COMMUNITY,+ SHE SAID.

+THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG, TO WHOM MEMBERS ARE RESPONSIBLE, ARE NOT DOCTRINAIRE. THEY ARE PRACTICAL PEOPLE.

+THEY VIEW POLICIES WITH THE GREATEST SCEPTICISM. THEY WILL BE LOOKING FOR RESULTS AND JUDGE US BY RESULTS,+ SHE SAID.

SHE SAID MEMBERS MUST UNDERSTAND WHAT IT WAS THAT PEOPLE WANTED, MUST REFLECT THIS IN THEIR OWN POLICY PROPOSALS AND IN THEIR STUDY OF GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS.

HOWEVER, SHE CONTINUED, GOVERNMENT MUST TAKE HEED OF WHAT MEMBERS SAY AND NOT JUST SUCCUMB TO THEIR VOTES.

THE POWER OF A VOTE IN THE COUNCIL WAS THE POWER OF A SLEDGE-HAMMER AND A VOTE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT WAS A NEGATIVE EXERCISE OF POWER, SHE SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT, THEREFORE, ALSO HAD A PART TO PLAY IN THAT THE POLICIES IT BROUGHT FORWARD TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MUST BE POLICIES THAT MEMBERS COULD SUPPORT.

+THIS MEANS THAT POLICY PROPOSALS MUST BE BACKED UP WITH FULL INFORMATION AND JUSTIFICATION,+ SHE SAID.

+THIS IS MUCH MORE LIKELY TO BE THE CASE IF THEY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED IN CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE CIVIL SERVICE AND THE UNOFFICIALS RATHER THAN HATCHED IN SECRET AND LAUNCHED AT THIS COUNCIL WITHOUT WARNING,+ SHE OBSERVED.

MISS DUNN POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST ALSO BE PREPARED TO ARGUE ITS CASE AND NOT JUST TO ASSERT IT WHILE THE UNOFFICIALS MUST BE EQUALLY PREPARED PUBLICLY TO SUPPORT THOSE POLICIES WHICH THEY HAD DEVELOPED IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE CIVIL SERVICE.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1985

- 4 -

+WE MUST ALWAYS BE PREPARED TO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT WHEN IT IS RIGHT, TO QUESTION IT WHEN WE ARE NOT CONVINCED AND TO OPPOSE IT WHEN WE BELIEVE IT IS WRONG,+ SHE STRESSED.

IT WAS ONLY IN THIS WAY HONG KONG WOULD BE ABLE, IN THE WORDS OF THE GOVERNOR LAST YEAR, +TO DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH IS FIRMLY ROOTED IN OUR COMMUNITY, IN WHICH THE VIEWS OF THE COMMUNITY ARE FULLY REPRESENTED AND WHICH IS MORE DIRECTLY ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG,+ MISS DUNN SAID.

EARLIER IN HER SPEECH, MISS DUNN WELCOMED THE EMPHASIS ON THE GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE ITS STEADY PROGRESS IN ALL ITS PRACTICAL PROGRAMMES TO ENSURE HONG KONG'S CONTINUING STABILITY AND PROSPERITY.

SHE ALSO SAID THAT SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE JOINT DECLARATION, CHINA'S PRESENCE IN HONG KONG HAD BECOME MORE PRONOUNCED AS HAD THE HONG KONG PRESENCE IN CHINA BUT NEITHER WAS SINISTER.

+THE WILL TO OBSERVE THE JOINT DECLARATION IS AS STRONG AS EVER. IT IS BOUND TO RESULT IN MUCH CLOSER RELATIONS THAN HAVE BEEN IN THE PAST.

+THESE ARE ESSENTIAL FOR THE FULFILMENT OF THE VISION THAT LED TO THE JOINT DECLARATION IN THE FIRST PLACE,+ SHE SAID.

ON THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THIS YEAR'S POLICY DEBATE, MISS DUNN EXPLAINED THAT MEMBERS WOULD BE SPEAKING IN FIVE GROUPS, EACH CONCENTRATING ON CERTAIN PARTS OF THE ADDRESS.

SHE SAID MEMBERS WOULD CONCENTRATE THEIR FIRE ON TARGETS SIGHTED IN SUCCESSION AND THIS WOULD BE AN IMPROVEMENT ON THE OLD +SCATTERED SHOTS+ APPROACH.

AS THE SPEECHES WOULD BE SHORT, TEN MINUTES BEING THE LIMIT, SHE SAID THIS MEANT MEMBERS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO SAY EVERYTHING THEY SHOULD LIKE TO SAY.

+WE WISH TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE SELECTIVITY IN OUR CHOICE OF SUBJECTS DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN THE SUBJECTS THAT WE SHALL LEAVE TO OTHERS,+ SHE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1985

- 5 -

GOVT DETERMINED TO IMPLEMENT PROSPERITY, STABILITY
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THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED TO IMPLEMENT THE TWIN GOALS OF PROSPERITY AND STABILITY ENSHRINED IN THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION AND TO STEER THE TERRITORY THROUGH A SMOOTH TRANSITION TO THE SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION STATUS.

DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI SAID THERE WERE STRONG INDICATIONS OF THIS DETERMINATION IN THE TONE OF THE GOVERNOR'S ANNUAL ADDRESS.

SPEAKING AT THE POLICY DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), HE SAID THE LONG LIST OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND URBAN RENEWAL PROJECTS OUTLINED WOULD SERVE TO BOOST CONFIDENCE IN LOCAL AND OVERSEAS INVESTORS AND CONCURRENTLY TO DEMONSTRATE THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO SUSTAIN HONG KONG'S LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT.

COMMENTING ON DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, DR HO SAID CONSULTATION WAS A FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT IN THE POLICY-MAKING PROCESS IN THE GOVERNMENT MACHINERY.

+AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL, THE PUBLIC ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE GOVERNMENT DECISIONS BY CHANNELLING THEIR VIEWS AND WISHES THROUGH THEIR DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS, ELECTED AND APPOINTED,+ HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS HAD TO SPEND A GREAT DEAL OF TIME AND ATTENTION IN CONSULTING AND CANVASSING THEIR CONSTITUENCIES PRIOR TO DEBATES ON IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT POLICY PROPOSALS.

+TO PROMOTE THIS FREE-FLOW COMMUNICATION, DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS HAVE BEEN MAKING REPEATED REQUESTS TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FOR ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF SUBSIDISED OFFICE ACCOMMODATION AND SECRETARIAL SERVICES.

+I URGE THAT THE GOVERNMENT PROMPTLY CONSIDER THESE REQUESTS,+ DR HO SAID.

TURNING TO THE BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORTS, DR HO SAID THE WHITE PAPER ON THE DRAFT HONG KONG (BRITISH NATIONALITY) ORDER 1986, PUBLISHED OVER A MONTH AGO, HAD DRAWN CONSIDERABLE COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC.

HE AGREED THAT THIS IMPORTANT DOCUMENT MERITED IN-DEPTH EXAMINATION AND WAS PLEASED THAT THERE WOULD BE A DEBATE ON IT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON DECEMBER 4.

LEAVING THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS ASIDE, HE RAISED A POINT OF PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BN(O) PASSPORT.

/HE POINTED

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1985

- 6 -

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE DRAFT ORDER-IN-COUNCIL ANNEXED TO THE WHITE PAPER WOULD COME INTO EFFECT ON JULY 1, 1987 AFTER GOING THROUGH THE NECESSARY LEGISLATIVE PROCESS.

+BY THEN, THE NEW BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORTS WILL BE AVAILABLE TO THOSE ELIGIBLE HONG KONG RESIDENTS, THAT IS THOSE WHO ARE HOLDING EXISTING BUT EXPIRING BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORIES CITIZEN PASSPORTS OR THOSE WHO ARE ENTITLED TO APPLY FOR A BRITISH PASSPORT FOR THE FIRST TIME.

+TO THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THE NEW BRITISH STATUS, THEY HAVE YET TO BE CONVINCED THAT THE NEW BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORT COULD AFFORD THE SAME DEGREE OF, IF NOT MORE, CONVENIENCE AND BENEFIT OF TRAVEL AS THE ALTERNATIVE BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORIES CITIZEN PASSPORT WHICH THEY WOULD STILL BE ENTITLED TO BETWEEN NOW AND JUNE 30, 1997,+ DR HO SAID.

HE SAID THAT FROM THE +USER+ POINT OF VIEW, IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE ADVANTAGES TO HOLDERS OF THE NEW PASSPORT BE CLEARLY EXPLAINED.

+I FULLY ENDORSE THE WISH OF THE GOVERNMENT TO HAVE THE BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORT WELL TESTED IN THE RUN-UP TO 1997, BUT I WOULD ALSO URGE THE GOVERNMENT TO PERFECT THE 'MARKETING' OF THIS BRAND-NEW UNTESTED PRODUCT SO AS TO ENCOURAGE THOSE ELIGIBLE TO TAKE IT UP,+ HE SAID.

ON THE SUBJECT OF ORGANISED CRIME, DR HO NOTED THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF LEGISLATION ENACTED TO COUNTER ORGANISED CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES, BUT UNFORTUNATELY THESE LAWS WERE EITHER INADEQUATELY APPLIED OR NOT FULLY EXPLOITED.

HE SAID THE PUBLIC WIDELY HELD THE VIEW THAT THE PENALTY IMPOSED ON CONVICTED OFFENDERS WAS TOO LENIENT TO PRODUCE A DETERRENT EFFECT.

+MEN IN THE STREET WOULD ALSO LIKE TO SEE THAT THE COURT, IN APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES, MAKE MORE FREQUENT USE OF SECTION 21 OF THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE (CAP. 115) WHICH PROVIDES FOR A DEPORTATION ORDER FOR CERTAIN OFFENCES,+ HE SAID.

HE RECALLED THAT IN THE LATTER PART OF 1950'S, THE POLICE SUCCESSFULLY DISINTEGRATED TRIAD SOCIETIES BY RECOURSE TO THE SPECIAL LEGISLATION, +THE EMERGENCY (DETENTION ORDERS) REGULATIONS 1956+.

+OVER 10 000 TRIAD OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS WERE ARRESTED AND OVER 400 OF THE TOP OFFICIALS WERE DEPORTED.

+MANY SURRENDERED THEMSELVES FOR BEING PLACED ON SUPERVISION ORDERS IN PREFERENCE TO DETENTION AND DEPORTATION,+ HE SAID.

/DR HO

DR HO SAID HE HAD NO INTENTION TO INTERFERE WITH THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY BUT WAS MERELY VOICING THE VIEWS AND WISHES OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY WOULD DULY REFLECT PUBLIC SENTIMENTS AND THE GRAVITY OF THE CRIME COMMITTED IN THEIR ADMINISTRATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE.

AS FOR LEGISLATION, DR HO SAID IT HAD BEEN SUGGESTED THAT MORE INVESTIGATORY POWERS BE GIVEN TO POLICE OFFICERS, IN ORDER TO ENABLE THEM TO GAIN ACCESS TO CERTAIN INFORMATION CONCERNING THOSE ENGAGED IN SERIOUS CRIMES.

+IN ADDITION, MORE STRINGENT LAWS SUCH AS THOSE ON CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY, ON CONSORTING, AND ON FORFEITURE OF ILL-GOTTEN GAINS FROM ILLICIT ACTIVITIES, MAY BE ENACTED,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THE PROTAGONISTS OF CIVIC RIGHTS MIGHT BE CRITICAL OF THESE NEW POWERS AND LAWS. BUT HE APPEALED TO THEM THAT THEY MUST WEIGH THE SACRIFICE OF SOME INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AGAINST THE EFFECTS THESE LEGISLATIVE MEASURES MIGHT HAVE IN CONTRIBUTING TO AN IMPROVED SOCIAL ORDER.

HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAKE AN EFFORT TO PROPERLY AND ADEQUATELY INFORM ALL SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE FULL EXTENT OF ORGANISED CRIME AND ITS OVERALL ANTI-TRIAD STRATEGIES, IN PARTICULAR, THOSE PARTS WHERE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CO-OPERATION WERE TO BE ENLISTED.

+IF THE FEARS OF HUMAN LIBERTIES BEING UNDULY ERODED ARE STILL HIGH IN SPITE OF ALL PUBLICITY EFFORTS, I SUGGEST THAT THESE NEW STATUTES MIGHT BE ENACTED WITH A LIFE OF, SAY, FIVE YEARS.

+WHEN LAW AND ORDER RETURNS, THESE STATUTES WILL NOT BE EXTENDED TO A FURTHER PERIOD,+ DR HO SAID.

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HK NEEDS TO FIND RIGHT POLITICAL FRAMEWORK
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POLITICALLY HONG KONG NEEDS TO FIND AND DEVELOP AN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK WHICH WILL HAVE THE BEST PROSPECTS OF SURVIVING THE PROGRESSION TOWARDS THE ULTIMATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JOINT DECLARATION, THE HON STEPHEN CHEONG SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

+THIS IS NO EASY TASK, FOR THAT STRUCTURE HAS TO BE SEEN TO BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE A SMOOTH TRANSITION TO THE ARRANGEMENTS ENVISAGED FOR 1997, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME PROVIDE A MEANINGFUL BASE FOR FOSTERING OUR FUTURE STABILITY AND PROSPERITY.

/+PATIENCE,

+PATIENCE, UNDERSTANDING AND SINCERE CO-OPERATION FROM ALL SIDES ARE CRUCIAL IF WE ARE TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES,+ HE SAID AT THE POLICY DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE SAID THAT SINCE THE INITIALLING OF THE JOINT DECLARATION, THERE HAD BEEN QUITE VISIBLE SIGNS OF AN UPTURN IN THE REAL ESTATE AND STOCK MARKETS WHICH HAD BEEN HAILED AS SIGNS OF SUBSTANTIAL RESTORATION OF CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG'S FUTURE.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, WE SHOULD BE HONEST WITH OURSELVES AND RECOGNISE THAT DEEP DOWN IN THE MINDS OF A LOT OF PEOPLE, THERE WAS STILL GREAT UNEASE AND UNCERTAINTY OVER OUR LONG TERM FUTURE.

+THE SIGNING OF THE JOINT DECLARATION MAY BE ONE THING, THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL ITS PROVISIONS IS QUITE ANOTHER,+ HE SAID.

HE STRESSED THE NEXT FEW YEARS WOULD BE VERY CRUCIAL BECAUSE ON BOTH THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FRONTS WE WERE AT A CROSS ROAD.

MR CHEONG SAID DESPITE THE FACT THAT BOTH BRITAIN AND CHINA HAD SO OPENLY AND REPEATEDLY DECLARED THEIR COMMON OBJECTIVES FOR HONG KONG, THE LEVEL OF MUTUAL MISTRUST BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES STILL APPEARED TO BE HIGH.

+CHINA STILL SEEMS TO BE VERY SKEPTICAL OF ANY PROPOSALS RAISED BY BRITAIN, UNDERSTANDABLY SO ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION, BUT IT CANNOT BE DENIED ALSO THAT SUCH CAUTION, WHEN CARRIED TOO FAR, WOULD IMPEDE PROPER AND OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS OF ISSUES, THUS UNNECESSARILY CAUSING SERIOUS PROBLEMS TO BE DEFERRED RATHER THAN SOLVED.

+BRITAIN, ON THE OTHER HAND, SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN A SOMEWHAT NONCHALANT ATTITUDE AND INITIALLY HAS DONE LITTLE TO REMOVE THAT MISTRUST.

+CERTAIN PROPOSALS MIGHT HAVE BEEN PUT FORWARD IN ALL SINCERITY, BUT WHEN SETBACKS WERE ENCOUNTERED, THERE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN LACKING A SENSE OF DYNAMISM IN PURSUING A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION FOR HONG KONG,+ HE SAID.

+SURELY, IF BOTH SIDES WERE TO MAKE NO POSITIVE ADJUSTMENTS TO THIS RESPECTIVE FRAMES OF MIND IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS, IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW THE COMMON OBJECTIVE CAN BE ACHIEVED SMOOTHLY,+ HE ADDED.

HE THEREFORE URGED BOTH PARTIES TO INTERACT WITH SYMPATHY, UNDERSTANDING AND DUE CONSIDERATION FOR OUR ANXIETIES, AND TO WORK CLOSELY AND PRAGMATICALLY TOWARDS DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS THAT COULD MANIFESTLY FOSTER AND MAINTAIN PUBLIC CONFIDENCE.

AS FOR THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG, MR CHEONG SAID WHATEVER OUR PRIVATE FEELINGS MIGHT BE, WE HAD TO RECOGNISE AND COME TO TERMS WITH THE FACT THAT THE SOURCE OF POWER OF THE FUTURE SAR GOVERNMENT WOULD BE DERIVED FROM THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OF CHINA.

THE DEEP CONCERN OF THE MAJORITY OF OUR POPULACE WAS OVER POSSIBLE FUTURE CHANGES IN CHINA AND NOT OVER WHETHER OR NOT CHINA WOULD ACCEPT A SYSTEM OF DIRECT ELECTIONS, HE SAID.

+WE FEEL LOST AND UNCERTAIN BECAUSE WE ARE AFRAID THAT CHINA WILL DEVIATE SIGNIFICANTLY FROM ITS PRESENT COURSE OF POLICIES AND NOT OVER WHETHER OR NOT OUR FUTURE LEGISLATURE WILL BE MAINLY DIRECTLY ELECTED,+ HE SAID.

+A HIGH DEGREE OF AUTONOMY FOR THE SAR GOVERNMENT IS NOT SYNONYMOUS WITH INDEPENDENCE, NOR WITH THE FREEDOM OF ACTION ONE NORMALLY ASSOCIATES WITH DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT BASED ON UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE.

+THE FUTURE SAR GOVERNMENT WILL ALWAYS WALK A TIGHT ROPE, AND IT WILL CONSTANTLY HAVE TO RECONCILE THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG WITH THE INTEREST OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OF CHINA.

NOT TO ACCEPT THIS REALITY IS PLAIN STUPIDITY,+ HE SAID.

IF WE WERE TO ACHIEVE PROSPERITY AND STABILITY WITHIN THIS KIND OF AUTONOMOUS ENVIRONMENT, HE SAID, OUR ECONOMIC PROGRESS SHOULD BE MAINTAINED AS OUR TOP PRIORITY WHILE PROGRESS ON OTHER IDEOLISTIC FRONTS SHOULD BE PURSUED PATIENTLY AND STEP BY STEP.

HE SAID THERE HAD BEEN UNDUE HASTE AS OF LATE ON THE PART OF CERTAIN GROUPS OF PEOPLE TO FORCE ONTO THE COMMUNITY A FUTURE FORM OF GOVERNMENT LONG BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE HAD HAD A CHANCE TO REVIEW, IN 1987, ITS PRESENT STRUCTURE.

+THE HIGH DEGREE OF EXCITEMENT COUPLED WITH THE CALL FOR DIRECTLY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES ACCOMPANYING THE PROPOSED FORMATION OF THE BASIC LAW CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE SEEMS TO BE PART OF THAT UNDUE HASTE,+ HE SAID.

MR CHEONG SAID HE HAD AN OPEN MIND ON DIRECT ELECTION.

HE ADDED THAT HE WOULD EVEN GO SO FAR AS TO POSTULATE THAT AS THE POLITICAL EXPERIENCE OF THE SOCIETY PROGRESSED, IT MIGHT BE DESIRABLE TO HAVE AN ELEMENT OR ELEMENTS OF DIRECT, TERRITORY-WIDE, SINGLE-LIST TYPE ELECTIONS WITHIN OUR FUTURE CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK.

+I AM ALSO IN THE FIRM BELIEF THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF HONG KONG'S UNIQUE SITUATION, WE SHOULD EXAMINE THE MERITS OR DEMERITS OF DIRECT ELECTIONS WITH A PRAGMATIC AND REALISTIC ATTITUDE TAKING INTO ACCOUNT FULLY THE AVOWED COMMON OBJECTIVE OF STABILITY AND PROSPERITY WHILST AVOIDING THE IDEOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL SLANT OF ANY ANALYSIS.

+FURTHERMORE, BEFORE WE CAN COME DOWN ON TO ANY FIRM DECISIONS, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD FIRST RE-EXAMINE THE RATIONALE BEHIND STARTING OUR CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT ROUTE WITH INDIRECT ELECTIONS,+ HE SAID.

WE HAD TO CONSIDER WHETHER IT HAD ACHIEVED THE DESIRED OBJECTIVE OF RETURNING THE SORT OF CANDIDATES WITH THE RIGHT SORT OF CALIBRE TO TAKE UP THE JOB AS A LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR, HE ADDED.

+IF THERE ARE PROBLEMS WITH INDIRECT ELECTIONS, WE SHOULD CONSIDER WHETHER WE CAN SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS AND TO IMPROVE ON THE SYSTEM,+ HE SAID.

HE QUESTIONED THE REAL RATIONALE OF DUMPING THE INDIRECT ELECTION SYSTEM WITHOUT GIVING IT A FAIR EXAMINATION.

