



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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IMPORTANCE OF HIGH STANDARD AMBULANCE SERVICE STRESSED

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THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, STRESSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT IT WAS MOST IMPORTANT, IN THE INTEREST OF THE HONG KONG COMMUNITY, THAT AN AMBULANCE SERVICE WITH A HIGH STANDARD BE MAINTAINED.

WINDING UP THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON AMBULANCE SERVICE, MR JEAFFRESON THANKED MEMBERS FOR THEIR VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS CONTEXT.

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT, ON THE ADVICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE IMPLEMENTING ALL THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONSULTANTS, SUBJECT, IN SOME CASES, TO THE AUTHORITY BEING GIVEN THE NECESSARY RESOURCES.

ON THE TARGET TRAVEL TIME FOR RURAL AREAS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, HE SAID ANY SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT BEYOND 30 MINUTES WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE AS THERE WERE REMOTE VILLAGES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND INACCESSIBILITY OF DIFFICULT TERRAIN.

BUT HE SAID CONSULTANT FINDINGS REVEALED THAT 71 PER CENT OF THE AMBULANCE SERVICES IN RURAL NEW TERRITORIES AREAS WERE ABLE TO REACH THE TARGET WITHIN 20 MINUTES AND MEASURES WERE BEING TAKEN TO INCREASE THIS PERCENTAGE BY POSTING AMBULANCES TO FAR STATIONS IN PLACES SUCH AS SHA TAU KOK.

TO ASSIST IN THE CASE OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION, SEVEN MOTOR CYCLES WERE BEING EMPLOYED IN THE AMBULANCE SERVICE AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS WOULD BE REVIEWED WITHIN A YEAR TO SEE IF THE NUMBER OF VEHICLES SHOULD BE INCREASED.

MR JEAFFRESON ALSO ASSURED THAT ALL AMBULANCES IN THE AMBULANCE SERVICE WILL BE AIR-CONDITIONED IN THREE YEARS' TIME.

HE SAID TWO AMBULANCE OFFICERS WOULD BE SENT TO THE UNITED KINGDOM TO HAVE A LOOK AT WHAT WAS BEING DONE THERE IN THE CONTEXT OF TRAINING AMBULANCEMEN IN PARAMEDIC SKILLS.

WHEN THEY RETURN, AN EXPERT GROUP WOULD BE SET UP TO LOOK AT WHAT THEY HAD FOUND THERE, HE SAID.

TO ENABLE DIRECT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN AMBULANCES AND HOSPITALS, MR JEAFFRESON ASSURED THAT DIRECT COMMUNICATION FACILITIES WOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE SECOND GENERATION SYSTEM WHICH WOULD BE OPERATING FOR THE AMBULANCE SERVICE BY 1991. HE ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS LOOKING AT A RELATIVELY INEXPENSIVE TECHNICAL IMPROVEMENT ENABLING DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITHOUT HAVING TO WAIT FOR THE SECOND GENERATION SYSTEM.

TURNING TO THE ABUSE OF AMBULANCE SERVICES, MR JEAFFRESON SAID AMBULANCEMEN WOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO REPORT SUCH CASES.

MEANWHILE, HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT WAS LOOKING AT THE POSSIBILITY OF MAKING THE ABUSE OF THE AMBULANCE SERVICE AN OFFENCE IN LAW, ALTHOUGH THE ACTUAL DRAFTING OF SUCH LEGISLATION WOULD NOT AT ALL BE EASY.

PRaises FOR AMBULANCE STAFF

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR DR THE HON CHIU HIN-KWONG TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SAID STAFF INVOLVED IN AMBULANCE SERVICES DESERVED THE HIGHEST PRAISE AS THE HIGH EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE AND THE EXCELLENT WORKING ATTITUDE OF THE STAFF WERE WELL KNOWN TO ALL.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON AMBULANCE SERVICE, DR CHIU SAID IT WAS NOT SURPRISING THAT THE STUDY ON THE REVIEW OF HONG KONG AMBULANCE SERVICE COMMISSIONED BY THE HEALTH OPERATIONAL RESEARCH UNIT WAS INITIATED NOT BECAUSE OF ANY UNACCEPTABLE SERVICE STANDARD OR OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY BUT WITH THE INTENTION TO ENSURE MAXIMUM USE OF RESOURCES AND A HIGHER STANDARD OF SERVICE.

DR CHIU SAID A COMPLETE PROCESS OF EMERGENCY SERVICE INCLUDED SIX ASPECTS: THE RECEIPT OF EMERGENCY CALL, DISPATCHING OF HELP, ON-THE-SPOT CARE, TRANSPORTATION OF THE SICK, AND CARE ON ARRIVAL AT ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT FOR TREATMENT. AMBULANCE SERVICE WAS JUST A PART OF EMERGENCY SERVICE.

"IF IT IS OUR OBJECTIVE TO REACH A HIGHER STANDARD OF EMERGENCY SERVICE, WHY DO WE NARROW OURSELVES TO AMBULANCE SERVICE ALONE AND LEAVE THE REST OF THE SERVICE A LOT OF ROOM FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT?" HE QUESTIONED.

HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT BECAUSE OF FINANCIAL CONSTRAINT, IT WAS QUITE DIFFICULT TO ENGAGE AN INDEPENDENT CONSULTANCY TO UNDERTAKE A REVIEW EXERCISE ON INDIVIDUAL PUBLIC SERVICE AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS.