+SAVE FOR IDEOLOGICAL BELIEFS, I MUST CONFESS I FAIL TO SEE ANY PRAGMATIC REASON WHY HONG KONG NEEDS TO BE THAT IMPATIENT TO ESTABLISH BEYOND ANY DOUBT THE DESIRABILITY OF DIRECT ELECTIONS,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT EVEN IF WE EVENTUALLY CONCLUDED THAT THERE WAS A CASE FOR SOME SORT OF TRIALS IN DIRECT ELECTIONS IN THE FUTURE, WE STILL HAD TO FACE THE FACT THAT HONG KONG WAS NOT AND WOULD NOT BECOME AN INDEPENDENT SOVEREIGN STATE.

+WE SURVIVED AND THRIVED ECONOMICALLY WITHOUT HAVING TO UNDERTAKE POLITICAL EXPERIMENTATION.

+LET US NOT NOW PREMATURELY INTRODUCE DRASTIC CHANGES TO OUR FORMULA FOR SUCCESS,+ HE SAID.

+IF EVER OUR PROSPERITY IS THREATENED THROUGH OUR OWN IMPATIENCE, WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE THE TWIN OBJECTIVE OF DEVELOPING FOR THE FUTURE SAR GOVERNMENT A POLITICAL STRUCTURE THAT WOULD BE RESPECTED BY BOTH THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG AND BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OF CHINA, AND ONE THAT WOULD BE MANIFESTLY CAPABLE OF FOSTERING HONG KONG'S STATUS AS A STABLE AND PROSPEROUS INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL CENTRE,+ HE SAID.

CONCLUDING, MR CHEONG ASKED THE LOCAL MEDIA TO CONSIDER RE-EXAMINING WHETHER OR NOT THEY HAD OVER ALLOCATED RESOURCES TO COVER THE OVERHEATED POLITICAL SCENE.

REFERRING TO THE QUESTIONS PUT TO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND HIS UNOFFICIAL COLLEAGUES, HE SAID MANY OF THEM WERE FOCUSED ON ISSUES WHICH MIGHT WELL BE PREMATURE FOR ANY RESPONSIBLE PUBLIC FIGURE TO COMMIT OR EVEN COMMENT ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.

+IN MY VIEW SUCH INTENSE POLITICAL HEAT AND SPECULATIVE QUESTIONING IS NOT CONDUCTIVE FOR HONG KONG TO FIND THE MUCH NEEDED BALANCED ANSWERS TO SO MANY SENSITIVE AND THORNY ISSUES THE SOLUTION OF WHICH WILL BE CRITICAL TO OUR FUTURE WELL BEING,+ HE ADDED.

MR CHEONG SAID HE COULD FULLY UNDERSTAND POLITICS WAS MORE LIABLE TO BREED CONTROVERSIES WHICH MADE INTERESTING OR EVEN EXCITING READING. YET, HE SAID, HONG KONG DID HAVE OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES WHICH MIGHT BE EQUALLY INTERESTING TO READERS.

+EVEN THE INTELLIGENTSIA OF HONG KONG DO NOT NEED EXCITEMENTS EVERYDAY AND IT MAY EVEN BE USEFUL AND CONSTRUCTIVE FOR THE COMMUNITY TO HAVE SOME COOLING PERIODS NOW AND AGAIN.

+AFTERALL, HOW MANY OF US ARE REALLY THAT BRILLIANT AS TO BE ABLE TO THINK CLEARLY AND RATIONALLY IN A CONTINUOUS ATMOSPHERE OF TENSION AND OVER EXCITEMENT?+ HE SAID.

HE SAID HE FULLY SUPPORTED THE THEME OF THE HON LYDIA DUNN THAT THERE WOULD BE NO FUTURE FOR US IF WE DID NOT ADDRESS AND RESOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF HERE AND NOW.

+AND THE ISSUES OF TODAY WHICH IMPINGE ON THE FUTURE STABILITY AND PROSPERITY OF HONG KONG ARE PRECISELY WHAT THOSE TWO WORDS IMPLY.

+IT IS NOT WITHOUT GOOD POLITICAL SENSE THAT SOMEONE ONCE SAID: 'TAKE CARE OF THE PENNIES AND THE POUNDS WILL TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES.'

+LET US ALL REFLECT, PONDER, REACT AND WORK STEADILY TOWARDS CONTINUED PROGRESS IN OUR QUEST FOR HONG KONG'S STABILITY AND PROSPERITY NOW AND IN THE YEARS TO COME,+ HE SAID.

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REGIONAL COUNCIL WILL FUNCTION WELL, SAYS CHEUNG
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THE REGIONAL COUNCIL WILL FUNCTION PROPERLY IN DEVELOPING MUNICIPAL SERVICES IN THE REGION, THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE FIRST DAY DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS, MR CHEUNG, WHO IS ALSO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PROVISIONAL REGIONAL COUNCIL, SAID IT WOULD HAVE MEMBERS REPRESENTING A WIDE CROSS-SECTION OF THE INTERESTS OF THE REGION WHEN IT WAS ESTABLISHED NEXT YEAR.

HE SAID THE COUNCIL WOULD ALSO ELECT ITS MEMBER TO SIT ON THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THUS ENSURING A CLOSE LINK FOR CONSULTATION BETWEEN THE THREE TIERS OF THE GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE PROVISIONAL REGIONAL COUNCIL HAD ALREADY SET UP A UNIQUE COMMITTEE SYSTEM CONSISTING OF THREE FUNCTIONAL SELECT COMMITTEES TO FORMULATE MUNICIPAL SERVICE POLICIES AND NINE DISTRICT COMMITTEES TO DEAL WITH OPERATIONAL MATTERS.

+I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE REGIONAL COUNCIL WITH ITS REPRESENTATIVE STRUCTURE AND CONSULTATIVE NETWORK THROUGH ITS COMMITTEES, WILL FUNCTION PROPERLY IN DEVELOPING MUNICIPAL SERVICES IN THE REGION, MR CHEUNG SAID.

ON THE FINANCING OF THE COUNCIL, MR CHEUNG STRESSED THAT IT WOULD REQUIRE SUFFICIENT REVENUE TO SUPPORT ITS VARIOUS ACTIVITIES.

HE NOTED THAT THE MAIN SOURCE OF THIS REVENUE WOULD BE THE RATES COLLECTED IN THE REGIONAL COUNCIL AREA AND URGED THAT IF THERE WERE ANY INCREASE IN THE RATES NEXT YEAR, THE REVENUE SO GENERATED SHOULD BE ALLOCATED TO THE COUNCIL TO ENABLE IT TO FULFIL ITS RESPONSIBILITIES.

HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT THAT RATES ALONE WAS MOST UNLIKELY TO BE SUFFICIENT TO FINANCE THE 428 CAPITAL WORKS PROJECTS WHICH THE COUNCIL HAD PLANNED.

HE SAID HE FELT OBLIGED TO SOLICIT AN UNDERSTANDING ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE SHARING THE HEAVY FINANCIAL BURDEN ON CAPITAL WORKS UNTIL THE REGIONAL COUNCIL WAS IN A POSITION TO TAKE OVER.

MR CHEUNG EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE RESULT OF THE RECENT REGISTRATION FOR THE URBAN COUNCIL AND REGIONAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR.

HE SUGGESTED THAT WE SHOULD NOT OVERLOOK THE POSSIBILITY OF EXTENDING THE FRANCHISE TO THOSE WHO HAD REACHED THE AGE OF 18 WHEN REVIEW OF THE FUNCTIONING OF THE REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT TOOK PLACE IN DUE COURSE.

+THEY ARE A GROUP THAT WE HAVE PROVIDED WITH BETTER EDUCATION.

+ON THEIR PART THEY HAVE DEMONSTRATED INCREASING SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

+I THINK THEY DESERVE THE ENTRUSTMENT OF ELECTORAL RIGHTS,+ HE SAID.

MR CHEUNG CALLED FOR A REVIEW OF THE COMPENSATION SCHEME FOR LAND RESUMPTION.

HE RECOUNTED THE DIFFICULTIES AND PROBLEMS FACED BY LOCAL AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY DURING RAPID DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES IN RECENT YEARS AND SAID THE EXISTING LAND COMPENSATION POLICY WAS UNFAIR.

HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ESTABLISH A POLICY TO ENCOURAGE AND TO SUPPORT THE CULTIVATION OF WASTED ARABLE LAND BY RESITING DISPLACED FARMERS TO FALLOW LAND LEASED BY THE GOVERNMENT, WITH RENTAL SUBSIDIES WHERE NECESSARY.

+THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD AT THE SAME TIME EXTEND ITS WORK IN INTRODUCING NEW AND IMPROVED PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES, EQUIPMENT AND METHODS, SUPPORTED BY INCREASED AGRICULTURAL LOANS AND MARKETING FACILITIES IN ORDER TO MAKE FARMING ECONOMICALLY VIABLE,+ HE SAID.

/MR CHEUNG

MR CHEUNG THEN TALKED ABOUT CONSUMER PROTECTION AND QUALITY CONTROL OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS AND COMMERCIAL PRACTICES.

HE CALLED FOR THE SPEEDING UP OF TRADE DESCRIPTION AND WEIGHTS AND MEASURES LEGISLATION TO ENSURE ACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTENTS OF GOODS AND THAT CUSTOMERS GET THE QUANTITY OF HIGH QUALITY GOODS THEY PAID FOR.

+BY PROMOTING THESE, IT WILL NOT ONLY CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS PRESERVING THE PRESTIGE OF HONG KONG AS A SHOPPERS' PARADISE BUT WILL ALSO HELP TO INSTILL OVERSEAS CONFIDENCE IN THE QUALITY OF OUR PRODUCTS.

+THESE WILL DEFINITELY HELP TO FURTHER DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN THE PROSPERITY AND STABILITY OF HONG KONG,+ HE SAID.

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WARNING AGAINST STAGNATION AND RETROGRESSION
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A WARNING WAS SOUNDED BY THE HON SELINA CHOW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AGAINST THE PITFALLS OF STAGNATION AND RETROGRESSION IN OUR CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM.

SPEAKING AT THE POLICY DEBATE, SHE SAID OUR CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM MUST PROGRESS TOWARDS THE FORM SPELT OUT IN THE JOINT DECLARATION AS THE DIRECTION WAS CLEAR AND THE GOAL WAS DEFINED.

+THE PACE IS OURS TO DETERMINE,+ SHE ADDED.

MRS CHOW SAID WE MUST RECOGNISE THE FEARS AS WELL AS THE ASPIRATIONS, BUT AT THE SAME TIME WE MUST ALSO RECOGNISE THE PITFALLS OF STAGNATION AND RETROGRESSION, WHICH COULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND COULD PARADOXICALLY PUT AT RISK THE STABILITY WE WISHED TO PRESERVE.

SHE SAID WE HAD LESS THAN 12 YEARS, CONSIDERABLY LESS IF WE WERE TO EFFECT A SMOOTH TRANSITION, TO ARRIVE AT THE FINAL STRUCTURE.

+THE MORE WE DELAY THAT FINALISATION, THE MORE CHANGES WE WOULD NEED TO EFFECT WITHIN A SHORTER TIME FRAME, WHICH COULD ONLY MEAN THAT WE WILL BE RUNNING A HIGHER RISK OF INSTABILITY.

+SUCH A SCENARIO MUST SURELY BE HARMFUL TO THE INTERESTS OF HONG KONG, CHINA AND BRITAIN,+ SHE SAID.

ON ADJUSTMENTS TO THE PRESENT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTION ARRANGEMENTS, MRS CHOW LISTED OUT FOR CONSIDERATION THREE ALTERNATIVES:

- * INSTEAD OF 12 CONSTITUENCIES, THE SINGLE LIST SYSTEM COULD BE ADOPTED;
- * TO ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY, ASSUMING THAT THE EXISTING SYSTEM WAS RETAINED, VOTING WITHIN THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE COULD BE OPEN;
- * TO ALLOW DIRECT ELECTION TO REPLACE THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE ALTOGETHER SO THAT LEGISLATORS ELECTED ON SUCH A POPULIST BASE COULD BE HELD DIRECTLY ACCOUNTABLE TO THEIR CONSTITUENCIES.

MRS CHOW SAID THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE POPULAR SUPPORT FOR A LIMITED SCALE OF DIRECT ELECTION TO BE INTRODUCED IN 1988.

AT THE SAME TIME, SHE SAID, THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE RESISTANCE FROM THE CONSERVATIVE SECTORS OF OUR COMMUNITY AGAINST UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE.

THE +FREE LUNCH+ ARGUMENT WAS WELL-KNOWN AND THE THREAT THAT ADVERSARIAL POLITICS POSED TO STABILITY WAS GENUINELY FEARED, SHE ADDED.

MRS CHOW POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE STILL QUESTIONS LAID DOWN IN THE JOINT DECLARATION THAT NEEDED TO BE RESOLVED. THEY INCLUDED THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LEGISLATIVE AND THE EXECUTIVE COUNCILS; THE MONITORING FUNCTION OF THE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES; THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE URBAN AND REGIONAL COUNCILS AND THE DISTRICT BOARDS ON THE ONE HAND, AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ON THE OTHER; THE ROLE OF THE UNOFFICIALS ON THE VARIOUS PLANES OF GOVERNMENT, AND THE RESOURCE SUPPORT REQUIRED TO FULFILL THEIR RESPECTIVE ROLES EFFECTIVELY, AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VARIOUS ENTITIES WITHIN THE NETWORK AND HIERARCHY OF ADVISORY BODIES WITHIN GOVERNMENT.

+THE 1987 REVIEW, TO WHICH THE GOVERNMENT IS FIRMLY COMMITTED, MUST BE AS THOROUGH AS POSSIBLE, EXPLORING ALL FACETS THAT NEED TO BE LOOKED AT, CONTAINING AS MANY OPTIONS AS ARE PRACTICABLE, SO AS TO ASSIST HONG KONG TO COME TO THE RIGHT DECISION EXPEDIENTLY,+ SHE SAID.

TURNING TO CONSUMER PROTECTION, SHE SAID IT WAS THE BUSINESS OF ALL OF US, BUT MORE SPECIFICALLY THAT OF THE CONSUMER COUNCIL, GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS WHICH HAD THE DUTY TO CONTROL, AND IF NECESSARY, TO PROSECUTE DELINQUENT TRADERS, THE POLICE, THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WHERE LEGISLATIVE MEASURES WERE NECESSARY.

+WE HAVE A COMMON CAUSE. WE WILL SUCCEED IF WE MAINTAIN THE PRESENT SPIRIT OF CLOSE CO-OPERATION,+ SHE SAID.

MRS CHOW ALSO SPOKE ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR, SAYING THAT THE CENTRAL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE WOULD BE PRESENTING TO GOVERNMENT NEXT MARCH A REPORT CONTAINING RECOMMENDATION ON POLICIES RELATING TO YOUTH, HAVING TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION VIEWS EXPRESSED IN A MOST MEANINGFUL CONFERENCE OF TWO PARTS ON YOUTH POLICIES IN PERSPECTIVE.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1985

- 15 -

THE COMMITTEE WOULD ALSO RECOMMEND THAT A STANDING CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE ON YOUTH BE CONSTITUTED TO CO-ORDINATE ALL TERRITORY-WIDE YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN RECREATION AND CULTURE= AS WELL AS TO ADVISE GOVERNMENT ON MAJOR POLICY ISSUES FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE YOUNG,+ SHE SAID.

MRS CHOW FELT THAT SUCH A COMMITTEE WITH OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL PARTICIPATION WHICH MUST INCLUDE YOUNG PEOPLE, WOULD BE ABLE TO CONTINUE THE MUCH GOOD WORK THAT HAD STARTED THIS YEAR.

ONE OF THE COMMITTEE'S PRIORITIES COULD BE TO EXAMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF A SO-CALLED YOUTH POLICY, IN ANSWER TO CALLS MADE BY A NUMBER OF EXPERTS ON YOUTH MATTERS, SHE SAID.

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RIGHT PACE FOR PROGRESS OF POLITICAL REFORMS
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HONG KONG'S PROGRESS TOWARDS POLITICAL REFORMS NEEDS TO BE PACED RIGHT SO AS TO ENHANCE SOCIAL STABILITY, ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE, AND TO AVOID ECONOMIC CHAOS AT ALL COSTS, THE HON HILTON CHEONG-LEEN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT DAY ONE OF THE POLICY DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID WE HAD TO PRAGMATICALLY MOVE FORWARD IN BUILDING UP OUR OWN STYLE OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT FOR 1997.

+BETWEEN NOW AND THEN, HONG KONG SHOULD BE INCREASINGLY ALIGNING ITSELF TO CHINA'S OPEN-DOOR POLICY, MODERNISATION DRIVE, SOCIALIST CULTURE AND CHINESE-STYLE RULE OF LAW, WHILE STILL RETAINING OUR OWN SYSTEMS UNDER THE 'ONE COUNTRY-TWO SYSTEMS' PRINCIPLE,+ MR CHEONG-LEEN SAID.

HE SAID HE BELIEVED THAT IT WAS TO THE LONG-TERM INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG TO HAVE A BALANCED PROPORTION OF INDIRECTLY AND DIRECTLY ELECTED LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SEATS BY THE 1988 ELECTIONS.

+I URGE THAT LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON THIS SUBJECT AND ALSO IN THEIR INDIVIDUAL CAPACITIES EXERT THEIR BEST EFFORTS TO PERSUADE BASIC LAW DRAFTING COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE OF DIRECT ELECTION FOR A PROPORTION OF THE SEATS OF THIS COUNCIL,+ HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT HONG KONG NEEDED PEOPLE WITH THE WILL, DEDICATION AND VISION TO COMBINE INTO A UNITED AND EFFECTIVE LOCAL LEADERSHIP TO STEP-BY-STEP TAKE OVER THE ADMINISTRATION OF HONG KONG UNDER BRITISH RESPONSIBILITY BY 1997.

/HE FURTHER

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1985

- 16 -

HE FURTHER PROPOSED THAT DURING THE 1985-86 SESSION, STANDING SELECT COMMITTEES BE APPOINTED WITH UNOFFICIALS AS CHAIRMEN TO COVER EDUCATION, CULTURE AND RECREATION, HOUSING, MEDICAL AND HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES, TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND ENVIRONMENT OR SOME OF THESE AREAS.

NOTING THAT THERE WAS ANOTHER THREE YEARS TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF WIDER REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, MR CHEONG-LEEN SAID COUNCILLORS WOULD HAVE TO PROVE TO LOCAL CITIZENS AND TO THE WORLD THAT WE HAD THE CAPABILITY OF GOVERNING OURSELVES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SPIRIT AND TERMS OF THE JOINT DECLARATION.

+IT IS AN UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGE BUT I BELIEVE THAT WE CAN FULFIL THIS HISTORIC TASK,+ HE SAID.

MR CHEONG-LEEN STRESSED THAT CONFIDENCE IN OURSELVES AND FAITH IN THE FUTURE OF CHINA AND HONG KONG WOULD ENSURE A SMOOTH TRANSITION BY 1997 AND INTO THE 21ST CENTURY.

HE SAID CIVIC AND POLITICAL EDUCATION OF THE HONG KONG PUBLIC SHOULD BE A MATTER OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE, AND WE WOULD HAVE TO INFORM AND ENGAGE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS GROUPS AND INTERESTED CITIZENS ON KEY ISSUES AS THEY AROSE.

+THE MORE ACTIVE PUBLIC INTEREST THERE IS IN HONG KONG POLITICAL AFFAIRS, THE MORE COMMITTED WILL HONG KONG PEOPLE BE TO THEIR OWN FUTURE AND THE FUTURE OF CHINA,+ HE SAID.

MR CHEONG-LEEN SAID HE BELIEVED THAT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WOULD NO DOUBT KEEP ITS SIGHTS FIRMLY FOCUSSED ON HONG KONG'S CONTINUED ECONOMIC GROWTH, THE FOUNDATION FOR WHICH WAS OUR FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM AND MARKET-ORIENTED ECONOMY.

+HONG KONG'S OWN BRAND OF CAPITALISM WILL HAVE TO RELATE TO AND MAKE ITS SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO CHINA'S SOCIALIST MODERNISATION AND HIGHER LIVING STANDARDS FOR THE CHINESE PEOPLE.

+IN OTHER WORDS, HONG KONG AFTER 1997 CAN BE THE PROVING GROUND WHEREBY CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM CAN CO-EXIST PRODUCTIVELY AND PEACEFULLY FOR ALL CONCERNED,+ HE SAID.

+ALREADY AS A START, IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JOINT DECLARATION, NEW LAND LEASES ARE BEING ISSUED TO EXPIRE IN THE YEAR 2047, AND THIS HAS REINFORCED CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC FUTURE,+ HE ADDED.

TURNING TO THE PROBLEM OF TRIADS, MR CHEONG-LEEN CALLED FOR MORE VIGOROUS ACTION BY GOVERNMENT, NOTING THAT HONG KONG PEOPLE WERE QUITE CONCERNED ABOUT THE INSIDIOUS MENACE OF TRIADS AND THAT SOME COUNTRIES COUNTED THEM AS AN EXPORT PRODUCT FROM HONG KONG.

+ONE OF THE MOST INTRACTABLE AREAS WHERE TRIAD ACTIVITY IS ENDEMIC IS AMONG HAWKERS.

/+I WOULD

+I WOULD URGE MAXIMUM COOPERATION FROM THE POLICE TO THE URBAN COUNCIL AND THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT IN COMBATTING THE TRIAD MENACE AMONG HAWKERS,+ HE SAID.

MR CHEONG-LEEN NEXT OBSERVED THAT LEGISLATION REGARDING ADVERTISEMENT SIGNS WAS ANOTHER MATTER OF CONCERN TO THE URBAN COUNCIL WHICH DECIDED MANY YEARS AGO THAT IT DID NOT HAVE THE REQUIRED ENGINEERING SKILLS AND FACILITIES TO EFFECTIVELY CONTROL THEM.

IT WAS AGREED WITH GOVERNMENT IN 1977 THAT THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION SHOULD BE ENACTED TO FACILITATE GOVERNMENT TAKING OVER THIS TASK, HE RECALLED.

+DESPITE INNUMERABLE REMINDERS TO GOVERNMENT OVER THE YEARS, NOTHING SO FAR HAS HAPPENED.

+AS THE SECRETARY FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES IS ONCE AGAIN MAKING A PLEA FOR THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO BE ENACTED, I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL TO KNOW IF SUCH LEGISLATION CAN BE ENACTED DURING THE CURRENT 1985-86 SESSION,+ HE SAID.

MR CHEONG-LEEN ALSO SAID THAT IN CO-OPERATION WITH GOVERNMENT, THE URBAN COUNCIL HOPED TO SEE THE COMPLETION OF THE HONG KONG CULTURAL CENTRE OPPOSITE THE PENINSULA HOTEL BY 1989.

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CALL TO INTRODUCE POLITICAL REFORMS CAUTIOUSLY
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POLITICAL REFORMS IN HONG KONG SHOULD ONLY BE MADE IN TANDEM WITH THE BASIC LAW WHICH IS TO BE DRAFTED AND PASSED BY THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS, THE HON HO SAI-CHU SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE POLICY DEBATE AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR HO SAID ANY POLITICAL REFORMS DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD SHOULD BE INTRODUCED CAUTIOUSLY AND LINKED TO THE FUTURE CONSTITUTION OF HONG KONG.

HE THEREFORE URGED ALL CONCERNED WHO MIGHT HAVE VIEWS ON THE DRAFTING OF THE BASIC LAW TO EXPRESS THEIR OPINIONS THROUGH THE RELEVANT CHANNELS SO THAT A FRAMEWORK OF ENDURING INSTITUTIONS MIGHT BE BUILT WHICH WOULD MAINTAIN CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG.

MR HO WELCOMED THE GOVERNOR'S REMARKS ABOUT THE BASIC LAW IN HIS OPENING ADDRESS, AND THE FIRM COMMITMENT OF BOTH THE BRITISH AND CHINESE GOVERNMENTS TO MAINTAIN LOCAL PROSPERITY AND STABILITY.

/HE ALSO

HE ALSO COMMENDED THE LAND COMMISSION FOR ITS +FLEXIBLE APPROACH+ IN RESOLVING OUR CURRENT NEEDS AND THUS ACHIEVING +A GOOD BEGINNING+.

THE COMMISSION, HE NOTED, APART FROM REACHING AGREEMENT ON A RANGE OF LEGAL DOCUMENTS FOR USE IN LAND TRANSACTIONS, HAD ALSO AGREED TO INCREASE THE STIPULATED LIMIT OF NEW LAND TO BE GRANTED FROM 50 HECTARES TO 58 HECTARES FOR THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR AND FOR THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT TO GRANT NEW LEASES OF LAND FOR TERMS EXPIRING NOT LATER THAN JUNE 30, 2047.

+ALL CONCERNED SHOULD NOW REST ASSURED THAT LAND WILL CONTINUE TO BE MADE AVAILABLE WHEN NECESSARY, TO MEET OUR DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS.

+WE SHOULD THEREFORE TAKE A LONG TERM VIEW AND NOT BE PESSIMISTIC ABOUT OUR FUTURE,+ MR HO SAID.

HE ALSO WELCOMED THE GOVERNOR'S REMARKS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION AND IN PARTICULAR, THE REFERENCE TO THE ENCOURAGING START OF THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP IN ITS ABILITY TO CO-OPERATE IN THIS IMPORTANT WORK TO ENSURE A SMOOTH TRANSFER OF GOVERNMENT IN 1997.

ON LOCALISATION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR HO SAID WE MUST NOT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST OVERSEAS OFFICERS WHOSE CONTRIBUTIONS HAD INDEED BEEN GREAT.

MUCH OF HONG KONG'S ACHIEVEMENTS, HE SAID, HAD BEEN ACCOMPLISHED NOT ONLY THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF LOCAL CIVIL SERVANTS BUT ALSO WITH THE HELP AND GUIDANCE OF THEIR EXPATRIATE COLLEAGUES.

HE WAS GLAD TO HEAR THAT THERE WOULD STILL BE A PLACE FOR SUCH OFFICERS NOT ONLY DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD BUT ALSO AFTER 1997 AS WAS PROVIDED FOR UNDER THE JOINT DECLARATION.

HE REMINDED THE CIVIL SERVICE THAT THEIR PRIMARY TASK WAS TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN HONG KONG.

+WE NOT ONLY REQUIRE A LOYAL AND DEDICATED CIVIL SERVICE BUT ALSO ONE WHICH IS CAPABLE OF INCULCATING A SENSE OF DEVOTION TO THE NEEDS OF THE PUBLIC SO THAT IT MAY DISCHARGE ITS RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE BEST INTEREST OF HONG KONG,+ MR HO SAID.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1985

- 19 -

CALL TO INTRODUCE DIRECT ELECTION IN 1988

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THE MOST NATURAL AND LOGICAL SECOND STEP IN THE DIRECTION TOWARDS A MORE OPEN, RESPONSIBLE AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT WITHIN THE CONSTRAINTS OF THE JOINT DECLARATION IS TO INTRODUCE DIRECT ELECTION IN 1988.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE HON MARTIN LEE DURING THE POLICY DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ANALYSING THE RATIONALE BEHIND DIRECT ELECTION, MR LEE SAID THAT THE JOINT DECLARATION HAD RESTORED CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG AND A FAIR NUMBER OF ABLE PEOPLE IN HONG KONG WERE WILLING TO DO THEIR PART TO MAKE THE PRINCIPLE OF +ONE COUNTRY TWO SYSTEMS+ WORK.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, THERE WAS A DOUBT IN THEIR MINDS WHETHER CHINA WOULD INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION OF HONG KONG, WHETHER IN THE LAW-MAKING SPHERE OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS OR THE JUDICIAL PROCESS.

MANY PEOPLE THEREFORE BEGAN TO LOOK FOR SOME SAFEGUARDS AND MANY BELIEVED THAT THE ONLY POSSIBLE SAFEGUARD WAS TO EVOLVE A SYSTEM WHICH WOULD PRODUCE A REALLY EFFECTIVE AND HIGHLY AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENT IN THE FUTURE SAR SO THAT IT COULD WITHSTAND SUCH ATTEMPTS TO INTERFERE, MR LEE SAID.

+AND WHAT CAN BE BETTER THAN A SYSTEM WHERE THOSE IN POWER ARE PUT THERE BY THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG AND CAN THEREFORE BE REMOVED BY THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG?+ HE ASKED.

HE SAID THAT WAS WHY IT WAS THOUGHT NECESSARY TO PROVIDE IN THE JOINT DECLARATION THAT THE EXECUTIVE SHOULD BE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE LEGISLATURE WHICH SHOULD BE CONSTITUTED BY ELECTIONS.

BUT, MR LEE SAID, THESE PROVISIONS WOULD BE MEANINGLESS UNLESS A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WERE ELECTED DIRECTLY BY THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG.

+AND THAT IS THE WHOLE RATIONALE BEHIND DIRECT ELECTION; AND THAT IS WHY SO MANY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN, AND ARE, CLAMOURING FOR DIRECT ELECTION IN HONG KONG,+ MR LEE SAID.

+INDEED, IT IS OUR ONLY HOPE TO REALISE THE IDEAL OF 'ONE COUNTRY TWO SYSTEMS',+ HE ADDED.

+THIS HAS NOW BECOME THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES AND NO ONE CAN RESIST IT.

+TAKE THAT AWAY, AND THE BEAUTIFUL AND COURAGEOUS DREAM OF A GRAND OLD MAN WILL TURN INTO A NIGHTMARE= AND OUR FREEDOMS CAN NO LONGER BE SAFEGUARDED,+ HE SAID.

/HE POINTED

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE SUGGESTION TO INTRODUCE DIRECT ELECTION IN 1988 FOLLOWED THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE WHITE PAPER ON THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IN HONG KONG WHICH ACKNOWLEDGED THAT +THERE WAS STRONG PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE IDEA OF DIRECT ELECTIONS BUT LITTLE SUPPORT FOR SUCH ELECTIONS IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.+

IN THE CONTEXT, HE SAID, THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE MEANT SEPTEMBER 1985.

HE ADDED THAT HE HAD DETECTED NO SIGN WHATSOEVER OF ANY CHANGE OF PUBLIC SENTIMENT IN THIS REGARD.

+ON THE CONTRARY, HAVING REGARD TO MY PLATFORM AND THOSE OF MY MANY COLLEAGUES IN THE RECENT ELECTIONS, IT IS OBVIOUS TO ALL THAT THOSE OF US WHO HAD, IN OUR RESPECTIVE ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, PLEDGED TO SUPPORT THE INTRODUCTION OF DIRECT ELECTION IN 1988, HAVE RECEIVED A CLEAR MANDATE TO DO SO.

+AND THAT MANDATE IS A VERY WIDE ONE, EMBRACING MOST OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS AND FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES,+ HE SAID.

ADDRESSING THE WORRY THAT OUR ECONOMY MIGHT BE THREATENED, MR LEE SAID: +THE STRENGTH OF OUR ECONOMY CAN ONLY BE MAINTAINED IF, AND ONLY IF, THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG BELIEVE THAT THIS PRINCIPLE OF 'ONE COUNTRY TWO SYSTEMS' CAN WORK; THAT IS, THEY CAN REASONABLY EXPECT THAT THE MUCH MIGHTIER SYSTEM ACROSS THE BORDER WILL NOT INTERFERE IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF OUR MUCH SMALLER SYSTEM; OR THAT IF THERE BE SUCH ATTEMPTS TO INTERFERE, THERE IS A SUFFICIENTLY STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT IN HONG KONG TO WITHSTAND THEM.+

IT WAS NOT REALISTIC TO HOPE THAT CHINA WOULD NOT INTERFERE OR AT LEAST ATTEMPT TO INTERFERE; AND WE MUST BE PREPARED FOR IT.

+INDEED, IT MUST BE CLEAR BY NOW TO EVERYONE, INCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE AFRAID OF DIRECT ELECTION, THAT UNLESS WE HAVE DIRECT ELECTION, WE WILL NEVER HAVE AN EFFECTIVE AND HIGHLY AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENT TO KEEP OUR SYSTEM SEPARATE FROM THE REST OF CHINA.

+IN SUCH A SITUATION, THE OUTFLOW OF CAPITAL AND TALENT WILL CONTINUE AS BEFORE AND ALTHOUGH THE BOAT WILL NOT BE ROCKED, OUR ECONOMY WILL LANGUISH AND DIE,+ HE SAID.

HOWEVER, HE SAID IT WAS DESIRABLE TO CARRY OUT POLITICAL REFORMS GRADUALLY.

HE SUGGESTED THAT WE SHOULD ONLY HAVE 25 PER CENT OF THE SEATS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VIA THE DIRECT ELECTION ROUTE IN 1988. AS TO THE REST, WE SHOULD WAIT FOR THE REVIEW IN 1987, WHICH SHOULD COMMENCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, HE SAID.

+WE WILL NEED TO RE-ASSESS THE POSITION AGAIN AFTER THE 1988 ELECTIONS BEFORE DECIDING ON THE NEXT STEP,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE SAID HE COULD NOT SEE HOW IT COULD BE SUGGESTED THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF DIRECT ELECTION COULD BE SAID TO CONTRAVENE THE JOINT DECLARATION.

ALTHOUGH THE JOINT DECLARATION DID NOT SAY THAT THE LEGISLATURE SHOULD BE BY DIRECT ELECTION, IT DID NOT PROHIBIT IT EITHER, HE SAID.

+OF ALL THE CAPITALIST COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD THAT HAVE ELECTIONS, THE GREAT GREAT MAJORITY HAVE DIRECT ELECTION, WHICH IS ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE THE BEST MODE OF ELECTIONS.

+AND SINCE THE JOINT DECLARATION SPECIFICALLY PROVIDES THAT HONG KONG WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE ITS CAPITALIST SYSTEM FOR 50 YEARS BEYOND 1997, IT IS ONLY LOGICAL TO EXPECT THAT THE METHOD OF ELECTIONS SHOULD FOLLOW THAT OF MOST OTHER CAPITALIST COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT ONCE INTRODUCED, DIRECT ELECTION WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE EVEN TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG WHO HAD RESERVATIONS ABOUT IT NOW.

+BUT WHETHER IT WILL REALLY BE A SUCCESS OR NOT, IT IS OUR ONLY HOPE ; AND NO ONE HAS POINTED TO A BETTER WAY WHICH WOULD GIVE OUR FUTURE SAR GOVERNMENT THAT HIGH DEGREE OF AUTONOMY,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THIS EXPERIENCE OF DIRECT ELECTION IN 1988 MUST BE BENEFICIAL TO THE MEMBERS OF BOTH THE DRAFTING AND CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES OF THE BASIC LAW BECAUSE THEY COULD JUDGE FOR THEMSELVES WHETHER THE ACTUAL EXPERIENCE WOULD SHOW DIRECT ELECTION TO BE A SUCCESS OR FAILURE.

MR LEE SUMMARISED HIS SPEECH IN THE FORM OF THE FOLLOWING EQUATION:

PROSPERITY AND STABILITY = 1 COUNTRY 2 SYSTEMS
= NO INTERVENTION = EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT = ANSWERABLE
TO PEOPLE = FULLY ELECTED LEGCO (AT LEAST 25 PER CENT
DIRECT)

+I CALL THIS 'THE EQUATION OF SUCCESS' AND I SUGGEST IT IS ALREADY CONTAINED IN THE JOINT DECLARATION,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST NOT BE FORCED INTO INACTION DURING THESE VITAL FEW YEARS, AND WAIT FOR THE BASIC LAW TO BE PROMULGATED.

+FOR THE DIRECTION OF OUR FUTURE POLITICAL REFORM IS ALREADY SET OUT IN THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THERE IS NO REASON WHY WE SHOULD NOT PROCEED IN THAT DIRECTION EVEN NOW.

+LIKewise, MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL MUST NOT BE FORCED INTO SILENCE AND PREVENTED FROM DEBATING OR CONSIDERING OUR FUTURE POLITICAL REFORMS,+ HE SAID.

/MR LEE

MR LEE SAID THEIR TERM OF OFFICE WAS ONLY FOR THREE YEARS AND ASKED HOW THEY COULD BE FAITHFUL TO THEIR OATH TO SERVE THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG CONSCIENTIOUSLY AND TRULY IF THEY DID NOT ADDRESS THEIR MINDS TO THE +MOST BURNING QUESTION OF THE DAY+.

+OF COURSE, WE WILL LISTEN TO THE VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG; BUT IT MUST BE RECOGNISED THAT ONLY THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG CAN TELL US WHAT TO DO.

+NOBODY ELSE CAN,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE APPEALED TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG WHO CARED FOR THEIR FUTURE TO SPEAK UP NOW AND LET THE WORLD KNOW THAT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HAD THEIR SUPPORT IN INTRODUCING DIRECT ELECTION IN 1988.

HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT HE HAD SAID THESE THINGS BECAUSE, LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, HE TOO WANTED TO SEE THIS IDEAL OF +ONE COUNTRY TWO SYSTEMS+ SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED IN HONG KONG.

+I DO NOT INTEND TO BE CONFRONTATIONAL WHEN I SAID WHAT HAS TO BE SAID.

+IT IS FROM THE HEART -- NOT ONLY MINE, BUT ALSO THOSE OF MANY OTHER PEOPLE WHO SHARE THE COMMON OBJECTIVE OF WORKING OUT A BRIGHT FUTURE, NOT ONLY FOR OURSELVES, BUT FOR OUR CHILDREN AND THEIR CHILDREN.

+I KNOW WE CAN DO IT TOGETHER,+ HE SAID.

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'PEOPLE PREFER TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN SPOUSE'
* * * * *

A LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR TODAY (WEDNESDAY) LIKENED DIRECT ELECTION TO +CHOOSING ONE'S SPOUSE BY ONESELF+ AND INDIRECT ELECTION TO +FINDING ONE'S SPOUSE THROUGH A MATCHMAKER+.

THE ANALOGY WAS DRAWN BY THE HON LEE YU-TAI WHEN SPEAKING AT THE ANNUAL POLICY DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

+ALTHOUGH THE FORMER WAY OF MARRIAGE SUFFERS A RELATIVELY HIGHER DIVORCE RATE THAN THE LATTER, PEOPLE TODAY STILL PREFER THE FORMER METHOD AS IT ALLOWS THEM TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN SPOUSES.

+IT IS THEREFORE, EASY TO SEE HOW MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC CHOOSE BETWEEN DIRECT AND INDIRECT ELECTIONS,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE SAID HE HOPED TO SEE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT IN REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, TOWARDS AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF ELECTED SEATS AND THE INTRODUCTION OF A MORE DIRECT ELECTORAL SYSTEM WHICH WERE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NATURAL PROCESS OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT.

/HE ALSO

HE ALSO SAID THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS IN DIRECT ELECTIONS WAS HIGHER THAN THAT IN INDIRECT ELECTIONS AND BY COMPARISON, THE RESULTS WERE HARDER TO BE MANIPULATED.

AS REGARDS THE PACE OF REFORMS, MR LEE SAID A GRADUAL APPROACH MUST BE ADOPTED, ONE THAT WAS CONSTANTLY ON THE MOVE AND NOT AT A STANDSTILL.

+THE POLITICAL SYSTEM AFTER 1997 WILL CERTAINLY BE MODELLED ON THE BASIS OF THE ONE AS SHAPED DURING THE NEXT 12 YEARS AND IT IS NOW ALREADY A RACE AGAINST TIME AS 12 YEARS WILL NOT BE TOO FAR OFF.

+THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG WILL HAVE TO MAKE GOOD PREPARATIONS DURING THE 12-YEAR TRANSITIONAL PERIOD TO ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT ON THE BASIS OF ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS,+ HE SAID.

AMONG THE THREE LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, MR LEE SAID, DISTRICT BOARDS WERE CLOSEST TO THE PUBLIC AND THE ROLE OF DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS SHOULD ACCORDINGLY BE GIVEN THE FULLEST PLAY.

+THE AUTHORITIES SHOULD CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING THEM WITH REASONABLE RESOURCES, SUCH AS OFFICE ACCOMMODATION, SO THAT THEY COULD SERVE THE PUBLIC IN A MORE EFFECTIVE WAY.

+ALSO, FOR THOSE MEMBERS WHO ARE REQUIRED BY THEIR PROFESSION (SUCH AS TEACHERS) TO PERFORM THEIR DUTIES IN DESIGNATED PLACES WITHIN PRESCRIBED PERIODS OF TIME, THE AUTHORITIES SHOULD CONSIDER APPROPRIATE ARRANGEMENTS TO THE EFFECT THAT THEY COULD TAKE A TEMPORARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE UNDER APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES TO ATTEND DISTRICT BOARD MEETINGS OR TO PERFORM PUBLIC DUTIES,+ HE SUGGESTED.

MR LEE NEXT SAID THAT BOTH THE EXISTING AND THE PROPOSED SYSTEMS TO ENQUIRE INTO COMPLAINTS ALLEGING MALADMINISTRATION BY GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE MAINTAINED SO AS TO PUT INTO EFFECT THE IDEA OF UPHOLDING JUSTICE.

+ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE PRESS COULD STILL MAINTAIN ITS INDEPENDENT STATUS AND MAKE OBJECTIVE REPORTS.

+IN THIS CONNECTION, THERE SHOULD NOT BE ANY CENSORSHIP OF THE PRESS OR ANY MEASURES FOR COMPULSORY DISCLOSURE OF THE SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

+THESE ARE THE ESSENTIAL POINTS WHICH NEED TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE BROADCASTING REVIEW,+ HE ADDED.