"WHAT WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND IS WHY DID WE LET GO OF THE CHANCE OF GIVING OUR EMERGENCY SERVICE A CHECK-UP WHEN THE TIME CAME," HE SAID.

ON THE ROLE OF DISPERSED MEDICAL CENTRES, DR CHIU SAID THAT THE SHORTENING OF THE TARGET TRAVEL TIME FOR AMBULANCE FROM 15 MINUTES TO 10 MINUTES IN URBAN AREAS INCLUDING NEW TOWNS AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONSULTANTS WAS ACCEPTABLE FOR THE TIME BEING.

HOWEVER, HE WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT A SHORTENING OF THE TRAVEL TIME FOR EMERGENCY CALLS IN RURAL AREAS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, WHICH AT PRESENT WAS 30-35 MINUTES, HAD BEEN CONSIDERED UNREALISTIC.

"THE TIME WASTED IN THE FIRST HALF AN HOUR CAN, TO A LARGE EXTENT, DIMINISH THE PATIENT'S CHANCE OF SURVIVAL ESPECIALLY IN MAJOR ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCY CASES," HE SAID.

HE SUGGESTED THAT CRITICALLY ILL PATIENTS SHOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO NEARBY MEDICAL CENTRES RATHER THAN REGIONAL HOSPITAL. IT SHOULD BE PARTICULARLY SO IN RURAL AND SUB-URBAN AREAS.

/HE SAID

HE SAID THAT MANY A TIME, MEDICAL CENTRES IN RURAL AREAS COULD ONLY SERVE AS TRANSFERRING AGENCIES BECAUSE THEIR LESS-EQUIPPED ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY UNITS COULD NOT ALWAYS MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF EMERGENCY TREATMENT.

"ALL THESE FACTS POINT TO ONE DIRECTION, THAT IS THE STANDARDS OF MEDICAL FACILITIES AND MANPOWER SUPPLY OF THE ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY UNITS OF DISTRICT HOSPITALS ESPECIALLY THOSE IN RURAL AREAS NEED TO BE STRENGTHENED," HE SAID.

DR CHIU WENT ON TO SAY THAT EMERGENCY RESUSCITATION WAS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE FOR THE CRITICALLY ILL AND SHOULD BE DONE IN THE ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT IMMEDIATELY UPON A PATIENT'S ARRIVAL BUT NOT IN HOSPITAL WARDS BECAUSE TIME MUST NOT BE WASTED IN WAITING FOR TROLLEY TRANSFER OR HOSPITAL LIFTS.

"IT IS A COMMON PRACTICE FOR ADVANCED HOSPITALS TO HAVE 'RESUSCITATION SQUADS' THAT WOULD TAKE PROMPT ACTIONS UPON THE RECEIPT OF AN EMERGENCY CALL," HE SAID. HE ADDED THAT THIS WAS ANOTHER IMPORTANT AREA WHICH THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SERIOUSLY LOOK INTO.

TURNING TO THE LEVEL OF TRAINING FOR AMBULANCE STAFF, HE SAID IT WAS THE CONSENSUS VIEW IN THE MEDICAL CIRCLE THAT THE LEVEL OF TRAINING FOR AMBULANCE STAFF SHOULD BE REINFORCED. THEIR SKILLS IN PROVIDING FIRST AID MEASURES SUCH AS ARREST OF HAEMORRHAGE, KEEPING AIR WAY CLEAR, ARTIFICIAL RESPIRATION, EXTERNAL CARDIAC MASSAGE, MATERNAL DELIVERY AND SO FORTH SHOULD BE FURTHER POLISHED.

HE ALSO SAID THAT IN ORDER TO MAKE BETTER USE OF HONG KONG'S EXISTING RESOURCES AND TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY, THERE SHOULD BE DIFFERENT TYPES OF AMBULANCE SERVICE TO CATER FOR DIFFERENT LEVEL OF SERVICE REQUIRED.

AMBULANCE DEALING WITH EMERGENCY CALLS SHOULD HAVE SUFFICIENT WELL-TRAINED STAFF AND FULLY-EQUIPPED FACILITIES. WHEN TRANSFERRING PATIENTS IN STABLE CONDITIONS FROM HOSPITAL TO HOME AND BETWEEN HOSPITALS, A WELL-EQUIPPED AMBULANCE WITH TRAINED PERSONNEL WAS A WASTE OF RESOURCES.

"IN THIS SITUATION, A COMFORTABLE MINIBUS MANNED BY TWO AMBULANCEMEN INSTEAD OF THREE WOULD BE QUITE ADEQUATE," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT SOME OF HIS MEDICAL COLLEAGUES TENDED TO BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE FOR AMBULANCE TO COME UNDER THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT RATHER THAN UNDER THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT. IN VIEW OF THE EXISTING PHYSICAL SETTINGS OF THE AMBULANCE SERVICE, IT MIGHT NOT BE PRACTICAL TO DO SO AT THE PRESENT TIME.

"WITH THIS REGARD, I MUST STRESS THAT THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT SHOULD PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN THE PROVISION OF QUALITY AMBULANCE SERVICE," HE CONCLUDED.