HE REITERATED THAT AVENUES OF REDRESS AND NEWSPAPER REPORTS COULD BOTH SERVE THE PURPOSE OF MONITORING GOVERNMENT ACTION AS WELL AS UPHOLDING SOCIAL JUSTICE.

NOTING THAT EDUCATION WAS ACCORDED THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE IN PUBLIC EXPENDITURE THIS YEAR, MR LEE SAID HE HOPED SUCH A PERCENTAGE COULD BE MAINTAINED OR EVEN IMPROVED ON IN THE YEARS TO COME.

HE POINTED OUT THE DIFFERENCE IN SUBSIDY GIVEN TO A GOVERNMENT BOUGHT PRIVATE SCHOOL PLACE AND A GOVERNMENT-AIDED SCHOOL PLACE, AND SAID EQUAL RESOURCES SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED TO ALL STUDENTS RECEIVING UNIVERSAL EDUCATION.

ON THE ACUTE NEED FOR DEGREE COURSES AND THE GOVERNMENT INTENTION TO PLAN A THIRD UNIVERSITY, MR LEE PROPOSED THAT A PLANNING COMMITTEE BE SET UP AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO COORDINATE THE WORK AND TO CONSIDER FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF THE CITY POLYTECHNIC TO START SCHOOL SESSION EARLY AT TEMPORARY SCHOOL PREMISES.

+BESIDES, THERE SHOULD BE PLANS FOR EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING 'SECOND CHANCE' HIGHER EDUCATION COURSES FOR ADULTS,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID HE BELIEVED OPEN EDUCATION WOULD OVERCOME THE RESTRAINTS IMPOSED ON ADULT STUDENTS THROUGH WORK AND FAMILY LIFE AND WAS MOST SUITABLE TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS IN PROMOTING ADULT EDUCATION IN A MODERN CITY.

THE SITE FOR THE THIRD UNIVERSITY SHOULD PREFERABLY BE ADJACENT TO THE MAJOR TRAFFIC SYSTEMS TO FACILITATE THE RUNNING OF ADULT COURSES, HE SUGGESTED.

MR LEE ALSO ADVOCATED THE SETTING UP OF A LOCAL VALIDATION ORGANISATION AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY TO ASSESS THE CURRICULA AND ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROPER RECOGNITION SO AS TO REDRESS THE INEQUALITY SITUATION.

ON THE PROVISIONAL ACCEPTANCE SCHEME OF THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY, HE SAID HE HOPED THAT THE AUTHORITIES OF THE TWO UNIVERSITIES AND POST-SECONDARY COLLEGES AND PERSONALITIES OF THE EDUCATION CIRCLE WOULD IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AMONG THEMSELVES, AND HELP SOLVE CERTAIN TECHNICAL PROBLEM PERTAINING TO IT WITH CONCERTED EFFORTS.

AS REGARD THE MATRICULATION STRUCTURE, HE SAID IT SHOULD NOT BE UNIFIED SIMPLY FOR THE SAKE OF UNIFICATION.

+EACH YEAR, THERE ARE ABOUT 5 000 PLUS STUDENTS IN HONG KONG WHO GO TO NORTH AMERICA AND ANOTHER 3 000 PLUS WHO GO TO MAINLAND CHINA AND TAIWAN TO PURSUE FURTHER STUDIES.

+AS FOUR-YEAR UNDER-GRADUATE COURSES ARE PROVIDED IN THE ABOVE PLACES, THERE SHOULD NOT BE ANY LINK-UP PROBLEM FOR THE ONE-YEAR MATRICULATION COURSE OR SIX-YEAR SECONDARY STRUCTURE HERE,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF REPEATERS IN VARIOUS EXAMINATIONS IN RECENT YEARS AND HOPED THAT THE ORGANISATIONS WHICH SHAPED POLICIES RELATING TO EDUCATION AND EXAMINATION WOULD EXAMINE THE ISSUE AND MAKE IMPROVEMENT.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1985

- 25 -

SOLVE FLAG QUESTION AT EARLY OPPORTUNITY
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THE HONG KONG SHIPPING COMMUNITY BELIEVES THAT THE TECHNICAL, LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEM INVOLVED IN THE CREATION OF A NEW HONG KONG SHIPPING REGISTER CAN BE RESOLVED BUT IS CONCERNED WITH INTERNATIONAL REACTION TO THE FLAG QUESTION, DR THE HON HELMUT SOHMEN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE COMMUNITY HOPED THAT THE BRITISH AND CHINESE GOVERNMENTS WOULD ADDRESS THIS ISSUE AT AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY WHILE PROGRESS ON OTHER DETAILS OF ESTABLISHMENT CONTINUED WITH ALL DELIBERATE SPEED, HE ADDED.

DR SOHMEN WAS SPEAKING AT THE ANNUAL POLICY DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE POINTED OUT THAT IF THE CHINESE NATIONAL FLAG COULD ONLY BE FLOWN, THIS WOULD NEGATE THE EXPRESS PROVISIONS OF THE JOINT DECLARATION WHILE A DISTINCT HONG KONG EMBLEM ALONE WOULD LIKELY NOT BE RECOGNISED BY OTHER NATIONS.

+THE PRACTICAL SOLUTION WILL LIE IN A DUAL FLAG, WITH BOTH THE CHINESE AND A NEW HONG KONG EMBLEM FLOWN TOGETHER,+ HE SAID.

+THE FREE ENTRY AND EXIT TO THE NEW REGISTER, AN ABSENCE OF REQUISITION POWERS, TOGETHER WITH SOME GUARANTIES AS TO THE TAX TREATMENT OF HONG KONG SHIPPING OPERATIONS OVER THE LONGER TERM WILL BE BASIC PREREQUISITES FOR ITS ATTRACTIVENESS TO INDIVIDUAL SHIPOWNERS,+ HE SAID.

DR SOHMEN NOTED THAT A SIMILAR QUESTION OF ACCEPTABILITY BY OTHER NATIONS AROSE IN CONNECTION WITH NATIONALITY AND PASSPORTS.

HE SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT WITH SUFFICIENT INTERNATIONAL GOODWILL VIS-A-VIS HONG KONG AND ITS PEOPLE, ANY ARRANGEMENTS MADE BY THE UNITED KINGDOM AND CHINA WOULD HAVE GOOD CHANCES OF BEING ACCEPTED BY MANY OTHER COUNTRIES ALTHOUGH STRONG LOBBYING EFFORTS WOULD BE UNAVOIDABLE.

NOTING THAT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WOULD SHORTLY DEBATE THE WHITE PAPER ON THE DRAFT HONG KONG (BRITISH NATIONALITY) ORDER 1986, HE SAID IT WAS SOMEWHAT SURPRISING THAT THE DRAFT LEGISLATION SEEMED TO HAVE LEFT OPEN SO MANY QUERIES AND DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS WHICH SHOULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED TO CREATE ANXIETY AND WHICH SHOULD PERHAPS HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED IN INTER-GOVERNMENTAL EXCHANGES PRIOR TO ITS PUBLICATION.

+IT IS DIFFICULT TO ENVISAGE HOWEVER THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES WOULD AMEND OR MODIFY THE BASIC POINTS ALREADY AGREED AND EMBODIED IN THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE MEMORANDA EXCHANGED.

/+IT IS

+IT IS WORTH REMEMBERING THAT THE TERMS OF THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE DRAFT IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION WILL MEAN THAT A MAJORITY OF THE HONG KONG POPULATION WILL, AFTER JULY 1, 1997, BE LEGALLY ENTITLED TO TWO TRAVEL DOCUMENTS, AND TO CONSULAR PROTECTION IN THIRD COUNTRIES BY TWO STATES, A BENEFIT NOT NORMALLY ENJOYED BY THE CITIZENS OF OTHER NATIONS,+ HE SAID.

DR SOHMEN NOTED THAT THE FOREIGN BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN HONG KONG SHOULD BE SEEN AS AN ADDITIONAL CONDUIT TO CONVEY THE VIEWS AND CONCERNS OF HONG KONG TO THE GOVERNMENTS AND, PERHAPS EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY, TO PUBLIC OPINION IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES.

HE SAID HE CONSIDERED THE EFFORTS BY AMERICAN BUSINESS INTERESTS IN HONG KONG TO INTERCEDE WITH WASHINGTON ON THE ISSUE OF U.S. PROTECTIONIST LEGISLATION ON BEHALF OF HONG KONG DESERVED PARTICULAR PRAISE.

+A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE BACKGROUND FOR MANY OF THE NOVEL ARRANGEMENTS HONG KONG WILL NEED TO PUT IN PLACE IN THE CONTEXT OF IMPLEMENTING THE JOINT DECLARATION WOULD CERTAINLY HELP IN THE EFFORT TO OBTAIN THE COOPERATION REQUIRED OF OTHER COUNTRIES, SINCE A GOOD GRASP OF COMMERCIAL INTRICACIES FREQUENTLY ALSO PAVES THE WAY FOR THE POLITICAL ACCEPTANCE OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS,+ HE SAID.

+THIS WILL BE OF PARTICULAR RELEVANCE LATER WHEN HONG KONG STARTS TO RENEGOTIATE THE 190 MULTILATERAL AND 800 BILATERAL INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS WHICH ARE CURRENTLY EXTENDED TO HONG KONG BY THE UNITED KINGDOM, OR WHEN HONG KONG NEGOTIATES NEW AGREEMENTS OR SEEKS TO JOIN AS A MEMBER OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AS PROVIDED FOR IN ART. XI OF ANNEX I OF THE JOINT DECLARATION; IN THE INTERIM IT IS OF COURSE THE TASK OF THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP TO DEAL WITH SUCH MATTERS, AND LOCAL DISCUSSION IS CURRENTLY RESTRICTED BY THE CONFIDENTIALITY ASPECTS OF THAT GROUP'S DELIBERATIONS,+ HE ADDED.

HE RECOMMENDED THAT FURTHER INVITATIONS BE EXTENDED TO SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC FOR VISITS TO HONG KONG TO ALLOW FOR PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE TERRITORY AND ITS INSTITUTIONS AND FOR A DEEPENING OF THE CONTACTS AT MOST SENIOR LEVEL.

DR SOHMEN ALSO NOTED THAT CONSTANT RE-ASSURANCES WOULD BE NEEDED FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF HONG KONG'S EMINENT POSITION AS A COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL CENTRE AND TO THIS END, THE HONG KONG AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS WORLD SHOULD BE GENERALLY ACCEPTING THE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES PROPOSED BY GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE UPON OR TO NEWLY REGULATE COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES.

HOWEVER, HE CAUTIONED THAT HONG KONG HAD PROSPERED OVER THE DECADES LARGELY BECAUSE IT HAD SO FAR PROVIDED AN ENVIRONMENT OF RELATIVE FREEDOM FOR COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE BASED ON PRIVATE RISK-TAKING.

/+WE MUST

+WE MUST THEREFORE BE CAREFUL NOT TO THROW OUT THE BABY WITH THE BATHWATER, AND IN A SURGE OF REFORMATORY ZEAL FOLLOWING THE HIGHLY-PUBLICISED EVENTS OF RECENT YEARS TRY TO PREVENT A RECURRENCE OF SUCH EVENTS AT THE COST OF CHANGING THE BASIC CHARACTER OF THE MARKET PLACE.

+BUSINESS CONFIDENCE ALSO REQUIRES A DEGREE OF CERTAINTY, AS WELL AS THE AVOIDANCE OF RETROACTIVITY AND OF ANY APPARENT CRITICISM OF COMMERCIAL SUCCESS WHEN AND WHERE LEGITIMATELY ACHIEVED,+ HE SAID.

ON CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS, DR SOHMEN OBSERVED THAT THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ARGUMENTS ABOUT THEIR SPEED AND SCOPE AND ABOUT THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THOSE DEVELOPMENTS AND THE BASIC LAW DRAFTING EFFORT WOULD NOT HELP HONG KONG'S AMBITIONS TO MAINTAIN INTERNATIONAL CONFIDENCE.

+WITH HINDSIGHT ONE MIGHT SAY THAT APART FROM STABILITY AND PROSPERITY, AN ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVE OF THE TWO SOVEREIGN POWERS FOR HONG KONG SHOULD HAVE BEEN 'CONTINUITY' AS A GUIDING PRINCIPLE FOR THE TRANSITION PERIOD.

+THE JOINT DECLARATION HAS BROUGHT ITS SHARE OF INTERPRETATION PROBLEMS AND GOVERNMENT IS FACING A SITUATION OF HAVING TO ADAPT TO NEW EXPRESSIONS OF PUBLIC OPINION, STEER A CAREFUL COURSE BETWEEN OUR LOCAL ASPIRATIONS AND THE NATIONAL INTERESTS AND DIFFERING PRIORITIES OF TWO SOVEREIGN NATIONS, COPE WITH ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY WHILE ATTEMPTING TO MODIFY THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT AND EDUCATE THE PEOPLE TO MEET THE DEMANDS EXPECTED TO BE MADE ON THEM BY THE TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY IN 1997.

+AS A BUSINESSMAN I MAY BE FORGIVEN FOR ARGUING THAT HONG KONG'S ONLY STRENGTH CONTINUES TO LIE IN ITS ECONOMIC SUCCESS AND THAT THE CONSEQUENCES OF ANY MEASURES CAPABLE OF THREATENING THIS SUCCESS EVEN TEMPORARILY DOES NOT BODE WELL FOR THE LONGER-TERM FUTURE OF THE TERRITORY,+ HE SAID.

GRADUALISM IN THE BUSINESS CONTEXT WAS ALWAYS PREFERABLE TO SUDDEN CHANGE, HE CONCLUDED.

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IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS NEED TO BE TACKLED FIRST

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THE GOVERNMENT WAS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) URGED TO TACKLE PROBLEMS IN THE ORDER OF THEIR IMMEDIACY.

THE CALL WAS MADE BY THE HON ANDREW WONG DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR WONG SAID PENDING PROBLEMS SHOULD ALWAYS TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER ANTICIPATED ONES.

/HE SAID

HE SAID WHILE HE PERSONALLY REGARDED DIRECT ELECTIONS SUPERIOR TO INDIRECT ELECTIONS, AND DIRECT AND/OR INDIRECT ELECTIONS ON A GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCY BASIS SUPERIOR TO SUCH ELECTIONS ON A FUNCTIONAL BASIS, HE DID NOT REGARD IT AS AN IMMEDIATE PROBLEM.

HE FELT IT WAS A PROBLEM IN ANTICIPATION OF 1997 AND THERE WERE MORE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS TO TACKLE.

MR WONG SAID HE HAD IN MIND TWO IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS, BOTH CONCERNING ACCOUNTABILITY, AT THE CENTRAL AND AT THE LOCAL LEVELS.

AT THE CENTRAL LEVEL, HE POINTED OUT THAT AT PRESENT TOP LEVEL EXECUTIVE POSITIONS WERE FILLED BY CIVIL SERVANTS WHO WERE PERSONALLY ONLY SUBJECT TO ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY.

THIS MEANT THEY WERE NOT REMOVABLE EVEN IF THEY HAD MADE ILL-CONSIDERED AND ILL-JUDGED DECISIONS AS LONG AS THEY HAD FOLLOWED ESTABLISHED PROCEDURE, HE SAID.

+THE SOLUTION LIES IN CHANGING SUCH POSITIONS INTO ONES TO BE FILLED BY POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR SUCH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO BE SUBJECT TO POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY,+ MR WONG SAID.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THOSE APPOINTEES COULD INITIALLY BE SERVING CIVIL SERVANTS GIVEN THE OPTION TO REMAIN AS CIVIL SERVANTS AND BE CALLED PERMANENT AND DEPUTY SECRETARIES, OR TO ASSUME THE NEW ROLES AS MINISTERS OR VICE-MINISTERS.

HE ADDED THAT CONSIDERATION SHOULD ALSO BE GIVEN TO INITIALLY APPOINTING UNOFFICIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS TO BE JUNIOR MINISTERS, THEN MINISTERS.

AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, MR WONG SAID ALTHOUGH DISTRICT BOARDS HAD BEEN IN EXISTENCE SINCE 1981 AND THAT THE ELECTED ELEMENT HAD NOW BEEN BOOSTED TO COMPRISE TWO-THIRDS OF THE MEMBERSHIP, THE DECISION-MAKING POWERS HAD REMAINED RESTRICTED AND CONSTRICTED.

+IT IS TRUE THAT ADMINISTRATION AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL HAS IMPROVED, HOWEVER, MOST BOARD MEMBERS ARE STILL DISGRUNTLED WITH THEIR INABILITY TO SOLVE LOCAL PROBLEMS WHEN FACED WITH THE OFFICIAL REPLY THAT IT HAS TO DO WITH CENTRAL POLICY.

+IT IS OBVIOUS THAT A MORE IMAGINATIVE DIVISION OF LABOUR AMONG OUR THREE TIERS OF GOVERNMENT IS CALLED FOR,+ HE SAID.

MR WONG SAID INCREASING THE DECISION-MAKING POWERS OF DISTRICT BOARDS HAD THE ADVANTAGE OF CIVIC EDUCATION THROUGH PRACTICE.

+IT IS ONLY THROUGH PRACTICE THAT A DEMOCRATIC TRADITION, WHICH IS SO VITAL FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS AT THE CENTRAL LEVEL, CAN BEGIN TO EMERGE,+ HE SAID.

MR WONG WELCOMED THE GOVERNMENT PLAN TO INTRODUCE A SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT OMBUDSMAN FOR THE REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES CAUSED BY MALADMINISTRATION, AND THE INTENTION TO PRODUCE THE FIRST PIECE OF LEGISLATION IN BOTH CHINESE AND ENGLISH IN 1986-87 AND TO PRODUCE AN AUTHENTIC CHINESE VERSION OF THE STATUTE LAW IN DUE COURSE.

HE SAID BOTH WERE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS AND THEIR SOLUTION WAS LONG OVERDUE.

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HEALTHY ECONOMY SHOULD BE GIVEN HIGHEST PRIORITY
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IN ITS PLANNING STRATEGY GOVERNMENT SHOULD ACCORD THE HIGHEST PRIORITY TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A HEALTHY ECONOMY, THE HON S.L. CHEN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE ANNUAL POLICY DEBATE, HE SAID WHILE APPRECIATING THE DESIRABILITY OF HAVING A MORE REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT TO MANAGE HONG KONG'S OWN AFFAIRS, EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PLACED ON THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A SOUND AND HEALTHY ECONOMY ON WHICH TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN OUR FUTURE.

HE SAID HE FAILED TO DETECT FROM THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY SPEECH THAT GOVERNMENT HAD A CONSCIOUS POLICY THAT WOULD SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY WHICH WAS VITAL TO HONG KONG'S ECONOMY.

CONCEDING THAT THE ECONOMY WAS STILL PERFORMING BETTER THAN MANY OTHER COUNTRIES, HE SAID THE FACT REMAINED THAT DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO OUR TRADITIONAL MARKETS HAD DECLINED AND THIS SHOULD GIVE US LITTLE COMFORT ESPECIALLY WHEN VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF INCREASING PROTECTIONISM OF OUR MAJOR TRADING PARTNERS, IN PARTICULAR THE UNITED STATES.

+ALTHOUGH DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO CHINA CONTINUE TO RECORD SUBSTANTIAL GROWTH, THUS PROVIDING A USEFUL BUFFER FOR HONG KONG'S EXTERNAL TRADE AT A TIME WHEN THE GROWTH IN DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO OUR TRADITIONAL MARKETS IS LOW, HONG KONG'S LONG TERM ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE CANNOT AND MUST NOT DEPEND ON IT,+ HE SAID.

MR CHEN SAID THAT HE FELT THAT IF WE WERE HONEST, WE HAD TO ADMIT THE PROSPECTS FOR HONG KONG IN THE COMING YEAR DID NOT APPEAR ENCOURAGING.

HE REFERRED TO THE RECENT FORECAST BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY THAT THE GDP GROWTH THIS YEAR WOULD BE NO MORE THAN 4.5 PER CENT AND THAT DOMESTIC EXPORTS WERE NOT GOING TO GROW BY A REAL ONE PER CENT AS PREVIOUSLY FORECAST.

+BEARING IN MIND THE SUBSTANTIAL GROWTH OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO CHINA WHICH WAS 75 PER CENT UP IN VALUE TERMS FOR THE FIRST HALF OF 1985, THIS MEANS THAT DOMESTIC EXPORTS TO OUR TRADITIONAL MARKET HAVE CONTINUED TO DECLINE.

+IN THE LIGHT OF THE GROWING UNCERTAINTIES, THE NEED TO BE CAUTIOUS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC FINANCE IS THEREFORE PARAMOUNT,+ HE SAID.

HE STRESSED THAT WE MUST CRITICALLY EXAMINE THE EXPENDITURE ON ALL OUR EXISTING POLICY COMMITMENTS, MENTIONING IN PARTICULAR EXPENDITURES IN THE AREAS OF PUBLIC HOUSING AND EDUCATION.