STAFF MORALE OF AMBULANCE SERVICE STRESSED

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THE FIRE SERVICES AS WELL AS THEIR AMBULANCE SERVICE HAVE SERVED HONG KONG WELL IN THE PROTECTION OF LIFE AND PROPERTY, THE HON CHAN KAM-CHUEN, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON AMBULANCE SERVICE, MR CHAN STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WERE THREE POINTS REGARDING STAFF MORALE WHICH THE GOVERNMENT OUGHT TO PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION.

FIRST, EVERY ORGANISATION WOULD SEEK TO GET BETTER QUALIFIED PERSONNEL FOR OFFICER POSTS.

"THIS IS GOOD FOR THE ORGANISATION IN THE LONG TERM. BUT IF OFFICER POSTS ARE ALL RESERVED FOR QUALIFIED NEW RECRUITS THIS WILL LOWER STAFF MORALE BOTH IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS.

"THE FAILURE OF SOME PRIVATE SECTOR COMPANIES WITH WESTERN TRAINED YOUNG BOSSES LOOKING DOWN ON THE OLD BUT LOYAL EMPLOYEES HAVE SOWN THE SEEDS OF BANKRUPTCY," HE SAID.

MR CHAN SAID A 50:50 RATIO IN FILLING OFFICER POSTS WITH QUALIFIED BUT INEXPERIENCED YOUTHS AND UNQUALIFIED EXPERIENCED MEN WITH LEADERSHIP QUALITY WOULD BOOST STAFF MORALE AND MAINTAIN A HAPPY BALANCE.

SECONDLY, THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE UNION SHOULD WORK OUT SOME DEFINITION TO PREVENT ABUSE OF THE AMBULANCE SERVICE. BLATANT CASES OF ABUSE SHOULD BE HEAVILY CHARGED TO SET AN EXAMPLE, HE SAID.

THIRDLY, MR CHAN SAID IT WAS A COMMON SIGHT TO SEE DRIVERS GIVING WAY TO POLICE AND FIRE SERVICE ENGINES BUT NOT ALWAYS TO AMBULANCES.

"OFFENDERS SHOULD BE PROSECUTED AND IF EVIDENCE IS REQUIRED, AMBULANCES SHOULD BE EQUIPPED WITH AUTOMATIC CAMERA TO PHOTOGRAPH OFFENDERS' CAR NUMBERS."

MR CHAN ALSO PRAISED THE ST. JOHN'S AMBULANCE WHOSE HISTORY DATED BACK AS EARLY AS THE 11TH CENTURY.

"IN HONG KONG, BESIDES TRAINING YOUTHS WITH THE LIFE SAVING TECHNIQUES OF FIRST AID, ST. JOHN'S AMBULANCE INSTIL DISCIPLINE AND ORGANISATION WHICH ONLY A PARA-MILITARY FORCE COULD ACHIEVE."

"IT IS ALSO THE TRAINING GROUND FOR CANDIDATES FOR RECRUITMENT TO THE PROFESSIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE, AS TWO OUT OF THREE FIRE SERVICES AMBULANCE PERSONNEL WHO CAME TO SEE ME IN OMELCO ON JUNE 6 IN SWIRE HOUSE WERE TRAINED BY THE ST. JOHN'S AMBULANCE," MR CHAN SAID.

HE HOPED THAT THE ST. JOHN'S AMBULANCE SHOULD BE PROVIDED WITH ADEQUATE RESOURCES TO TRAIN MORE PEOPLE UNTIL FIRST AID WAS COMMON KNOWLEDGE IN EVERY HOUSEHOLD AND WORK PLACE.

"IF WE HAVE AN 'INSTANT FIRST AID' MAN TO STOP THE BLEEDING OR DO THE RIGHT THING UNTIL THE PATIENT IS HANDED OVER TO THE PROFESSIONALS, IT MAY MEAN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH."

MR CHAN ALSO SAID THAT IF EVERY PARENT AND WORKER WAS TRAINED, THE NUMBER OF UNWARRANTED DEATHS COULD BE CUT DOWN.

"ON TV NEWS, ONE COULD SEE THE DIFFERENCE OF A LARGE NUMBER OF UNTRAINED MEN SHOUTING AND MILLING AROUND IN A CATASTROPHE, AGAINST A SIMILAR SCENE BUT WITH FEWER TRAINED MEN WORKING QUIETLY AND EFFICIENTLY AND SENDING THE WOUNDED SWIFTLY TO HOSPITAL," HE ADDED.

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GOVERNMENT URGED TO IMPROVE AMBULANCE SERVICE

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THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE ACTION IN IMPROVING AMBULANCE SERVICE WHICH IS VITAL IN GIVING IMMEDIATE CARE UNDER EMERGENCY CONDITIONS TO SAVE HUMAN LIVES, DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON AMBULANCE SERVICE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, DR IP, WHO IS CONVENOR OF THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP PREPARING FOR THE DEBATE, SAID: "WE RECOGNISE AND APPRECIATE THE QUALITY ALREADY ATTAINED IN THE WORK OF OUR AMBULANCE SERVICE BUT WE SHARE A COMMON DESIRE TO IMPROVE ON WHAT WE FIND UNSATISFACTORY."

DR IP SAID IN PREPARATION FOR THE DEBATE, THE AD HOC GROUP HAD HELD FIVE MEETINGS; ONE MEETING EACH WITH THE ADMINISTRATION, THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT AMBULANCEMEN'S UNION AND THE AMBULANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION.

THE GROUP HAD ALSO WRITTEN TO THE MEDICAL AND PARAMEDICAL PROFESSIONALS AND CONCERNED ORGANISATIONS ASKING FOR THEIR VIEWS ON THE AMBULANCE SERVICE IN HONG KONG.

A TOTAL OF 136 LETTERS HAD BEEN SENT OUT AND 57 REPLIES HAD BEEN RECEIVED, OF WHICH 47 CONTAINED ADVICE ON AND CRITICISMS OF THE AMBULANCE SERVICE.

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"WITH THE BENEFIT OF THE INSIGHT OF THE FRONT-LINE WORKERS IN THE SERVICE, THE AD HOC GROUP ANALYSED THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HORU (HEALTH OPERATIONAL RESEARCH UNIT) CONSULTANT REPORT WHICH WAS COMMISSIONED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO STUDY THE OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF THE AMBULANCE SERVICE.

"THE GROUP ARRIVED AT 19 POINTS (10 ON THE HORU REPORT AND NINE OF OUR OWN) ON WHICH WE AGREED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE ACTION IN IMPROVING OUR AMBULANCE SERVICE," DR IP SAID.

ON THE HORU REPORT, THE GROUP LARGELY AGREED WITH ITS RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND OVERALL EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE.

THESE INCLUDE:

- (A) 95% OF THE EMERGENCY CALLS IN URBAN AREAS AND NEW TOWNS MUST BE MET WITHIN A 10 MINUTE TRAVEL TIME;
- (B) INCREASE IN STAFF AND VEHICLES, AMBULANCE DEPOTS AND "TEMPORARY STANDBYS" IN ORDER TO MEET THE ABOVE;
- (C) STRENGTHENING THE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE BY INCREASING THE NUMBER OF AMBULANCE OFFICERS;
- (D) A MORE DYNAMIC INTEGRATION OF INFORMATION AND COMMAND CONTROL;
- (E) THE AMBULANCE CONTROL CONSOLES TO BE MANNED BY AMBULANCE STAFF INSTEAD OF SPECIAL CONTROL STAFF;
- (F) BETTER CO-ORDINATED ROUTINE TRANSFER SERVICE; AND
- (G) TIERING OF THE EMERGENCY AND ROUTINE SERVICES.

HOWEVER, THE GROUP COULD NOT ACCEPT THE LACK OF INITIATIVE IN CUTTING DOWN THE TARGET TRAVEL TIME IN THE N.T. WHICH NOW STANDS AT 34 MINUTES.

"IT SEEMS THAT THE HORU REPORT DOES NOT AIM TO IMPROVE THIS ASPECT OF OUR SERVICE," DR IP SAID.

"WE DISCUSSED THIS ISSUE IN DEPTH AND WE FELT THAT THE SERVICE SHOULD STRIVE TO ATTAIN A 20 MINUTE TARGET TRAVEL TIME FOR 95% OF THE AMBULANCE CALLS IN THE N.T.

"THE HORU REPORT ALSO RECOMMENDS THAT HOSPITAL CONTROLLERS SHOULD BE UPGRADED TO OFFICER POSTS. WE SUPPORT THIS RECOMMENDATION BUT URGE THE ADMINISTRATION TO NOTE ANY STRESS ON THE MORALE OF THE MORE SENIOR AMBULANCEMEN WHO MAY BE AFFECTED BY SUCH CHANGES.

/"WE FEEL

"WE FEEL THAT THE MORE CAPABLE ONES SHOULD BE GIVEN THE NECESSARY TRAINING, AND MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, A REAL OPPORTUNITY TO BE PROMOTED DIRECTLY TO OFFICER GRADE UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM."

DR IP SAID THE GROUP HAD LOOKED FURTHER INTO THE OPERATION OF THE EXISTING SERVICE AND OBTAINED FEEDBACK FROM THE FRONT-LINE WORKERS.

SHE SAID THE AMBULANCE-AID MOTORCYCLE (AAMC) LAUNCHED IN 1984 HAD PROVED TO BE EFFECTIVE IN GIVING PROMPT RELIEF TO THE ACCIDENT VICTIMS IN THE REMOTE AREAS, INSPITE OF TRAFFIC CONGESTIONS EN ROUTE.

"WE KNOW THAT THE AAMC SERVICE WILL BE REVIEWED AFTER A YEAR'S TIME. BUT EVEN AT THIS JUNCTURE, THE PUBLIC RESPONSE TO AND CONFIDENCE IN THIS SERVICE IS FAVOURABLE ENOUGH FOR US TO URGE THE ADMINISTRATION TO LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF INCREASING ITS NUMBER."

SHE SAID MANY OF THE FEEDBACK ALSO URGED THAT AIR-CONDITIONING SHOULD BE PROVIDED IN THE AMBULANCES, AND THE GROUP WAS PLEASED TO LEARN THAT THIS WAS ALREADY AN ESTABLISHED GOVERNMENT POLICY BUT WOULD LIKE THE PROCESS TO BE SPEEDED UP.

ON STAFF TRAINING, DR IP SAID IN 1979, DUE TO FINANCIAL STRINGENCY AND LIMITATION ON STAFF RESOURCES, TRAINING WAS REDUCED FROM 14 TO ONLY EIGHT WEEKS.