HE SAID THAT FROM THE STATISTICS OF COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES ON HOUSING AND EDUCATION OF SEVERAL COUNTRIES OVER A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS FROM 1978 TO 1983, IT COULD BE SEEN THAT ON HOUSING, HONG KONG HAD CONSISTENTLY BEEN THE LEADER AMONG BOTH INDUSTRIALLY DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHILE ON EDUCATION, HONG KONG WAS ONLY SECOND TO JAPAN.

+WE SHOULD OF COURSE BE PROUD TO BE IN THE FOREFRONT IN THE PROVISION OF THESE SOCIAL SERVICES.

+BUT HAVING ACHIEVED SO MUCH IN SO SHORT A TIME, I SUGGEST THE TIME HAS NOW COME FOR US TO TAKE A HARD LOOK AT HOW MUCH FURTHER WE SHOULD GO OR CAN AFFORD TO GO WITHOUT UPSETTING OUR LONG ESTABLISHED FISCAL POLICY THAT WE MUST HAVE A SIMPLE AND EQUITABLE TAXATION SYSTEM WITH LEVELS SET TO PROVIDE INCENTIVES TO ENTERPRISE.

+THIS IS IMPERATIVE IF HONG KONG'S PROSPERITY AND STABILITY IS TO BE MAINTAINED AND PRESERVED IN THE FUTURE,+ HE SAID.

MR CHEN NOTED THAT FOR THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC HOUSING, HONG KONG'S TAXPAYERS HAD CARRIED THE FINANCIAL BURDEN TO THE TUNE OF \$31 BILLION DURING THE PAST DECADE AND THE QUESTION TO BE ASKED NOW WAS WHETHER WE WERE ONLY HELPING THOSE WHO WERE IN REAL NEED OR WERE WE ALSO SUBSIDISING THE WELL-OFF.

HE SAID HE FULLY SUPPORTED THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE SET OUT IN THE GREEN PAPER ON HOUSING SUBSIDY TO TENANTS OF PUBLIC HOUSING THAT WELL-OFF TENANTS MUST BE EXPECTED TO PAY MORE FOR THEIR SUBSIDISED ACCOMMODATION ESPECIALLY WHEN THERE WAS STILL A VERY LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WAITING FOR PUBLIC HOUSING.

+IT IS ONLY RIGHT AND FAIR THAT THOSE WHO HAVE FOR A LONG TIME BENEFITED FROM SUBSIDISED HOUSING, BUT ARE NOW FINANCIALLY IN A BETTER POSITION, SHOULD EITHER VACATE THEIR UNITS OR BE MADE TO PAY HIGHER RENTS,+ HE SAID.

HE SUGGESTED THAT INCREASED REVENUE COULD THEN BE PLOUGHED BACK INTO THE PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME TO EASE THE BURDEN OF THE TAX PAYING PUBLIC.

+UNLESS WE ARE SATISFIED THAT WE ARE GETTING GOOD VALUE FOR THE HUGE SUMS OF MONEY SPENT EACH YEAR ON PUBLIC HOUSING, I AS A TAXPAYER HAVE CONSIDERABLE DOUBTS IN THE WISDOM OF PURSUING A PROGRAMME THE PURPOSE OF WHICH HAS DEPARTED FROM THAT ORIGINALLY ENVISAGED, WHICH WAS TO HELP THOSE WHO ARE IN REAL NEED,+ MR CHEN SAID.

ON EDUCATION, HE SAID THAT IT WAS IRONIC THAT WHILE MANY APPLAUDED THE MERIT OF NINE-YEAR FREE AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION WHEN IT WAS INTRODUCED IN 1978, MANY EDUCATORS AND TEACHERS WERE NOW SAYING THAT IT WAS ONE OF THE MAIN CAUSES OF INCREASING UNRULY AND DELIQUENT BEHAVIOURS IN SCHOOLS.

THE FACT THAT MANY CHILDREN HAD NO INTEREST IN STUDYING AND WOULD RATHER SPEND THEIR TIME IN THE STREETS OR IN SUCH PLACES AS ELECTRONIC GAMES PARLOURS MEANT THAT VAST AMOUNT OF PUBLIC MONEY WAS BEING WASTED ON THOSE WHO OBVIOUSLY DID NOT APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY OF SCHOOLING, HE SAID.

HE QUESTIONED WHETHER THE PRESENT SYSTEM HAD BEEN SERIOUSLY RE-ASSESSED OF ITS VALUE SINCE ITS INCEPTION.

AS A FIRST STEP TO CORRECT THE SITUATION, HE SAID HE BELIEVED WE HAD TO ACCEPT THE FACT THAT NOT ALL CHILDREN WERE SUITABLE FOR EDUCATION BEYOND A CERTAIN LEVEL.

+FOR THOSE WHO SHOULD BE EDUCATED, WE NEED TO ENSURE THAT THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IS SUCH THAT WOULD JUSTIFY OUR HUGE ANNUAL EXPENDITURES IN THIS SECTOR OF EDUCATION,+ HE SAID.

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GOVT URGED TO TACKLE PROTECTIONISM POSITIVELY
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN URGED TO EXAMINE ITS POLICY ON HOW TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF PROTECTIONISM POSITIVELY.

THE CALL CAME FROM THE HON ALLEN LEE DURING THE ANNUAL POLICY DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID PROTECTIONISM WAS NOT ONLY AN ECONOMIC ISSUE ANY MORE, IT WAS A POLITICAL ISSUE.

+IT REALLY DOES NOT MATTER TO EXAMINE WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF THE PROTECTIONISTIC SENTIMENTS, THE FACT IS, IT IS THERE AND IT WON'T DISAPPEAR.

+WE HAVE MADE OUR NOISES KNOWN TO THE WORLD THAT HONG KONG HAS AN OPEN MARKET, WE PRACTISE FREE TRADE, AND WE ARE THE VICTIM OF PROTECTIONISM THROUGH NO FAULT OF OUR OWN, BUT AT THE END OF THE DAY, THE MOST WE WILL GET IS A SYMPATHETIC HEARING,+ HE SAID.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1985

- 32 -

REFERRING TO THE RECENT VOTE IN THE U.S. SENATE ON THE JENKINS BILL, MR LEE SAID WE COULD NOT RELY ON THE PRESIDENTIAL VETO TO RELIEVE US FROM THIS THORNY SUBJECT.

ONE POSITIVE WAY TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM, HE SAID, WAS FOR THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR TO MOVE TOWARDS HIGH TECHNOLOGY, SOMETHING WHICH THE ECONOMISTS HAD TIME AND AGAIN URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE.

+I AM AFRAID THAT, IN MY OPINION, OUR GOVERNMENT HAS GIVEN US LIP SERVICE AND DOING VERY LITTLE IN ENHANCING THE DEVELOPMENT IN THIS AREA.

+I SUGGEST THAT WE SET UP A COMMITTEE WITH SPECIFIC TERMS OF REFERENCE TO TAKE ACTIONS ON THIS IMPORTANT SUBJECT WHICH WILL AFFECT OUR FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE ALSO NOTED THAT DURING THE LAST FEW YEARS THERE HAD BEEN A GRADUAL BUT CONTINUING SHIFT IN THE ECONOMIC BASE OF HONG KONG FROM MANUFACTURING INTO THE SERVICE AND FINANCIAL SECTOR.

NOTING THAT THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR WAS STILL THE LARGEST SECTOR FOR EMPLOYMENT, HE STRESSED THAT WE MUST RECOGNISE THIS SHIFTING OF OUR ECONOMIC BASE AND LOOK TO DIRECTIONS OTHER THAN MANUFACTURING TO HELP TO MAINTAIN OUR GROWTH AND PROSPERITY INTO THE 1990'S.

HE BELIEVED THAT THE NEW FIELD OF +INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY+, KNOWN TO THE WORLD AS +IT+, WOULD PROVE CRUCIAL TO OUR EFFORTS IN PRESSING FORWARD WITH DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SERVICE AND FINANCIAL SECTOR.

MR LEE SAID INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY WAS THE TECHNOLOGY CONCERNED WITH THE GENERATION, TRANSMISSION, DISTRIBUTION, AND USE OF INFORMATION IN VARIOUS FORMS, INCLUDING VOICE, VIDEO, TEXT AND DATA.

+IT INCLUDES ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS AND CONSUMER ELECTRONICS, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, BOTH THE HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE ASPECTS OF COMPUTING AND THE DESIGN AND PRODUCTION OF COMPUTER-BASED MANUFACTURING SYSTEM.

+IT IS, THEREFORE, NOT JUST A QUESTION OF USING COMPUTERS,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG OPERATED IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA OF TRADE AND FINANCE, AND IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT WE WOULD BE INCREASINGLY AFFECTED BY THESE NEW TECHNOLOGIES.

+HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THERE IS A MORE IMPORTANT REASON FOR HONG KONG TO ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENTS IN 'INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY'.

/+WE HAVE

+WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME THE CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THIS FIELD FOR THE WHOLE OF THE REGION AND TO PROVIDE A SOURCE OF EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE FOR CHINA AS SHE MOVES FORWARD WITH HER MODERNISATION PROGRAMME,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT BOTH POLYTECHNICS HAD ALREADY TAKEN THE INITIATIVE AND HAD BEEN STUDYING THESE DEVELOPMENTS IN RELATION TO THE COURSES THEY SHOULD BE OFFERING AND HE HOPED TO SEE THE FIRST COURSES IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMENCING IN THE NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR.

HE BELIEVED THAT IT WAS TIME FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF +IT+ AND SUGGESTED THAT HONG KONG SHOULD CONCENTRATE IN THE APPLICATIONS OF +IT+ RATHER THAN +IT+ ITSELF AND DEVELOP QUICKLY ITS ABILITY TO HANDLE AND TO EXPLOIT THE NEW APPLICATIONS THAT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY WAS MAKING POSSIBLE.

HE PROPOSED THAT A WORKING PARTY FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY BE ESTABLISHED WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM INDUSTRY, COMMERCE, GOVERNMENT AND THE UNIVERSITIES AND POLYTECHNICS.

THE WORKING PARTY SHOULD BE CHARGED WITH THE TASK OF EXAMINING THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, ASSESSING THEIR POTENTIAL IMPACT ON HONG KONG AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW BEST HONG KONG COULD MEET THIS CHALLENGE, HE SAID.

IT SHOULD ALSO EXAMINE THE RESOURCE IMPLICATION OF ITS RECOMMENDATIONS PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO THE PROVISION OF THE NECESSARY RETRAINING PROGRAMME WHICH MIGHT BE REQUIRED, HE ADDED.

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'CONFIDENCE IS KEY FACTOR IN HK'S FUTURE'

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HONG KONG'S FUTURE RESTS IN LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONFIDENCE AND THE CONFIDENCE OF CHINA AND BRITAIN, AND THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE THIS PRINCIPLE AS A CRITERION IN ITS ADMINISTRATION.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE HON WONG PO-YAN AT THE POLICY DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR WONG SAID AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION, THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG HAD RESTORED THEIR CONFIDENCE AND THIS WAS EVIDENCED IN THE REVIVAL OF THE REAL ESTATE MARKET AND THE STABLE CONDITION IN THE IN-COMING AND OUT-GOING FLOWS OF FUNDS.

/HOWEVER,

HOWEVER, HE SAID, CERTAIN PEOPLE IN HONG KONG WERE STILL TAKING A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE AND THE CONFIDENCE FOR INVESTMENT HAD NOT BEEN RESTORED TO THE LEVEL BEFORE 1982.

+IF WE, IN HONG KONG, SHOULD WISH TO CONTINUE DEVELOPING OUR ECONOMY AT A PACE AS IT WAS PREVIOUSLY, WE NEED TO MAKE AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF INVESTMENT IN NEW INDUSTRIES IN ORDER TO ENHANCE PRODUCTIVITY.

+MORE MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY PERSONNELS NEED TO BE TRAINED TO COPE WITH THE NEW CIRCUMSTANCES.

+WE ALSO NEED MORE REINFORCED FINANCIAL STRENGTH TO SUPPORT THESE DEVELOPMENTS.

+IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL, THE PREDOMINANT FACTOR IS CONFIDENCE,+ HE SAID.

MR WONG SAID HONG KONG PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE FULL CONFIDENCE IN ITS OWN FUTURE AND ONLY BY THUS COULD THE WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE BE PUT TO AN END.

HE SAID IT WAS EQUALLY IMPORTANT TO INSTILL IN FOREIGN INVESTORS FULL CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG'S FUTURE AND ENVIRONMENT AND TO CONVINCING THEM IN MAKING LONG TERM INVESTMENTS IN HONG KONG.

TO ACHIEVE THESE ENDS, MR WONG SAID THE EFFORTS OF BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN HONG KONG WOULD BE NEEDED.

HE SAID OUR PRESENT TASK WAS TO CLEAR ANY FACTOR WHICH MIGHT POSSIBLY MAKE THE INVESTORS FEEL DOUBTFUL AND WORRIED IN OUR REVENUE, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT ASPECTS.

HE THEREFORE EXPRESSED SUPPORT TO THE NEED FOR A SIMPLE AND EQUITABLE TAXATION SYSTEM AND CALLED ON THE PUBLIC TO BE VERY CAREFUL AND NOT TO OVER-REACT WHEN ACTIONS WERE TAKEN TO PLUG LOOPHOLES IN THE SYSTEM TO AVOID JEOPARDISING THE CONFIDENCE OF THE ENTREPRENEURS.

MR WONG POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO HAVE REASONABLE MONITORING OF FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL UNDERTAKINGS.

WE SHOULD MAKE PROVISIONS IN OUR LEGISLATION TO OFFER A FAIR AND COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT TO ALL ENTREPRENEURS ALIKE AND THE GUIDELINES MUST BE ABLE TO SERVE THE PURPOSE OF PROTECTING THE INVESTMENTS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN ORDER TO SECURE THEIR CONFIDENCE, HE SAID.

ON HONG KONG'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA, MR WONG SAID THAT EVERY POSSIBLE MEASURE SHOULD BE TAKEN TO IMPROVE THE UNDERSTANDING OF HONG KONG'S FUNCTIONING IN VARIOUS RESPECTS BY THE OFFICIALS AND PEOPLE OF CHINA.

+OUR AIM IS TO MAKE THEM HOLD CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG, UNDERSTAND OUR CURRENT SITUATION, AND REALISE THAT HONG KONG WILL, AS IT IS DOING NOW, CONTRIBUTE TO CHINA WHEN IT BECOMES A SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION IN 12 YEARS TIME,+ HE SAID.

MEANWHILE, HE REMINDED THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG THAT THERE HAD BEEN A CLOSE LINK OF MORE THAN 100 YEARS BETWEEN BRITAIN AND HONG KONG AND BRITAIN WOULD STILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR HONG KONG'S ADMINISTRATION IN THE COMING 12 YEARS.

+WE THEREFORE CANNOT NEGLECT THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS RELATIONSHIP AND WE MUST ADOPT VARIOUS MEASURES TO ENCOURAGE BRITISH ENTREPRENEURS TO MAINTAIN A HIGH LEVEL OF INTEREST IN HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES,+ HE SAID.

TURNING THEN TO THE SUBJECT OF MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY, MR WONG SAID IT WOULD CONTINUE TO BE AN IMPORTANT PILLAR IN HONG KONG'S ECONOMY AND CALLED FOR ADJUSTMENTS IN CERTAIN AREAS TO COPE WITH THE UPSURGE OF PROTECTIONISM AND STRONG COMPETITION.

FIRSTLY, HE SAID WE MUST DEVELOP OUR ABILITY IN PRODUCT DESIGNING WHICH STILL REMAINED AT A FAIRLY LOW LEVEL.

+I THINK THAT BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS MUST BE FAR SIGHTED BY ACTIVELY MAKING INVESTMENTS IN THIS RESPECT AND ARRANGING FOR THE TRAINING OF PEOPLE IN THIS AREA.

+THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SET UP SUCH COURSES IN THE POLYTECHNIC AS WELL AS IN TECHNICAL INSTITUTES, AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR SHOULD DEVOTE MORE RESOURCES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL PRODUCTS,+ HE SAID.

MR WONG ALSO FELT THAT WE SHOULD PROVIDE MORE GUIDANCE TO ATTRACT FOREIGN INVESTMENTS IN OUR INDUSTRIES.

HE SAID HE WAS PLEASED WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS IN SETTING UP OVERSEAS OFFICES TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE AND INFORMATION TO POTENTIAL INVESTORS ABROAD.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TRY TO EMPLOY SOME INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED INVESTMENT PLANNING ORGANISATIONS TO COME TO HONG KONG AND CONDUCT AN IN-DEPTH AND OBJECTIVE SURVEY ON HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIAL FOUNDATION AND RESOURCES TOGETHER WITH ITS SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS, MANPOWER, TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRIAL ENVIRONMENTS.

MR WONG SAID IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO REVIEW THE GOVERNMENT'S LONG ADOPTED NON-INTERVENTION POLICY IN VIEW OF THE UPSURGE OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTIONISM AND THE VARIOUS FACTORS AFFECTING HONG KONG CURRENTLY.

WHILE SUPPORTING THE GOVERNMENT'S STATED INTENTION TO PROCEED WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE THIRD UNIVERSITY, HE PROPOSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF EXPANDING THE BAPTIST COLLEGE INTO A UNIVERSITY.

+IF WE MAKE USE OF THIS COLLEGE AS A BASE TO DEVELOP THE THIRD UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG, IT IS MOST WORTHWHILE BOTH IN TERMS OF TIME AND RESOURCES,+ HE SAID.

TRAINING FOR IN-HOUSE PROFESSIONALS URGED
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A LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR SUGGESTED TODAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SET UP ITS OWN TRAINING UNIT TO TRAIN IN-HOUSE INVESTIGATING ACCOUNTANTS AND LAWYERS TO SERVE VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

SPEAKING AT THE ANNUAL POLICY DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE HON PETER POON SAID THIS COULD SAVE THE HIGH COSTS OF INVESTIGATING COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES AND CRIMES BY ENGAGING OUTSIDE PROFESSIONALS.

HE SAID HE DID NOT AGREE WITH THE ARGUMENT THAT +WHAT THE GOVERNMENT TRAINS, THE PRIVATE SECTOR WILL GRAB+.

+OUR UNIVERSITIES, POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS AND POLYTECHNICS ARE TURNING OUT MORE ACCOUNTING AND LAW GRADUATES AND MANY SUCH GRADUATES FROM OVERSEAS ARE RETURNING TO HONG KONG AS THEIR PROSPECTS ELSEWHERE ARE GENERALLY NOT AS GOOD AS IN HONG KONG. THERE IS THEREFORE NO LACK OF TALENT TO BE TRAINED.

+CERTAIN LOSSES OF THESE PERSONNEL ARE INEVITABLE BUT TO QUOTE AN EXAMPLE, THE INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT OF THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT HAS SUCCESSFULLY TRAINED A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF HIGHLY COMPETENT AND EFFICIENT ACCOUNTANTS TO INVESTIGATE TAX EVASION AND HAS BEEN ABLE TO RETAIN MOST OF SUCH STAFF,+ HE SAID.

THE PROPOSED TRAINING SCHEME WAS DEFINITELY WORTH LOOKING INTO AS THERE WERE LIKELY TO BE A NUMBER OF COMMERCIAL CRIMES OR OTHER ASSIGNMENTS EACH YEAR WHICH WOULD JUSTIFY THE NEW POSTS, MR POON ADDED.

ON TAXATION, MR POON SAID HE WAS PLEASED TO HEAR THAT GOVERNMENT WAS IN AGREEMENT WITH THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY ON THE NEED FOR A SIMPLE AND EQUITABLE TAXATION.

HOWEVER, HE SAID THIS DID NOT MEAN THAT WE SHOULD LIVE WITH TAX LEGISLATION WHICH WAS RELATIVELY EASY TO AVOID.

+IF THERE ARE LOOPHOLES WHICH CAUSE LOSS OF REVENUE WHICH SHOULD PROPERLY BE DUE TO GOVERNMENT, THEY NEED TO BE PLUGGED QUICKLY.

+I THEREFORE STRONGLY SUPPORT THE INTRODUCTION OF ADEQUATE ANTI-AVOIDANCE LEGISLATION AT AN EARLY DATE,+ HE ADDED.

HE SAID IF SUCH LEGISLATION WAS PASSED, THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT WOULD NEED A STRONG TEAM OF ASSESSORS, EXPERT AND EXPERIENCED IN ANTI-AVOIDANCE LEGISLATION.

/MR POON

MR POON SAID WHILE HE FELT THAT LOCALISATION SHOULD PROCEED WITH DUE SPEED, THE EXPERTISE OF THE SOME LESS THAN 20 EXPATRIATE OFFICERS IN THE DEPARTMENT, MANY OF THEM MATURE ACCOUNTANTS WITH A GOOD TAX BACKGROUND, SHOULD BE RETAINED AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.