HOWEVER, THE GROUP WAS PLEASED TO LEARN THAT THE STEERING COMMITTEE ON AMBULANCE SERVICE WHICH OVERSAW THE HORU REPORT RECOMMENDED THAT THE TRAINING OF AMBULANCEMEN SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO 24 WEEKS AND THAT THE MINIMUM TRAINING AMBULANCEMEN RECEIVED WILL BE INCREASED.

"THE MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL HAS REPEATEDLY STRESSED TO US THE IMPORTANCE OF BETTER AND PROPER TRAINING OF THE AMBULANCEMEN AND THIS RECOMMENDATION SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED BY THE ADMINISTRATION WITHOUT HESITATION," SHE SAID.

THE GROUP ALSO CONSIDERED THE FEASIBILITY OF SETTING UP A SMALL PARAMEDIC TEAM IN HONG KONG TO SERVE REMOTE AREAS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND THAT THE NUMBER OF MOBILE CASUALTY TREATMENT CENTRES (MCTC) SHOULD BE INCREASED FROM ONE TO THREE SUCH THAT ONE EACH WOULD SERVE THE HK, KOWLOON AND THE NT.

ON NEW MEASURES, DR IP SAID THE GROUP WAS CONVINCED THAT TWO WAY DIRECT COMMUNICATION SHOULD BE SET UP BETWEEN THE AMBULANCE AND THE ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OF THE HOSPITAL AS SUCH DIRECT COMMUNICATION WAS VITAL IN MATTERS OF EMERGENCY.

/THE GROUP

THE GROUP ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE OCCURRENCE OF ABUSE OF THE AMBULANCE SERVICE MUST BE LOOKED INTO AND THAT THE LAW SHOULD BE REVIEWED IN ORDER TO NARROW DOWN THE SCOPE OF THE AMBULANCE SERVICE.

ON PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION, DR IP SAID THE GOVERNMENT AND THE HONG KONG CHAPTER OF THE AMBULANCE SERVICE INSTITUTE SHOULD ASSIST IN SETTING UP STRUCTURAL COURSES TO FACILITATE AMBULANCE STAFF TO ATTAIN PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS.

SHE SAID THE TRAINING OF AMBULANCE IN HONG KONG WAS UNDERTAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT WHICH ALSO UNDERTOOK TO ASSESS AND APPROVE OF ITS OWN STANDARD OF TRAINING.

"IT IS ADMITTED THAT SUCH STANDARD WAX AND WANES UNDER FINANCIAL STRINGENCY AND LIMITATION OF STAFF RESOURCES. IT IS ABOUT TIME THAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER AN INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF THE COMPETENCE OF OUR AMBULANCE PERSONNEL," SHE SAID.

IN CONCLUSION, DR IP SAID IN 1986 THERE WERE 365,574 CALLS FOR AMBULANCE SERVICE AND LIVES WERE SAVED WITH THE HELP OF AMBULANCEMEN.

"THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT THEIR SERVICE IS INVALUABLE AND EVERY EFFECT MUST BE MADE TO ENSURE THAT NO LIFE IS LOST FOR WANT OF SPEEDY MEDICAL CARE.

"WE HOPE THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WILL TAKE ACTION TO IMPLEMENT OUR SUGGESTIONS (AND THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE HORU REPORT) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE," SHE ADDED.

SHE ALSO SAID TODAY'S DEBATE ON AMBULANCE SERVICE WAS A SMALL PART OF EMERGENCY SERVICE AS IT DEALT WITH PRE-HOSPITAL PART OF CRITICAL CARE.

"MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE BROADER ASPECT OF EMERGENCY SERVICE IN THE ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OF HOSPITALS SHOULD BE SERIOUSLY LOOKED INTO, IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE MORE EFFECTIVE AND RATIONAL EMERGENCY SERVICE OVER THE TERRITORY.

"AS SUCH, I URGE THAT THE CONCERN OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION TO REQUIRE THE MOST SENIOR DOCTOR IN THE A AND E DEPARTMENT OF THE HOSPITAL TO HAVE A MINIMUM OF 5 YEARS EXPERIENCE AND PREFERABLY IN THE A AND E DEPARTMENT BE IMPLEMENTED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE," DR IP ADDED.

CALL TO STRENGTHEN AMBULANCE SERVICE

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR PROFESSOR THE HON POON CHUNG-KWONG TODAY (WEDNESDAY) URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO STRENGTHEN THE AMBULANCE SERVICE IN HONG KONG.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER TO PROVIDE BETTER EQUIPPED AMBULANCES, A BETTER TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR AMBULANCE STAFF AND AN IMPROVED COMMUNICATION SYSTEM BETWEEN AMBULANCE AND HOSPITAL.

PROF. POON WAS SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON AMBULANCE SERVICE.

HE SAID HE HAD CONSULTED HIS MEDICAL COLLEAGUES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG AND HE WAS OF THE OPINION THAT THE EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES IN AN AMBULANCE VAN WERE INADEQUATE AND SO WAS THE TRAINING OF THE AMBULANCE CREW.

HE ALSO SAID HE FELT VERY STRONGLY THAT THE VAN SHOULD HAVE REASONABLY SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT AND A CREW WHO KNEW HOW TO USE IT.

THERE SHOULD BE A BETTER COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE AMBULANCE CREW AND THE DOCTORS IN THE HOSPITAL, HE ADDED.

PROF. POON SAID AMBULANCE SHOULD BE EQUIPPED WITH PORTABLE ELECTROCARDIOGRAM (ECG) MACHINES AND DEFIBRILLATORS.

"IT SHOULD ALSO BE ALSO BE BETTER EQUIPPED IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRANSFER OF NEW BORN BABIES IN ORDER TO REDUCE COLD INJURY AND BREATHING DISORDERS OF THE BABIES.

"THEREFORE, PORTABLE INCUBATORS, MONITORS AND VENTILATORS SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO ENSURE THAT THE VERY SICK BABY IS STABILISED BEFORE AND DURING TRANSPORT TO HOSPITAL," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT ALL AMBULANCES SHOULD BE AIR-CONDITIONED, BECAUSE IT WAS VERY HOT IN SUMMER.

PROF. POON SAID A DISTINCTION SHOULD BE CLEARLY DRAWN BETWEEN EMERGENCY AND ROUTINE AMBULANCE SERVICE. FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN TRANSFERRING CONVALESCENT PATIENTS, AN ORDINARY VAN WOULD SERVE THE PURPOSE ADEQUATELY.

"A FULLY-EQUIPPED AMBULANCE WOULD BE A WASTE OF RESOURCES IN THIS SITUATION. THIS WILL MAXIMISE THE EFFECTIVE USE OF AMBULANCE," HE SAID.

/TURNING TO

TURNING TO THE TRAINING OF AMBULANCE CREW, PROF. POON SAID THE EXISTING LEVEL OF TRAINING WAS CONSIDERED BARELY ADEQUATE TO ENABLE AMBULANCE PERSONNEL TO RECOGNISE THE PATIENT'S CONDITION AND TO RENDER STABILISING TREATMENT ON THE SPOT, INCLUDING RESUSCITATION AND TO CONTINUE SUCH TREATMENT DURING TRANSPORT TO HOSPITAL.

HE SAID IT WAS DESIRABLE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF SOME OF THE STAFF AND THE LEVEL OF TRAINING THEY RECEIVED.

"THEY SHOULD BE TRAINED TO HANDLE CLINICALLY URGENT CONDITIONS SUCH AS HEART RESUSCITATION AND SERIOUS TRAUMA," HE SAID, NOTING THAT THE NUMBER OF PATIENTS REQUIRING HEART-LUNG RESUSCITATION WAS VERY LARGE.

HE SAID TRAINING SHOULD INCLUDE MEASURES TO BE TAKEN IN THE TRANSFER OF NEW BORN BABIES TO HOSPITALS. THERE HAD BEEN GROSS DEFICIENCY OF TRAINED PERSONNEL IN THIS AREA.

TURNING TO COMMUNICATION BETWEEN AMBULANCES AND HOSPITALS, PROF. POON SAID DIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN THE AMBULANCE CREW AND DOCTORS IN AN EMERGENCY WARD MUST BE ESTABLISHED WHILE AN AMBULANCE SERVICE WAS BEING DELIVERED.

HE NOTED THAT IN NORTH AMERICA, FOR EXAMPLE, THERE WAS DIRECT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN AMBULANCE CREW AND HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM DOCTORS. THE CREW WOULD FUNCTION AS NURSE-PRACTITIONERS TO CONDUCT FIRST CONTACT ASSESSMENTS ON THEIR PATIENTS. THE EMERGENCY ROOM DOCTORS WOULD GIVE ORDERS OR ADVICE OVER THE PHONE FOR APPROPRIATE ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN.

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PROBLEMS IN AMBULANCE SERVICES IDENTIFIED

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG SAID THAT THREE PROBLEM AREAS IN AMBULANCE SERVICES WERE MISUSE OF SERVICES, EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE GRADING OF AMBULANCE STAFF.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON AMBULANCE SERVICE, MR TAM SAID THAT "MISUSE" OF AMBULANCE SERVICES HAD TWO MEANINGS, THE FIRST OF WHICH WAS UNLAWFUL USE AND THE SECOND WAS LAWFUL BUT IMPROPER USE.

/HE NOTED

HE NOTED THAT THE FIRE SERVICES ORDINANCE STATED THAT THE DUTIES OF THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT SHALL BE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, TO CONVEY ANY PERSON WHO APPEARED TO NEED PROMPT OR IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION TO A HOSPITAL OR OTHER PLACES WHERE MEDICAL ATTENTION WAS AVAILABLE.

HE SAID LAWFUL BUT IMPROPER USE COULD BE ILLUSTRATED BY A SIMPLE EXAMPLE: A PERSON SPRAINED HIS FINGER DURING A BALL GAME AND CALLED AN AMBULANCE TO CARRY HIM TO A BONE-SETTER.

THIS DID NOT VIOLATE THE LAW BUT JUDGING BY ORDINARY STANDARDS, THAT PERSON HAD MISUSED THE AMBULANCE SERVICE, MR TAM SAID.

"IF THIS SITUATION IS ALLOWED TO CONTINUE UNCHECKED, WILL NOT THE MORALE OF THE AMBULANCEMEN AS PROVIDERS OF EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE BE AFFECTED?" HE QUESTIONED.