+IN THE MEANTIME, EVERY EFFORT SHOULD ALSO BE MADE TO TRAIN MORE LOCAL ASSESSORS IN THIS PARTICULAR FIELD,+ HE SAID.

COMMENTING ON BANKING SUPERVISORY SYSTEMS, MR POON SAID HE FULLY AGREED AND SUPPORTED THE INTRODUCTION OF FURTHER MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN THE PRUDENTIAL SUPERVISION OF BANKS AND DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES.

HOWEVER, HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT TIGHT REGULATIONS ALONE COULD NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM.

+BANKS AND OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS MUST BE IMPRESSED UPON THAT THEY SHOULD OBSERVE THE SPIRIT AS WELL AS THE LETTER OF THE LAW AND RELEVANT REQUIREMENTS.

+FURTHERMORE, CONSTANT CONSULTATION WITH THE BANKING SECTOR AND CLOSER LIAISON BETWEEN THE BANKING COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE AND THE AUDITING PROFESSION ARE TO BE WELCOME,+ HE SAID.

ON THE SUPERVISION OF STOCK EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES, MR POON SAID IT WOULD NOT BE COMPLETE WITHOUT PROPER COMPANY LEGISLATION.

HE SAID THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMPANY LAW REFORM ON DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS IN PUBLIC COMPANIES WERE THEREFORE BOTH NECESSARY AND TIMELY AND SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

MR POON SAID WE WERE LUCKY THAT WE DID NOT HAVE MASSIVE UNEMPLOYMENT WHICH NO DOUBT CREATED MANY SOCIAL PROBLEMS ELSEWHERE.

+HOWEVER, THE SLOWING DOWN OF RE-INVESTMENT IN INDUSTRY IS WORRYING AND THIS MAY HAVE LONG-TERM REPERCUSSIONS,+ HE SAID.

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FUTURES MARKET LEGISLATION RAISES AMBIGUITIES * * * * *

WHILE THE FUTURES MARKET WAS CLOSELY REGULATED BY LAW, THE PRESENT LEGISLATION STILL RAISED AMBIGUITIES, AS THE PHYSICAL MARKET WAS NEITHER UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE COMMISSION FOR COMMODITIES TRADING NOR SUBJECT TO THE PROTECTION OF THE COMPENSATION FUND.

THIS OBSERVATION WAS MADE BY DR THE HON KIM CHAM AT THE ANNUAL POLICY DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

/+FURTHERMORE,

+FURTHERMORE, PHYSICAL DEALERS HAVE PROVIDED CREDIT LIBERALLY, PERMITTED DEFERRED DELIVERIES, THUS OFFERING FEATURES SIMILAR TO FUTURES TRADING,+ HE SAID.

+WITHOUT A PROPER MARKET STRUCTURE, THERE ARE NO REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SEGREGATION OF CLIENTS' FUNDS, NO SUPERVISION AND ABOVE ALL, NO DISCIPLINE FOR MALPRACTICES.

+THUS, FOR WANT OF CONTROL DEFAULTS ARE NOT INFREQUENT,+ HE ADDED.

DR CHAM ALSO NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH THE MARKET STARTED ONLY AMONG DEALERS, THE GRADUAL BROADENING OF ITS CLIENTELE HAD LED TO SUBSTANTIAL CLAIMS UPON DEALER DEFAULTS.

+GOVERNMENT MUST CONSIDER APPROPRIATE REGULATION OVER THIS OFF-BEAT MARKET, OTHERWISE SPURTS IN GOLD PRICES WILL GENERATE MORE CASES OF DEFAULT AND BY IMPLICATION, DAMAGES TO THE PUBLIC,+ HE WARNED.

AS TO WHAT MEASURES OF REGULATION SHOULD BE DEEMED DESIRABLE, HE SAID THAT OVER-REGULATION WAS OFTEN ABHORRED FOR SUGGESTING STRANGULATION.

HE SAID HE BELIEVED THE SHEER OUTCRY FOR INVESTOR PROTECTION WAS NOT EFFICACIOUS AND IT WAS THE PULSE OF THE MARKET AND THE FEELING OF IT THAT UNDERLINED BETTER REGULATION AND PROTECTION.

DR CHAM SAID IT WAS THE CONSIDERED VIEW OF SIR KENNETH BERRILL, CHAIRMAN OF THE BRITISH SECURITIES AND INVESTMENT BOARD (S.I.B) THAT REGULATION OF MARKETS WOULD BE MOST EFFECTIVELY EXECUTED BY MEMBERS OF THE BOARD WHO WERE PRACTITIONERS DRAWN FROM THE MARKETS WHICH THEY HAD THE JOB OF REGULATING.

HE SAID HE AGREED WITH SIR KENNETH ENTIRELY THAT A FULL UNDERSTANDING OF THE MARKETS WAS ESSENTIAL IF THEY WERE TO BE REGULATED EFFECTIVELY.

HE POINTED OUT THAT BY +UNDERSTANDING+, SIR KENNETH MEANT MORE THAN A KNOWLEDGE OF TECHNICALITIES BUT RATHER THE IDEA OF BEING CLOSELY ATTUNED TO THE NEEDS OF PARTICULAR MARKETS.

DR CHAM SAID SURELY THIS WAS FOOD FOR THOUGHT AS WE CONSIDERED OUR REGULATORY FRAMEWORK TO MEET OUR FUTURE NEEDS.

TURNING TO HONG KONG'S TRADING OUTLOOK HE SAID IT WOULD REMAIN CLOUDED BY UNCERTAINTIES LOOMING OVER THE PROLONGED CYCLE OF DEMANDS, POLITICAL BARGAIN AND COMPROMISES OVER THE ISSUE OF TRADE RESTRICTION.

HE SAID HE BELIEVED WE HAD TO ADDRESS URGENTLY THE PRESSURE OF GROWING COMPETITION IN OUR TRADITIONAL MARKETS POSED BY OTHER NEW INDUSTRIAL ECONOMIES.

+INDEED, A NEW MARKET ONCE CAPTURED SHOULD DESERVE EVERY EFFORT TO PRESERVE IT,+ HE SAID.

IN PARALLEL, THE PROGRESSIVE NEED FOR DIVERSIFICATION AND HIGH TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRIES WAS CONSPICUOUS AND IMPERATIVE, HE ADDED.

+NEVERTHELESS, COMMON TO THESE HIGH TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRIES IS THEIR HIGH RISK OF FAILURE ENDEMIC IN THEIR EARLY STAGES OF GESTATION AND DEVELOPMENT.

+GIVEN OUR CONVICTION IN FREE ENTERPRISE, IT IS PATENTLY UNREALISTIC TO RELY UPON THE GOVERNMENT TO SPONSOR AND DEVELOP THESE INDUSTRIES.

+PRIVATE INITIATIVES, IN TERMS OF CREATIVITY AND ENTREPRENEURIAL CARE, ARE THEREFORE ESSENTIAL TO THE CONCEPTION, BREEDING AND SUSTENANCE OF OUR HIGH-TECH INDUSTRIES,+ HE SAID.

HE SUGGESTED THAT TO CATER TO THESE UNIQUE CAPITAL NEEDS, HONG KONG SHOULD CONSIDER PROVIDING A VENTURE CAPITAL MARKET FOR RAISING VENTURE CAPITAL SIMILAR TO AN OVER-THE-COUNTER MARKET ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD.

DR CHAM SAID THIS COULD BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE RELAXATION OF EXISTING LISTING GUIDELINES OF MINIMUM CAPITAL TO PERMIT SMALLER AND YOUNGER COMPANIES TO BE TRADED.

+UPON MATURITY, THIS MARKET FOR VENTURE CAPITAL CAN BE FURTHER EXPANDED TO PERMIT THE LISTING AND TRADING OF 'CONCEPT STOCKS' IN OUR EQUITY MARKET.

+IN THIS WAY, WE CAN CHANNEL SURPLUS CAPITAL INTO NEEDY VENTURES OF HIGH TECHNOLOGY AND RISKS BUT THERE MUST BE CORRESPONDING SAFEGUARDS ON THE ADEQUATE DISCLOSURE OF THE RISKS INVOLVED IN VENTURE CAPITAL STOCKS,+ HE SUGGESTED.

PROVIDED THAT THE PROSPECTIVE INVESTOR INVESTED WITHIN HIS MEANS AND WAS WELL AWARE OF THE IMPLIED RISK, DR CHAM SAID HE BELIEVED SUCH STOCKS WOULD HELP BRIDGE THE NEED FOR HIGH-TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT ON ONE HAND AND INVESTORS WHO HAD THE CAPACITY TO TAKE RISKS ON THE OTHER.

+STRATEGICALLY SPEAKING, WHILE A VENTURE CAPITAL MARKET WITH LIBERAL LISTING GUIDELINES AND ADEQUATE RISK DISCLOSURE MAY HELP TO STIMULATE INVESTMENTS IN HONG KONG, A VENTURE CAPITAL MARKET WILL ALSO BE CONGRUENT TO AND SUPPORTIVE OF THE MODERNISATION PROGRAMME IN THE PROVISION OF VENTURE EQUITY FINANCING IN CHINA.

+THIS WILL ENABLE OUR ECONOMY TO REMAIN COMPLEMENTARY AND COMPATIBLE WHILE EXPENDING THE UNIQUE FUNCTIONS OF OUR FREE ENTERPRISE ECONOMY,+ HE SAID.

BUSINESS CONFIDENCE RESTS ON GOVT PERFORMANCE
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THE PERFORMANCE AND LEVEL OF EFFICIENCY OF GOVERNMENT IS PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT OF MANY ASPECTS AFFECTING BUSINESS CONFIDENCE, THE HON THOMAS CLYDESDALE SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE POLICY DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID THIS WAS ESPECIALLY SO IN A TERRITORY LIKE HONG KONG WHERE THE POLITICAL SCENE WAS UNDERGOING FUNDAMENTAL AND DRAMATIC CHANGE.

+THIS CAN HARDLY BE OTHERWISE, GIVEN THE VERY HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY RESTING UPON THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE LONG-TERM PLANNING AND DAY-TO-DAY ADMINISTRATION OF ONE OF THE MOST EFFICIENT AND SUCCESSFUL ECONOMIC SYSTEMS IN THE WORLD TODAY.

+BECAUSE OF OUR UNIQUE POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES, THE GOVERNMENT WORKS UNDER THE GLARE OF INFORMED PUBLIC OBSERVATION, ASSESSMENT AND COMMENT.

+A POLICY WHICH HAS GONE WRONG OR WHICH LOOKS LIKE GOING WRONG IS VERY QUICKLY THE OBJECT OF CRITICISM AND CENSURE - AND RIGHTLY SO,+ HE SAID.

THE POINT WAS HOWEVER THAT GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HAD A DIRECT AND SWIFT EFFECT ON PUBLIC AND BUSINESS CONFIDENCE, HE ADDED.

MR CLYDESDALE SAID IT WAS NOT TOO MUCH TO CLAIM THAT THE SUCCESS OF THE TRANSITION FROM BRITISH TO CHINESE SOVEREIGN RESPONSIBILITY FOR HONG KONG WHICH WOULD BE BROUGHT DURING THE NEXT 12 YEARS WOULD DEPEND ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON THE RETENTION OF BUSINESS CONFIDENCE IN THE ABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO MAINTAIN THE SYSTEMS, FREEDOMS, AND GROWTH PATTERNS TO WHICH WE HAD LONG BEEN ACCUSTOMED.

ON SPECIFIC ISSUES UPPERMOST IN THE MINDS OF BUSINESSMEN TODAY, HE SAID ON THE INTERNATIONAL FRONT THE THREAT OF TRADE PROTECTIONISM IN THE UNITED STATES WAS WORRYING LARGE SECTORS OF HONG KONG BUSINESSMEN SPECIFICALLY AND ALL HONG KONG BUSINESSMEN GENERALLY.

+CLOSER TO HOME WE ARE INTERESTED IN THE CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA, BOTH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC.

+LET US HOPE THAT THESE WILL INDEED CONTINUE TO PROVIDE GREATER GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES THAN ANY OTHER MARKET IN THE WORLD,+ HE SAID.

ON THE DOMESTIC FRONT, MR CLYDESDALE SAID INTEREST RATES, LABOUR AVAILABILITY AND COST, TEXTILE QUOTAS, TAXATION AND THE LOCAL CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE WERE ALL MATTERS WHICH EXERCISED THE BUSINESS MIND.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1985

- 41 -

HE SAID THAT THE GREATEST SINGLE CONCERN HOWEVER MUST BE THAT OVER OUR IMMEDIATE AND LONG TERM FUTURE.

+GIVEN THE FUNDAMENTAL NATURE OF THE POLITICAL CHANGES WHICH ARE TAKING PLACE, BUSINESSMEN ARE ACUTELY AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HONG KONG-CHINA RELATIONSHIP.

+THE LEVEL OF THEIR CONFIDENCE THAT THIS SITUATION CONTINUES TO IMPROVE WILL BE REFLECTED IN THEIR WILLINGNESS TO INVEST IN THE LONG TERM PROJECTS ESSENTIAL TO OUR FUTURE SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT,+ HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS THE LEVEL OF THIS KIND OF INVESTMENT COMMITMENT HAD NOT BEEN SATISFACTORY.

MR CLYDESDALE SAID HE EXPECTED THAT EXTERNAL MARKET PROBLEMS WOULD CONTINUE TO BE RESOLVED AND THAT HONG KONG WOULD BE ABLE TO ADJUST TO CHANGES IN TRADING AND INVESTMENT PATTERNS AS THESE OCCURRED.

+PROVIDED WE CONTINUE TO ENJOY REASONABLE AND NON-DISCRIMINATORY MARKET ACCESS FOR OUR GOODS AND SERVICES, WE SHOULD ALWAYS BE ABLE TO EXPORT COMPETITIVELY.

+WE SHALL HOWEVER HAVE TO TAKE SUCH STRONG ACTION AS IS OPEN TO US TO PROTECT OUR RIGHTS UNDER THE GATT AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS, WORKING ON OUR OWN ACCOUNT AND WITH OTHER LIKE MINDED TERRITORIES,+ HE SAID.

IN THIS REGARD, MR CLYDESDALE SAID, THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT WE MUST HAVE THE BEST POSSIBLE INSTITUTIONAL ORGANISATION AND SYSTEM TO PROTECT AND PROMOTE OUR INTERNATIONAL MARKET ACCESS.

AS TO OUR MANUFACTURING AND SERVICE INDUSTRIES, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD A VERY CLEAR RESPONSIBILITY AND ROLE TO PLAY IN ACTIVELY CONTINUING TO ASSIST IN DEVELOPING THE NECESSARY LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS WHICH SUPPORTED TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT.

+BUT IT IS THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF HONG KONG WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE ISSUES WHICH AFFECT BUSINESS CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG.

+WE ARE IN A COMPLETELY NEW SITUATION TRAVELLING ALONG AN UNFAMILIAR ROAD AND MUST TAKE CARE THAT WE ARE NOT DIVERTED,+ HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WOULD PLAY AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN HELPING TO GUIDE THE HONG KONG COMMUNITY ALONG THIS CHOSEN PATH IN SUCH A WAY AND AT SUCH A PACE THAT CONFIDENCE COULD BE MAINTAINED AT THE PRESENT HIGH LEVEL.

/MR CLYDESDALE

MR CLYDESDALE SAID THAT LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MUST BE ENCOURAGED TO REMAIN CONFIDENT THROUGHOUT ALL THE STAGES OF THE TRANSITION SET OUT IN THE SINO-BRITISH AGREEMENT ON HONG KONG.

+THIS CAN BEST BE DONE BY CONTINUING TO FOLLOW TRIED, TESTED AND PROVEN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES.

+BUSINESS WILL NOT TAKE KINDLY TO CHANGE FOR CHANGE'S SAKE BUT ONLY WHEN A CASE HAS BEEN MADE OUT FOR IT AND WHEN IT WILL CLEARLY IMPROVE OUR FUTURE PROSPECTS.

+THE SYSTEMS WE HAVE DEVELOPED IN HONG KONG OVER MANY YEARS HAVE PROVED ENORMOUSLY SUCCESSFUL AND MUST NOT BE DISCARDED OR RADICALLY ALTERED WITHOUT VERY GOOD REASON,+ HE STRESSED.

THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF A REPRESENTATIVE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT, FOR EXAMPLE, MUST BE CONSIDERED IN THIS LIGHT, HE ADDED.

MR CLYDESDALE ALSO OBSERVED THAT THE COMPARATIVE FREEDOM FROM GOVERNMENT REGULATION AND CONTROL COUPLED WITH THE LOW TAX REGIME AND THE CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HAD PROVIDED A SUBSTANTIAL BASIS OF CERTAINTY ON WHICH BUSINESS CONFIDENCE WAS PREDICATED AND AN INDICATION OF POSSIBLE CHANGE IN ANY OF THEM COULD CAUSE REAL CONCERN.

+THE POINT IS WELL ILLUSTRATED IF ONE CARES TO LOOK AT THE UNSETTLING EFFECT OF THE CHANGES WHICH HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE IN THE FIELD OF TAXATION - AND THERE WILL BE MORE PROPOSALS FOR CHANGES PUT BEFORE US IN THE COMING WEEKS,+ HE SAID.

DESPITE THE INCREASING SOPHISTICATION OF THE HONG KONG ECONOMY WHICH WOULD PROBABLY REQUIRE MORE AND MORE GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN ITS DEVELOPMENT, MR CLYDESDALE SAID HE BELIEVED THAT IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO CONTINUE TO ENJOY SUBSTANTIAL FREEDOM TO CONDUCT ITS AFFAIRS WITHIN SYSTEMS WHICH DID NOT CHANGE RADICALLY AND WHICH CONTINUED TO ENGENDER A HIGH LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG AND ELSEWHERE.

+THIS COUNCIL IS THE WATCHDOG WHICH MUST GUARD OUR FREEDOM.

+I HAVE NO DOUBT WE SHALL WORK TOGETHER AND IN HARMONY TO THAT END,+ HE SAID.

STRENGTHENED PRUDENTIAL SUPERVISION WELCOMED
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THE FINANCIAL SECTOR FULLY SUPPORTS THE MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF THE PROPOSED REFORMS STRENGTHENING THE PRUDENTIAL SUPERVISION OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND MARKETS, THE HON DAVID K.P. LI SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE ANNUAL POLICY DEBATE, HE SAID THAT IT WAS ONE OF THE LESSONS LEARNED FROM EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW YEARS THAT THERE WAS A NEED TO IMPROVE THIS PRUDENTIAL SUPERVISION.

HE NOTED THAT THE MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF THE PROPOSED REFORMS WERE NAMELY TO PROTECT INDIVIDUAL AND CORPORATE DEPOSITORS; TO PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE INTEGRITY OF THE BANKING SYSTEM OPERATING IN AND FROM HONG KONG; TO ASSIST CONSOLIDATED SUPERVISION BY OTHER JURISDICTIONS IN THE INTERESTS OF SAFE INTERNATIONAL BANKING; AND TO PROTECT THE GOOD NAME OF HONG KONG AS A REPUTABLE FINANCIAL CENTRE.

THE FINANCIAL SECTOR, HE ADDED, ALSO RECOGNISED THAT SUCH REFORM PROPOSALS WERE IN ITS BEST INTERESTS THOUGH IT MIGHT HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE WAY THE REFORMS WERE TO BE IMPLEMENTED AND THE SUPPLEMENTARY MEASURES THAT MIGHT ASSIST THE PROCESS.

HOWEVER, HE WARNED THAT OVER-REGULATION AND OVER-LEGISLATION WOULD DISCOURAGE PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND INITIATIVE, TO THE PERMANENT DETRIMENT OF HONG KONG'S FINANCIAL SERVICES INDUSTRY.

POINTING OUT THAT REFORM PROPOSALS WOULD REQUIRE STRICTER SUPERVISION AND THE PRESSURE ON THE STAFF OF THE BANKING COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE WOULD BE GREATER THAN EVER, MR LI CALLED FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF MORE STAFF WITH A HIGH DEGREE OF BANKING KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE TO COPE WITH THE MOUNTING WORKLOAD.

IN THE SUGGESTED REFORM PROPOSALS, THE BANKING COMMISSIONER WOULD BE GIVEN MORE DISCRETIONARY POWERS TO DEAL WITH INDIVIDUAL CASES OF SUSPECTED MISMANAGEMENT OR FRAUD.

TOGETHER WITH HIS EXISTING POWERS, THE NEW PROPOSALS WOULD MAKE THE FUTURE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING A VERY POWERFUL PERSON, MR LI SAID.

+HONG KONG IS VERY FORTUNATE THAT IN OUR PRESENT COMMISSIONER, WE HAVE A PERSON OF EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCE AND INTEGRITY.

+BUT IN THE CHALLENGING YEARS AHEAD, ADEQUATE SAFEGUARDS MUST BE PROVIDED AGAINST ANY POSSIBLE ABUSE OF POWER,+ HE SAID.