TURNING TO NON-EMERGENCY SERVICES, MR TAM SAID THAT ACCORDING TO DATA IN THE REPORT ON AMBULANCE SERVICES, BETWEEN 1975 AND 1985 NON-EMERGENCY CALLS HAD INCREASED PERSISTENTLY BY FIVE TIMES WHEREAS EMERGENCY CALLS HAD JUST MORE THAN DOUBLED DURING THE SAME PERIOD.

"GIVEN THE LIMITED RESOURCES, THE DRASTIC AND RAPID INCREASE OF DEMAND FOR NON-EMERGENCY SERVICES WAS BOUND TO RESULT IN A LOWERING OF THE QUALITY OF EMERGENCY SERVICES," HE SAID.

WITH THE CONTINUING GROWTH OF NON-EMERGENCY SERVICES, THE AMBULANCEMEN WOULD HAVE TO SPEND LESS TIME AND EFFORT ON EMERGENCY SERVICES. THIS MIGHT DAMPEN THE ENTHUSIASM WHICH HAD AT THE OUTSET INSPIRED THEM TO TAKE UP THIS MEANINGFUL CAREER, HE ADDED.

ON THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE GRADING OF AMBULANCE STAFF, MR TAM SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE AMBULANCE SERVICE REPORT HAD CORRECTLY PROPOSED TO CREATE A LARGE NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL AMBULANCE OFFICER POSTS, RUMOUR HAD IT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD AS A CONSEQUENCE DELETE ONE RANK FROM THE NON-OFFICER GRADE.

"IF THIS IS TRUE, IT WILL SERIOUSLY CURTAIL THE LATTER'S PROMOTION PROSPECT AND WOULD DEFINITELY DEPRESS THEIR MORALE," HE SAID. HE HOPED THE GOVERNMENT WOULD GIVE ASSURANCES TO THE RANK AND FILE REGARDING THEIR PROMOTION PROSPECTS.

IN DEALING WITH THE MISUSE OF AMBULANCE SERVICES, MR TAM SAID IT WAS PARAMOUNT TO REVIEW THE ILL-DEFINED AREAS IN THE LAW SO AS TO PLUG THE LOOPHOLE ALLOWING "LAWFUL" MISUSE OF THE SERVICES, AND TO STEP UP INVESTIGATIONS INTO AND PROSECUTIONS OF UNLAWFUL USE OF THE SERVICES.

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AS TO NON-EMERGENCY SERVICES, HE SAID THE HOSPITALS SHOULD CONSIDER THE USE OF MORE ECONOMICAL WAYS OF TRANSPORTING PATIENTS, SUCH AS USING VEHICLES SIMILAR TO THE "REHABUS" TO CONVEY LESS SERIOUS CASES.

"THEIR CO-ORDINATION WITH THE AMBULANCE COMMAND CENTRE SHOULD ALSO BE IMPROVED BY ARRANGING PRE-BOOKED RUNS IN SUCH A WAY THAT MORE PATIENTS MAY BE CARRIED IN ONE JOURNEY."

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BILL TO SET UP THIRD UNIVERSITY INTRODUCED
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THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BILL 1987 PROVIDES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND INCORPORATION OF THE THIRD UNIVERSITY, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON MICHELANGELO PAGLIARI, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR PAGLIARI SAID IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE NEW UNIVERSITY TO BE INCORPORATED AS A LEGAL ENTITY SO THAT IT COULD TAKE ACTION WITH DUE LEGAL AUTHORITY.

HE SAID IT WAS THE ADVICE OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY THAT THE LEGISLATION SHOULD PROVIDE A BALANCED FRAMEWORK FOR THE EFFICIENT FUNCTIONING OF A MODERN PUBLICLY-FUNDED TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY THAT WOULD ALLOW FOR THE AUTONOMY OF THE UNIVERSITY ITSELF AND FOR THE ACADEMIC FREEDOM OF ITS TEACHING AND RESEARCH STAFF.

"TO ACHIEVE THIS BALANCE", MR PAGLIARI SAID, "IT REQUIRES A UNIVERSITY COUNCIL AS THE CENTRAL GOVERNING BODY WITH SOLE RESPONSIBILITY FOR STRATEGIC PLANS TO UNDERPIN ACADEMIC DECISIONS; A SENATE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR REGULATING THE ACADEMIC CONTENTS AND STANDARDS OF THE UNIVERSITY; AND A VICE-CHANCELLOR WHO IS RECOGNISED NOT ONLY AS THE ACADEMIC LEADER BUT ALSO AS THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE UNIVERSITY."

MR PAGLIARI FURTHER EXPLAINED THAT THE BILL SET OUT THE OBJECTS OF THE UNIVERSITY WHICH WERE TO PROVIDE FOR TEACHING AND RESEARCH, PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELDS OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS STUDIES.

/THE BILL

THE BILL ALSO PROVIDED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COURT, THE COUNCIL, THE SENATE, THE FACULTIES AND SCHOOLS AND THE CONVOCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY, HE SAID.

"SINCE IT IS INTENDED THAT THE NEW UNIVERSITY WILL PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN TECHNOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, EXPLICIT PROVISIONS HAVE BEEN INCLUDED ENABLING THE UNIVERSITY TO PROVIDE ADVISORY, CONSULTANCY, RESEARCH AND OTHER RELATED SERVICES AND TO ENTER INTO PARTNERSHIPS AND JOINT VENTURES.