CONTINUING, MR LI SAID THE BANKING COMMUNITY THOUGHT THEY COULD LIVE WITH THE SUGGESTED LIQUIDITY RATIO, BUT ONLY IF THE LIQUIDITY OF THE SYSTEM WAS GUARANTEED BY A LENDER OF LAST RESORT IN SOME ACCEPTABLE FORM.

HE NOTED THAT IN RECENT YEARS THERE HAD BEEN A TREMENDOUS GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF MONEY MARKET INSTRUMENTS AND IT HAD BEEN SAID THAT THE ATTRACTION OF SOME OF THESE WAS THEIR RANKING AS LIQUID ASSETS UNDER THE BANKING AND DEPOSIT-TAKING ORDINANCES.

+HOWEVER THIS IS SOMEWHAT OF AN ILLUSION BECAUSE INDIVIDUAL BANKS HAVE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO DISPOSE OF THESE ASSETS AT SHORT NOTICE IN A LIQUIDITY SQUEEZE,+ HE SAID.

WHILE THE INTERBANK MARKET AND STANDBY FACILITIES PROVIDED BY THE LEADING BANKS COULD AFFORD SOME RELIEF, SMALLER INSTITUTIONS FELT THAT REGULAR BORROWING OR DISCOUNTING FROM THEIR LARGER COMPETITORS WOULD PLACE THEM AT A SUBSTANTIAL DISADVANTAGE, MR LI ADDED.

HE PROPOSED THAT THE MONETARY AFFAIRS BRANCH OR THE BANKING COMMISSION SHOULD DEVISE A SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT, WHEREBY GOVERNMENT COULD, IN ONE FORM OR OTHER, BE APPROACHED DIRECTLY TO PURCHASE SUCH INSTRUMENTS AT DISCOUNTED RATES, SUCH RATES TO BE DETERMINED BY AN AGREED FORMULA.

+WERE SUCH AN AVENUE OPEN TO SMALLER INSTITUTIONS, IT WOULD HELP LIQUIDITY, IT WOULD GIVE GOVERNMENT AN ADDED INSTRUMENT FOR MONETARY CONTROL AND IT WOULD ALSO REDUCE THE NEED FOR SMALLER INSTITUTIONS TO CONSULT THEIR LARGER RIVALS,+ HE SAID.

CONCEDING THAT NO SPECIAL CONCESSION OR PRIVILEGE SHOULD BE GIVEN TO ANY GROUP, HE WARNED THAT RIGID ENFORCEMENT OF SOME PROPOSED REFORMS MIGHT LEAD TO A MAJOR WITHDRAWAL OF BANKING BUSINESS FROM HONG KONG.

+MAY I SUGGEST THEREFORE THAT THE CONCEPT OF THE 'LIMITED SERVICE BANK' BE RE-ACTIVATED WHEREBY INSTITUTIONS WHICH CONFINE THEMSELVES TO OFFSHORE OPERATIONS, AND DO NOT TAKE HONG KONG DOLLAR DEPOSITS OR COMPETE IN THE DOMESTIC BANKING MARKET, WOULD BE SUBJECT TO MINIMAL SUPERVISION AND REGULATION,+ HE SAID.

EARLIER IN HIS SPEECH, MR LI SAID THAT PUBLIC CONFIDENCE REMAINED BOTH FRAGILE AND VOLATILE, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO THE BANKING AND MONETARY SYSTEM.

+NO EFFORT SHOULD BE SPARED TO STRENGTHEN THAT CONFIDENCE,+ HE URGED.

HE ALSO MAINTAINED THAT WE SHOULD NOT CONTEMPLATE CHANGING OR REPLACING THE LINKED RATE IF THERE WAS NO VIABLE ALTERNATIVE.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1985

- 45 -

MORE COMPREHENSIVE INDUSTRIAL POLICY NEEDED

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THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD STEP UP ITS EFFORT IN WORKING OUT A MORE COMPREHENSIVE INDUSTRIAL POLICY TO HELP LOCAL INDUSTRY TO ADAPT ITSELF TO THE CHANGING TRADE CLIMATE AND TO ACHIEVE CONTINUED EXPORT GROWTH.

THE CALL WAS MADE BY THE HON NGAI SHIU-KIT DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR NGAI SAID THAT IN RECENT YEARS, A NUMBER OF HONG KONG'S TRADE PARTNERS ESPECIALLY THE UNITED STATES, TENDED TO ADOPT THE POLICY OF TRADE PROTECTIONISM, ONE AFTER ANOTHER, GIVING A SERIOUS BLOW TO THE EXPORT-ORIENTED MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND REGIONS.

+AS ITS VICTIM HONG KONG REALLY NEEDS TO DEVISE A COUNTER-STRATEGY TO NEUTRALISE THE POUNDING OF PROTECTIONISM,+ HE SAID.

+HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF THE PRESENT RAMPANCY IN TRADE PROTECTIONISM, WHETHER A SINGLE BILL WOULD BE PASSED OR VETOED IS NO LONGER THE CRUX OF THE PROBLEM.

+WHAT IS MORE CRUCIAL IS FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO JOIN HANDS WITH THE INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL SECTOR IN PLANNING A LONG TERM INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY IN ORDER TO BUILD A BETTER FOUNDATION FOR OUR MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY, THEREBY MAKING OUR EXPORT TRADE MORE COMPETITIVE,+ HE SAID.

MR NGAI SAID THAT IN AN ERA OF NEW TECHNOLOGY AND MODERN ADVANCEMENT, PRODUCT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT HAD BECOME KEY LINK IN THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY.

+THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR ALSO REALISES THAT ONLY PRODUCT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COULD ENABLE US TO MEET THE CHANGING DEMANDS OF THE MARKETS.

+IT IS ONLY THROUGH DIVERSIFICATION OF PRODUCTS THAT WE COULD NULLIFY THE PRESSURE ARISING FROM FOREIGN PROTECTIONISM,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID HE WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT AT PRESENT PRODUCT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT WAS NEITHER COMMON NOR FULLY DEVELOPED IN HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIAL SECTOR AND ONLY A HANDFUL OF CONSIDERABLY-SEIZED MANUFACTURERS INVESTED IN IT. HOWEVER, MOST SMALL MANUFACTURERS, LIMITED BY THEIR SIZE, WERE UNABLE TO SHOULDER THE EXPENSES IN THIS ASPECT.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER SETTING UP A SPECIAL ORGANISATION OR DEPARTMENT FOR DEVISING A COMPREHENSIVE AND SYSTEMATIC PLAN TO SUPPLY TECHNICAL CONSULTING AND COUNSELLING SERVICES TO MANUFACTURERS IN THE FIELD OF PRODUCT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, AS WELL AS GRANTING TAX EXEMPTION TO INVESTMENTS ON PRODUCT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AS A SORT OF INCENTIVE.

/AS PRODUCT

AS PRODUCT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COULD NOT BE COMPLETELY DETACHED FROM THE APPLICATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY, MR NGAI SAID, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER PROVIDING MORE SYSTEMATIC FACILITIES IN TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER, AND TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF OUR INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGY.

HE ALSO ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO CONSIDER SETTING UP A TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER CENTRE OR DEPARTMENT, TO COORDINATE THE RESEARCH ON THE INTRODUCTION OF FOREIGN TECHNOLOGY, HAVING REGARD TO OUR EXISTING INDUSTRIAL BASE AND WITH A VIEW TO RAISE THE TECHNOLOGICAL LEVEL OF MANUFACTURING PRODUCTION.

MR NGAI SAID THE +ACTIVE NON-INTERVENTION POLICY+ ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR SO MANY YEARS WAS NOW IN NEED OF OVERALL REVIEWS IN ORDER TO COPE WITH THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT.

+THE INTENTION OF MY BRINGING OUT THE ISSUE OF SUPPORTIVE INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES IS TO REINFORCE OUR INDUSTRIAL BASE, THEREBY MAKING OUR INDUSTRIAL EXPORT PRODUCTS MORE COMPETITIVE AND MORE RESISTANT TO FOREIGN PROTECTIONISM,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID IT WAS THE SHARED VIEW OF THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR THAT ONLY A ROBUST MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY COULD RESULT IN A MORE HEALTHY ECONOMIC GROWTH.

+THEREFORE, THE GOVERNMENT'S INDIRECT ASSISTANCE TO INDUSTRY DOES NOT IMPLY FAVOURING ONE SECTOR AGAINST ANOTHER,+ HE SAID.

+AT PRESENT HONG KONG IS PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN CHINA'S MODERNISATION SCHEME AND SHOULD THUS FURTHER STRENGTHEN OUR ECONOMIC STATUS.

+THERE IS ACTUAL NEED FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO ACTIVELY SUPPORT OUR INDUSTRY AND AT THE SAME TIME TO DEVISE A LONG TERM INDUSTRIAL POLICY,+ HE SAID.

REGARDING THE EXPENDITURE AND INCOME IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, MR NGAI SAID HE WAS GLAD TO LEARN THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS EXPECTING A BALANCED BUDGET DUE TO THE INCREASE IN REVENUE FROM SALE OF LAND AND HOPED THAT THIS COULD HELP TO AVOID INCREASE IN TAX RATE OR MAKE USE OF OUR FREE FISCAL RESERVE AGAIN, THEREBY RESULTING IN A DEFINITE EFFECT ON SOCIAL STABILITY.

MR NGAI ALSO EXPRESSED HIS FULL SUPPORT FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE'S LOCALISATION SCHEME.

NOTING THAT THE QUALITIES AND EFFICIENCY OF CIVIL SERVANTS WERE THE PREREQUISITES TO AN EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT, HE PROPOSED THAT CIVIL SERVANTS SHOULD BE GIVEN MORE LOCAL AND OVERSEAS TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.

+IN PARTICULAR, WE SHOULD STEP UP THE TRAINING OF THE MIDDLE MANAGEMENT IN THE CIVIL SERVICE, TO SERVE AS A BOOSTER TO HONG KONG'S DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS PROSPERITY,+ HE SAID.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1985

- 47 -

RIGHT OF ABODE ENDORSEMENT SIGNIFICANT
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INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF THE PROPOSED BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORT HINGES ON A SUITABLE FORM OF ENDORSEMENT TO INDICATE THAT THE HOLDER HAS RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG, THE HON J. J. SWAINE SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE POLICY DEBATE, HE SUGGESTED THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD BEST ACHIEVE INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF THE PASSPORT IF IT WERE ITSELF TO RECOGNISE THE VALUE OF THE PASSPORT FOR SECURING ENTRY INTO THE U.K.

+ADMINISTRATIVELY THIS COULD BE ACHIEVED WITH THE MINIMUM OF DIFFICULTY BY HAVING ALL SUCH PASSPORTS ENDORSED ON ISSUE WITH PERMISSION TO LAND IN THE U.K.

+THIS WOULD SECURE FREE ENTRY OF THE HOLDER INTO THE U.K., AND OBTAIN THE NEED FOR OBTAINING A CERTIFICATE OF ENTRY BEFOREHAND OR FOR OBTAINING SPECIFIC PERMISSION ON EACH OCCASION OF ENTRY,+ HE SAID.

MR SWAINE POINTED OUT THAT NO VIOLATION OF PRINCIPLE WAS INVOLVED SINCE PERMISSION TO LAND FELL SHORT OF THE RIGHT TO LAND AND COULD NOT THEREFORE MATURE INTO AN ENTITLEMENT TO REGISTRATION AS A BRITISH CITIZEN UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT 1981.

TURNING TO THE USE OF LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION, MR SWAINE STRESSED THAT NOW MORE THAN EVER WE MUST ENSURE THE PROFICIENCY OF YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN IN BOTH SPOKEN AND WRITTEN ENGLISH.

+HONG KONG'S VALUE TO CHINA WHICH IS ONE OF THE CHIEF AIMS OF THE JOINT DECLARATION ON OUR FUTURE, REQUIRES THAT HONG KONG MUST REMAIN A LEADER IN THE WORLD OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND FINANCE.

+AN INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION IS ESSENTIAL FOR HONG KONG'S SUCCESS AND HONG KONG MUST RETAIN ITS GRIP ON ENGLISH, WHICH IS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID HE LAMENTED THE FALL IN THE STANDARD OF ENGLISH OF YOUNG PEOPLE OVER THE YEARS AND EMPHASISED THAT WE SHOULD ADDRESS THE PROBLEM IMMEDIATELY AND COME UP WITH SOLUTIONS THAT WOULD WORK.

ON HIGHER EDUCATION, MR SWAINE WAS PLEASED WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S STATED INTENTION TO PROCEED WITH THE PLANNING FOR A THIRD UNIVERSITY.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE UPWARD PRESSURE OF OUR FORMS 6 AND 7 LEAVERS WAS UNRELENTING AND WOULD ONLY BE PARTIALLY EASED BY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A THIRD UNIVERSITY.

/HE SAID

HE SAID WE ALSO NEED TO PLAN FOR OUR SUB-DEGREE PLACES NAMELY THOSE AT DIPLOMA AND CERTIFICATE LEVEL AND SEEK TO ACHIEVE THE OPTIMUM MIX OF DEGREE AND NON-DEGREE PLACES.

+THE COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION IS HIGH INDEED AND WE SHALL HAVE TO ENSURE VALUE FOR MONEY IN THE FACE OF COMPETING DEMANDS ON THE PUBLIC PURSE,+ HE ADDED.

MR SWAINE EXPRESSED CONCERN AT THE SLOW PROGRESS IN SETTING UP A LOCAL ACCREDITING BODY IN PLACE OF THE U.K. COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL ACADEMIC AWARDS AND ALSO OF A LOCAL RESEARCH GRANTS COMMITTEE.

HE SAID THE PROPOSED HONG KONG COUNCIL FOR ACADEMIC AWARDS WOULD HAVE THE JOB OF ASSESSING AND VALIDATING NEW DEGREE COURSES AT THE TWO POLYTECHNICS AND THE BAPTIST COLLEGE.

+ITS SCOPE COULD BE INCREASED TO COVER SUB-DEGREE COURSES AND INDEED THE COURSES AT INSTITUTIONS WHICH ARE NOT WITHIN THE UPGC UMBRELLA.

+EARLY ESTABLISHING OF SUCH A BODY WOULD GIVE IT TIME TO DEVELOP ITS OWN PROCEDURES AND TO ACQUIRE THE NECESSARY REPUTATION TO ACHIEVE INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION,+ HE SAID.

ON THE LOCAL RESEARCH GRANTS COMMITTEE, MR SWAINE SAID THE NEED FOR CO-ORDINATED DIRECTION OF THE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AT OUR TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS AND FOR THE EXPANSION OF SUCH ACTIVITIES THROUGH STRATEGIC FUNDING WAS WELL RECOGNISED.

+NOT ONLY WILL INDUSTRY AND THE COMMUNITY BENEFIT BY THE FRUITS OF SUCH RESEARCH BUT THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESEARCH WILL HELP ATTRACT, RETAIN AND DEVELOP THE RIGHT CALIBRE OF STAFF.

+THIS IS OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE NOW THAT WE HAVE A THIRD UNIVERSITY IN VIEW BECAUSE IF WE WISH TO ENGAGE LOCAL STAFF FOR IT, WE MUST ENSURE THAT OUR PRESENT TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS ARE ABLE TO PRODUCE POST-GRADUATES OF HIGH CALIBRE, WHICH MEANS ENSURING SUFFICIENT RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES AT THE EXISTING INSTITUTIONS,+ HE SAID.

COMMENTING ON THE SUBJECT OF LEGAL AID, MR SWAINE SAID HE WOULD STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT IT SHOULD CEASE TO BE A GOVERNMENT-PROVIDED SERVICE, PARTICULARLY IN CRIMINAL CASES.

HE SAID QUESTION MUST INEVITABLY BE ASKED WHETHER IT WAS APPROPRIATE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WHICH PROSECUTED AN ALLEGED OFFENDER THROUGH ONE OF ITS ARMS SHOULD ADMINISTER THE SCHEME FOR HIS DEFENCE THROUGH ANOTHER OF ITS ARMS.

+MORE FUNDAMENTALLY, IN HONG KONG THE DECISION WHETHER TO GRANT LEGAL AID IN CRIMINAL CASES RESTS WITH THE LEGAL AID DEPARTMENT (ALTHOUGH THERE IS FINAL RECOURSE TO A JUDGE), WHEREAS IN ENGLAND THE POWER TO MAKE A LEGAL AID ORDER RESTS WITH THE COURT.

+IN CIVIL CASES, LEGAL AID IS ADMINISTERED BY THE LAW SOCIETY IN ENGLAND, WHEREAS IN HONG KONG IT IS RUN BY THE LEGAL AID DEPARTMENT WHICH DETERMINES WHETHER LEGAL AID SHOULD BE GRANTED, A DECISION WHICH MIGHT BE SEEN TO BE INCREASINGLY SENSITIVE WHERE THE GOVERNMENT IS A PARTY TO THE LITIGATION,+ HE ELABORATED.

MR SWAINE ADVOCATED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION OF LEGAL AID IN BOTH CIVIL AND CRIMINAL CASES SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND PLACED WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

+I BELIEVE THE LEGAL PROFESSION IN HONG KONG IS NOW LARGE ENOUGH TO SHOULDER THIS RESPONSIBILITY,+ HE SAID.

FINALLY, MR SWAINE SPOKE ON THE EVENTS OF THE PAST WEEK CONCERNING THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN HONG KONG.

QUOTING ARTICLES 2, 3, 4 AND ANNEX 1 ARTICLE 1 OF THE JOINT DECLARATION, HE SAID IT WAS CLEARLY BEYOND QUESTION THAT IT WAS FOR THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO BRING HONG KONG ALONG THE ROAD OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT TO A STATE OF MATURITY SUFFICIENT FOR THE PEOPLE TO EXERCISE THE POLITICAL RIGHTS PROMISED UNDER THE JOINT DECLARATION.

+IN THIS SOLEMN TASK, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT OWES A CONSTITUTIONAL AND MORAL OBLIGATION TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG TO ENSURE THAT THE IDEALS AND PROMISES OF THE JOINT DECLARATION ARE FULFILLED TO THE LETTER AND SPIRIT,+ HE SAID.

TO THAT END, MR SWAINE SAID, CONSULTATION WITH THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG WAS ESSENTIAL AND FOR THEIR PART, THE PEOPLE MUST BE FREE TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR.

+THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE LAST FEW DAYS HAS NOT BEEN CONDUCTIVE TO A FREE EXPRESSION OF VIEWS, CHARGED AS IT HAS BEEN WITH TENSION AND VEILED THREATS.

+I VENTURE TO SAY THAT SUCH A STRATEGY WILL PROVE TO BE WHOLLY COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE,+ HE SAID.

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UPKEEP OF POLICE MORALE CALLED FOR
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PRIORITY SHOULD BE GIVEN ON IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY AND MORALE OF THE POLICE FORCE AS THE FUNCTION OF HAVING AN OUTSTANDING POLICE FORCE IN MAINTAINING LAW AND ORDER IS BEYOND DOUBT, THE HON YEUNG PO-KWAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

+DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD BEFORE 1997, GOVERNMENT SHOULD GIVE UTMOST SUPPORT TO THE FORCE,+ HE SAID.

SPEAKING AT THE POLICY DEBATE, MR YEUNG URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO CONSIDER HIS FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS IN ENHANCING THE EFFICIENCY AND MORALE OF THE POLICE FORCE.

- * TO AVOID REDUCING SOME OF THE POWERS OF POLICE OFFICERS WITHOUT PRACTICAL AND CONVINCING REASONS.
- * TO FIT IN WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TOWNS, OUR POLICE FORCE MUST BE MODERNISED, WITH CONSTANT REVIEW OF THE FACILITIES AND CAPITAL WORKS WHICH THE FORCE WAS SHORT OF.
- * TO REINFORCE STAFF TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING.
- * GOOD WELFARE BENEFITS WOULD HELP TO ENHANCE MORALE AND EFFICIENCY AND THAT AUXILIARY POLICE OFFICERS SHOULD ALSO BE ELIGIBLE FOR POLICE WELFARE BENEFITS IN GENERAL.

HE SUGGESTED THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER SETTING UP AN AUXILIARY POLICE WELFARE FUND TO ENHANCE THE MORALE AND EFFICIENCY OF AUXILIARY POLICE OFFICERS.

FURTHERMORE, SINCE IT HAD BEEN PROVED THAT THE AUXILIARY POLICE FORCE WAS PLAYING AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN MAINTAINING OUR LAW AND ORDER, GOVERNMENT SHOULD FORMULATE SOME SPECIFIC POLICY TO ALLOCATE SUFFICIENT FUNDS TO THE AUXILIARIES, SO THAT MAXIMUM USE COULD BE MADE OF THE SPACIOUS AREA OF THE NEW AUXILIARY POLICE HEADQUARTERS IN KOWLOON BAY.

- * GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE EARLY STEPS TO FORMULATE SOME SPECIFIC POLICY TO REINFORCE THE CONFIDENCE OF POLICE OFFICERS IN THE FUTURE OF THEIR WORK.
- * LOCALISATION OF THE POLICE FORCE SHOULD FOLLOW A STABLE AND GRADUAL COURSE.
- * THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CAREFULLY EXAMINE THE EFFECT OF THE PROPOSED NEW RETIREMENT SCHEME ON THE MORALE OF POLICE OFFICERS, ESPECIALLY THE RANK AND FILE.

IN VIEW OF THE PARTICULAR NATURE AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF POLICE OFFICERS, GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER WHETHER SOME SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE MADE FOR THEM.

COMMENTING ON DRUGS PROBLEMS, MR YEUNG SAID CONFISCATING THE WEALTH ACQUIRED BY DRUG TRAFFICKERS THROUGH ILLEGAL MEANS WOULD HAVE A GREATER DETERRING EFFECT.

+IN FACT, SUCH EFFECTIVE DETERRING MEASURE IS IN LINE WITH RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC PROBLEMS, UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF INTERPOL.

+APART FROM CONTINUING TO PROMOTE ANTI-NARCOTIC EDUCATION AMONG THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND YOUNG PEOPLE, AS WELL AS INFLECTING SEVERE PUNISHMENT UPON THOSE WHO GO AGAINST THE LAW BY SMUGGLING, MANUFACTURING AND GROWING NARCOTIC DRUGS, GOVERNMENT OUGHT TO STRENGTHEN CONTACT WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES TO STRIKE A HEAVY BLOW ON DRUG TRAFFICKERS,+ HE SAID.

TURNING TO EDUCATION, MR YEUNG SAID A GOOD EDUCATION IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE, TOGETHER WITH THE INSTRUCTION OF ADVANCED SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE, WOULD LAY THE FOUNDATION OF A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR HONG KONG.

SCHOOLS MUST PAY ATTENTION TO THE EFFECTS OF GOOD TEACHING STAFF AND APPROPRIATE TEXTBOOKS WHILE MAKING A DECISION TO USE BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION, HE SAID.

+IF IT IS HOPED THAT THE PRESENT SITUATION OF PUTTING STRONGER EMPHASIS ON ENGLISH THAN CHINESE COULD BE BALANCED, GOVERNMENT OUGHT TO TAKE THE LEAD IN VARIOUS ASPECTS, PARTICULARLY IN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT, TO PROVE TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION THAT ADOPTION OF A BILINGUAL TEACHING POLICY IS A KEY FACTOR IN KEEPING HONG KONG AS AN IMPORTANT COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL AND MONETARY CENTRE,+ HE SAID.

REFERRING TO THE REPORT BY THE BROADCASTING REVIEW BOARD, HE SAID WHETHER A PROPOSAL WAS APPLICABLE DEPENDED ON ITS ACCEPTABILITY BY THE WHOLE SOCIETY.

+OWING TO THE COMPLEXITY OF THE CONTENTS OF THE REPORT, GOVERNMENT HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE SOME GENERAL EXPLANATIONS TO FACILITATE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND IN TURN, ENCOURAGE MORE PUBLIC VIEWS OF VALUE,+ HE SAID.

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LAW AND ORDER CRUCIAL DURING TRANSITIONAL PERIOD
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THE MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC SECURITY AND SOCIAL ORDER IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN PRESERVING THE PROSPERITY AND STABILITY OF HONG KONG.

THE HON CHUNG PUI-LAM SAID THIS AT THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S OPENING ADDRESS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE THE POLICE FORCE WITH ADEQUATE RESOURCES FOR MAINTAINING ITS MODERNISATION.

THE GOVERNMENT MUST ENSURE THAT THE FORCE WOULD BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN ITS HIGH LEVEL OF EFFICIENCY AND MORALE, SO THAT IT WOULD CARRY OUT CORRESPONDING MEASURES IN MEETING ALL THE CHANGES AS MIGHT ARISE DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD, HE SAID.

ON THE ISSUE OF TRIAD SOCIETY, MR CHUNG SAID PRIORITY SHOULD BE GIVEN PARTICULARLY TO THE POSSIBLE MEASURES OF KEEPING TRIAD INFLUENCE AWAY FROM SCHOOLS AND PLACES OF AMUSEMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

HE SAID HE HOPED THE GOVERNMENT WOULD IMMEDIATELY CONSIDER NECESSARY AMENDMENTS TO THE RELEVANT LEGISLATION SO THAT SERIOUS CRIMES COULD BE MORE EFFECTIVELY DEALT WITH AND THAT CRIMINALS BE MORE READILY BROUGHT TO JUSTICE.

MR CHUNG ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE RISING NUMBER OF BURGLARY CASES IN RESIDENTIAL FLATS AND URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE EVERY RESOURCES TO PROMOTE AND MAKE A SUCCESS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH PROGRAMME LAUNCHED JOINTLY BY THE FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE AND THE POLICE.

POINTING OUT THAT THE QUALITY OF WATCHMEN WAS IMPORTANT TO THE SECURITY OF MULTI-STOREY BUILDINGS, HE SAID THE WATCHMEN ORDINANCE WAS OUTDATED AND HAD TO BE AMENDED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

+THERE IS AMBIGUITY IN THE TERM 'WATCHMEN' AS WELL AS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE QUALITY OF WATCHMEN,+ HE SAID.

TURNING TO HOUSING, MR CHUNG SAID THAT IN ORDER TO PROVIDE MORE PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS FOR APPLICANTS ON THE WAITING LIST, HE FELT THAT THE HOUSING AUTHORITY SHOULD ENCOURAGE BETTER-OFF PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS TO PURCHASE FLATS UNDER THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME.

HE SUGGESTED THE AUTHORITY TO CONSIDER OFFERING PROSPECTIVE BUYERS ATTRACTIVE TERMS SUCH AS EXEMPTING THEM FROM DOWN PAYMENT, ARRANGING LOANS AT LOW INTEREST RATES, SELLING FLATS AT CONCESSIONARY PRICE, AND ASSURING THEM A PUBLIC HOUSING UNIT IN CASE THEY ARE UNABLE TO PAY UP THEIR MONTHLY INSTALMENT DUE TO CHANGES IN FINANCIAL CONDITION.

MR CHUNG ALSO WELCOMED THE PLANNING OF A THIRD UNIVERSITY IN HONG KONG BUT HE OBSERVED THAT THE NUMBER OF FIRST DEGREE PLACES TO BE PROVIDED WAS WELL BELOW THE NUMBER DEMANDED.

HE THEREFORE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO CONSIDER PROVIDING EXTERNAL DEGREE COURSES BY MAKING FULL USE OF THE FACILITIES OF EXISTING INSTITUTIONS AND TAKING AFTER THE EXTERNAL DEGREE SYSTEM OF LONDON UNIVERSITY.

THE STUDENTS COULD THEN TAKE UP THEIR COURSES BY PRIVATE STUDY, CORRESPONDENCE OR IN ANY OTHER WAY AT THEIR OWN EXPENSES, WHILE THEIR NUMBER WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY THE LACK OF SPACE IN THE CAMPUS, HE SAID.

+THIS SYSTEM WILL BE ABLE TO MEET THE NEED OF THOSE ASPIRING YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE KEEN ON FURTHERING THEIR STUDIES AND TO BRING UP MORE QUALIFIED PERSONNEL AT THE SAME TIME,+ MR CHUNG ADDED.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1985

- 53 -

LESS ROAD DEATHS WITH SAFETY MEASURES -- CS
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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A VARIETY OF SAFETY MEASURES HAS LED TO A DECLINE IN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS AND CASUALTIES, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DAVID AKERS-JONES, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 1985 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ROAD SAFETY, SIR DAVID SAID THAT IN 1984 THE NUMBER OF ACCIDENTS AND CASUALTIES DROPPED BY ABOUT 10 PER CENT AND +THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE KILLED ON THE ROADS WAS THE LOWEST FOR 17 YEARS+.

HE TOLD DELEGATES THAT WITH A POPULATION OF ABOUT FIVE-AND-A-HALF MILLION HONG KONG HAD AN AVERAGE DENSITY OF OVER 5 000 PERSONS PER SQUARE KILOMETRE OF LAND AND A DENSITY OF 244 VEHICLES FOR EVERY KILOMETRE OF ROAD.

+ENABLING THIS NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND THIS NUMBER OF VEHICLES TO GO ABOUT THEIR DAILY AFFAIRS REQUIRES AN EFFICIENT AND FUNCTIONING TRANSPORT SYSTEM.

+THIS, I BELIEVE WE HAVE, BUT IT REQUIRES A CAREFUL, CONSTANT AND RESPONSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORT POLICIES AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE,+ SIR DAVID SAID.

ON HONG KONG'S ROAD SAFETY EFFORTS, THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID THAT THESE HAD CONCENTRATED ON PEDESTRIANS, AND ROAD SAFETY PUBLICITY AIMED AT PEDESTRIANS GAVE POSITIVE ADVICE ON WALKING SAFELY.

ACCIDENT DATA WAS ALSO ANALYSED TO IDENTIFY BLACK SPOTS WHERE SIX OR MORE PEDESTRIAN ACCIDENTS HAD OCCURRED IN A PERIOD OF 12 MONTHS.

THESE SITES WERE INVESTIGATED TO SEE WHETHER ANY PATTERN EMERGED FROM THE ACCIDENTS AND EASY, LOW-COST ENGINEERING MEASURES WERE THEN IMPLEMENTED WHICH BROUGHT CONSIDERABLE BENEFIT, SIR DAVID SAID.

+PROGRESS HAS ALSO BEEN MADE IN IMPROVING ROAD CROSSING FACILITIES AND NUMEROUS SUBWAYS AND FOOTBRIDGES NOW SEPARATE PEDESTRIANS FROM VEHICULAR TRAFFIC,+ HE ADDED.

+WE HAVE DONE MUCH BUT THE WORK NEVER STOPS.+

SIR DAVID POINTED OUT THAT AS PART OF THIS WORK AND ACTIVITY, THE ROAD SAFETY ASSOCIATION OF HONG KONG HAD DONE A GREAT DEAL TO PROMOTE ROAD SAFETY.

+ONE OF ITS PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES, AND ITS GREATEST SUCCESS, IS THE FORMATION OF SCHOOL CROSSING PATROLS,+ HE SAID.

THESE PATROLS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN WERE AUTHORISED TO STOP TRAFFIC IN THE VICINITY OF THEIR SCHOOLS TO ENSURE THAT FELLOW SCHOOL CHILDREN COULD CROSS THE ROAD SAFELY.

/+SINCE THE

+SINCE THE PATROLS WERE FOUNDED IN 1963, NOT A SINGLE STUDENT HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT WHILE CROSSING THE ROAD UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF PATROL MEMBERS,+ SIR DAVID SAID.

+THIS IS A MAGNIFICENT RECORD, ESPECIALLY WHEN ONE CONSIDERS THAT OVER 300 000 STUDENTS COME UNDER THE CARE OF PATROLS EACH DAY,+ HE SAID.

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LADY HOWE VISITS TAI PO

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LADY HOWE, WIFE OF BRITISH FOREIGN MINISTER SIR GEOFFREY HOWE, WHO IS IN HONG KONG ON A PRIVATE VISIT, TOURED TAI PO TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TO SEE DEVELOPMENT IN THE DISTRICT AND THE VARIOUS WELFARE FACILITIES PROVIDED.

ACCOMPANIED BY MRS EVELYN DOE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, LADY HOWE FIRST CALLED AT THE TAI PO DISTRICT OFFICE WHERE SHE WAS BRIEFED BY MR THOMAS CHAN, TAI PO DISTRICT OFFICER, ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA.

SHE THEN VISITED TAI PO COMMUNITY CENTRE TO SEE THE FACILITIES PROVIDED, INCLUDING A GROUP WORK UNIT RUN BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT, A DAY NURSERY OPERATED BY THE TUNG WAH GROUP OF HOSPITALS AND A MULTI-SERVICES CENTRE FOR THE ELDERLY RUN BY THE SALVATION ARMY.

LADY HOWE THEN TOURED THE LOK SIN TONG CHU TING CHEONG HOME FOR THE AGED AND TALKED TO THE RESIDENTS.

LATER ON SHE VISITED PELLETIER HALL ON CLEARWATER BAY ROAD, A RESIDENTIAL HOME FOR GIRLS RUN BY THE GOOD SHEPHERD SISTERS.

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RSD SERVICES IN TUEN MUN DISTRICT

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SOME 130 000 PEOPLE TOOK PART IN 355 RECREATION AND SPORTS PROJECTS ORGANISED BY THE REGIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT FOR TUEN MUN RESIDENTS IN THE SIX MONTHS FOLLOWING ITS ESTABLISHMENT ON APRIL 1 THIS YEAR.

THIS WAS DISCLOSED BY THE DISTRICT LEISURE MANAGER (TUEN MUN), MR JIMMY CHOW, AT THE FIRST MEETING OF THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT COMMITTEE OF THE PROVISIONAL REGIONAL COUNCIL TODAY.

/MR CHOW,

MR CHOW, WHO HEADS THE LEISURE SERVICES SECTION OF THE RSD'S TUEN MUN DISTRICT OFFICE, SAID THAT +THE SECTION IS HEAVILY INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY BUILDING IN TUEN MUN THROUGH ORGANISATION OF LEISURE ACTIVITIES FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS.

+APART FROM ORGANISING PROGRAMMES JOINTLY WITH THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT BOARD AND THE TUEN MUN SPORTS ASSOCIATION, ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE ARE FREQUENTLY GIVEN TO OTHER LOCAL ORGANISATIONS IN THE PROMOTION OF RECREATION AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES.+

ON OTHER ASPECTS OF MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE RSD IN THE DISTRICT WHICH COVERS AN AREA OF 3 130 HECTARES, THE DISTRICT HYGIENE SUPERINTENDENT (TUEN MUN), MR FU KAM-HUNG, SAID AN AVERAGE OF 163 TONNES OF REFUSE AND JUNK ARE COLLECTED DAILY BY A FLEET OF 13 SPECIALISED REFUSE COLLECTION VEHICLES.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE SECTION, WITH AN ESTABLISHMENT OF 486, WAS ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR STREET SWEEPING AND WASHING, NIGHTSOIL COLLECTION, PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT OF 63 REFUSE COLLECTION POINTS AND 56 PUBLIC TOILETS. ALL THESE WERE IN ADDITION TO SPECIAL CLEANSING SERVICES PROVIDED TO VILLAGES, SQUATTER AREAS, PICNIC SPOTS AND WATERCOURSES, MR FU SAID.

ON THE PROVISION OF CULTURAL FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES, CULTURAL SERVICES OFFICER, MR LO YIU-CHUNG, SAID: +THESE WERE CENTRED AROUND THE TWO PUBLIC LIBRARIES WHICH, IN ADDITION TO PROVIDING THE USUAL BOOK LENDING SERVICES FROM THEIR STOCK OF 89 713 BOOKS AND 4 141 ITEMS OF AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS, ALSO ORGANISED A WIDE VARIETY OF EXTENSION ACTIVITIES.

MR LO SAID THAT THE TUEN MUN (TAI HING) PUBLIC LIBRARY AND THE TUEN MUN (YAU OI) PUBLIC LIBRARY TOGETHER ISSUED A TOTAL OF 150 837 LIBRARY ITEMS IN THE THREE MONTHS FROM JULY TO SEPTEMBER. IN THE SAME PERIOD, AN AVERAGE OF 11 208 PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN LIBRARY EXTENSION ACTIVITIES EACH MONTH.

FREE ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMMES SUCH AS CANTONESE OPERAS, VARIETY SHOWS, POP CONCERTS AND PUPPET SHOWS, HE SAID, ARE REGULARLY ORGANISED BY THE RSD AT 12 OUTDOOR LOCAL VENUES. ON AVERAGE, FOUR TO FIVE PROGRAMMES ARE PRESENTED EACH MONTH, ATTRACTING AN AUDIENCE OF BETWEEN 100 TO 400 PEOPLE EACH TIME.

AT THE MEETING, THE COMMITTEE APPROVED A PROPOSAL TO NAME A NEW PUBLIC LIBRARY LOCATED AT TIP YING HOUSE IN BUTTERFLY ESTATE AS +BUTTERFLY ESTATE PUBLIC LIBRARY+.

THE NEW LIBRARY, MEASURING 285 SQUARE METRES, WILL BE COMPLETED IN FEBRUARY 1986.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1985

- 56 -

FISHERMEN COMPLETE NAVIGATION TRAINING
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A GROUP OF 11 FISHERMEN HAS COMPLETED AN INTENSIVE NAVIGATION TRAINING COURSE ORGANISED BY THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT.

THE FOUR-MONTH FULL-TIME COURSE, THE 32ND HELD SINCE 1960, IS DESIGNED TO HELP FISHERMEN NAVIGATE THEIR VESSELS CORRECTLY AND SAFELY.

SPEAKING AT THE GRADUATION CEREMONY TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE ACTING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (FISHERIES) OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT, DR CHRISTOPHER LEE, SAID THE LOCAL FISHING INDUSTRY RELIED MUCH ON OFFSHORE FISHING.

+A SOUND KNOWLEDGE OF NAVIGATION IS THEREFORE VERY IMPORTANT FOR FISHING VESSELS TO REACH THEIR FISHING GROUNDS CORRECTLY AND DIRECTLY AND FOR PROVIDING BETTER SAFETY TO BOTH VESSEL AND CREW,+ HE SAID.

DR LEE SAID THE DEPARTMENT STARTED PROVIDING FREE NAVIGATION TRAINING TO LOCAL FISHERMEN IN 1955 BY HOLDING SKIPPER CLASSES WHICH WERE REPLACED BY THE NAVIGATION COURSE IN 1960.

+THE NAVIGATION COURSE PROVIDES TRAINING ON CHART WORK, SEAMANSHIP, SIGNALLING AND DEAD RECKONING NAVIGATION AS WELL AS A KNOWLEDGE OF OPERATING SUCH ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT AS THE ECHO SOUNDER AND THE SATELLITE NAVIGATOR,+ HE SAID.

SO FAR, 296 FISHERMEN FROM 32 CLASSES HAVE COMPLETED THE NAVIGATION COURSE AND OBTAINED THE CERTIFICATES AWARDED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

DR LEE LATER PRESENTED CERTIFICATES TO THE GRADUATING FISHERMEN.

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TENDERS CALLED FOR STORAGE SITE
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THE LANDS DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR THE SHORT TERM TENANCY OF A KOWLOON SITE OFF LUNG CHEUNG ROAD, NEAR TAI WOR PING.

THE SITE, ABOUT 3 020 SQUARE METRES, WILL BE USED FOR OPEN STORAGE.

TENANCY OF THE SITE IS FOR ONE YEAR, RENEWABLE MONTHLY THEREAFTER.

/CLOSING

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1985

- 57 -

CLOSING DATE FOR ACCEPTANCE OF TENDERS IS NOON ON DECEMBER 13.

FORM OF TENDER, TENDER NOTICE AND CONDITIONS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM, AND TENDER PLAN INSPECTED AT, THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, KOWLOON WEST, YAU MA TEI CAR PARK BUILDING, 10TH FLOOR, 250 SHANGHAI STREET, KOWLOON AND THE LANDS DEPARTMENT, SURVEY DIVISION, MURRAY BUILDING, FIFTH FLOOR, GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG.

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PARKING SPACES SUSPENDED
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TO FACILITATE RECONSTRUCTION WORKS IN LUEN WO HUI, FANLING, PRIVATE CAR PARKING SPACES AT NO. 17-35 LUEN HING STREET WILL BE SUSPENDED FROM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO DECEMBER 3.

PARKING SPACES AT NO. 1-23 WO LUNG STREET WILL BE SUSPENDED FROM DECEMBER 4 (WEDNESDAY) TO DECEMBER 10.

MEANWHILE, TO FACILITATE CONSTRUCTION WORK, FU YUNG STREET IN TSUEN WAN BETWEEN SHA TSUI ROAD AND HEUNG WO STREET WILL BE CLOSED FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (NOVEMBER 30) UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

NO LEFT TURN WILL BE ALLOWED FROM WESTBOUND SHA TSUI ROAD INTO FU YUNG STREET, TRAFFIC WILL BE DIVERTED VIA HEUNG SHING STREET.

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SALT WATER CUT
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SALT WATER SUPPLY TO CERTAIN PREMISES IN NORTH POINT WILL BE SUSPENDED FROM 11 PM ON SATURDAY (NOVEMBER 30) TO 6 AM THE FOLLOWING DAY FOR LEAKAGE TEST.

THE AFFECTED AREA IS BOUNDED BY KING'S ROAD, LAU SIN STREET, HING FAT STREET AND WHITFIELD ROAD, INCLUDING ELECTRIC ROAD AND MERLIN STREET.

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