"IT IS HOPED THAT THESE POWERS WILL ENABLE THE UNIVERSITY TO UNDERTAKE MORE CONTRACT RESEARCH IN COLLABORATION WITH HONG KONG'S INDUSTRY AND TO ACT AS AN EFFECTIVE CHANNEL IN TRANSLATING ADVANCED TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS INTO OUR INDUSTRIAL FABRIC.

"THE EARLY ENACTMENT OF THIS BILL REPRESENTS NOT ONLY AN IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD IN BRINGING THE NEW HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INTO BEING, IT ALSO SERVES TO DEMONSTRATE OUR COMMITMENT TO MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF OUR ECONOMY AND THE GROWING ASPIRATIONS OF OUR YOUNGER GENERATION FOR MORE BETTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION," HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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COVERAGE OF INSOLVENCY FUND TO BE EXTENDED

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THE PROTECTION OF WAGES ON INSOLVENCY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 PROPOSES TO EXTEND THE PROTECTION AFFORDED BY THAT ORDINANCE TO INCLUDE UP TO SEVEN DAYS WAGES IN LIEU OF NOTICE OR \$2,000 WHICHEVER IS LESS, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON MICHAENGELLO PAGLIARI, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR PAGLIARI SAID IT ALSO PROVIDED FOR THE COUNCIL TO VARY BY RESOLUTION THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF WAGES IN LIEU OF NOTICE PAID OUT OF THE PROTECTION OF WAGES ON INSOLVENCY FUND TO AN APPLICANT.

HE SAID THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS ALLOWED EMPLOYEES TO CLAIM WAGES DUE TO THEM BECAUSE OF THEIR EMPLOYER'S INSOLVENCY FROM THE FUND UP TO FOUR MONTHS' WAGES OR \$8,000 WHICHEVER WAS THE LESS.

/"THESE LIMITS

"THESE LIMITS WERE SET TO CONFORM WITH LIMITS LAID DOWN IN THE BANKRUPTCY AND COMPANIES ORDINANCES WHICH PROVIDE THAT ARREARS OF WAGES UP TO THESE AMOUNTS SHALL RECEIVE PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT AS DEBTS HAVING PRIORITY OVER OTHER CREDITORS' CLAIMS, IN THE EVENT OF AN EMPLOYER'S BANKRUPTCY," HE ADDED.

MR PAGLIARI ALSO SAID THE EFFECT OF THE PROTECTION OF WAGES ON INSOLVENCY ORDINANCE PASSED IN 1985 WAS TO REMOVE THE WORKER FROM THE LEGAL ARENA IN WHICH CLAIMS ON A BANKRUPT EMPLOYER WERE SETTLED.

HE SAID THE EMPLOYEE NEEDED ONLY TO APPROACH THE FUND TO RECEIVE THE WAGES DUE TO HIM, AND THE FUND WOULD PURSUE THE EMPLOYER TO RECOVER THE AMOUNT DUE.

"IF THE FUND FAILED TO DO SO, IT WOULD CARRY THE LOSS, NOT THE EMPLOYEE FOR WHOM SUCH A LOSS MIGHT HAVE BEEN VERY SERIOUS INDEED," HE ADDED.

MR PAGLIARI SAID THE FUND PAID OUT \$13.5 MILLION TO 5,890 EMPLOYEES AND \$15 MILLION TO 5,813 EMPLOYEES IN ITS FIRST AND SECOND YEAR RESPECTIVELY.

HE SAID THE FUND WAS FINANCED BY A LEVY OF \$100 PER ANNUM ON BUSINESS REGISTRATIONS AND ITS SIZE, THE AMOUNT AVAILABLE TO ASSIST WORKERS, HAD INCREASED FROM \$39.5 MILLION AT THE END OF ITS FIRST YEAR OF OPERATION TO \$68.1 MILLION AS AT MARCH 31, 1987.

HE ALSO SAID THE FUND WAS PROJECTED TO RISE TO \$83.1 MILLION BY THE END OF THE CURRENT YEAR'S ACTIVITY, ASSUMING THAT THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT WAS INTRODUCED ON AUGUST 1 THIS YEAR.

"THE OPPORTUNITY HAS ALSO BEEN TAKEN TO REVIEW OTHER ASPECTS OF THE ORDINANCE AFTER ITS FIRST TWO YEARS OF OPERATION AS A RESULT OF WHICH TWO AMENDMENTS ARE CONTAINED IN THE BILL," MR PAGLIARI SAID.

"THE FIRST OF THESE REMOVES THE INFLEXIBILITY OF REQUIRING VARIOUS FORMS TO BE PRESCRIBED BY REGULATION AND PERMITS THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR TO APPROVE THE FORMS USED.

"THE SECOND AMENDS THE BANKRUPTCY ORDINANCE AND THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE TO REMOVE AN INCONSISTENCY WITH THE PROTECTION OF WAGES ON INSOLVENCY ORDINANCE WHICH ARISES BECAUSE OF THE TIME IT TAKES TO PRESENT WINDING UP OR BANKRUPTCY PETITIONS."

HE SAID BOTH AMENDMENTS WOULD HELP ENSURE THE EFFICIENT OPERATION OF THE FUND.

MR PAGLIARI

MR PAGLIARI SAID THERE WERE THOSE WHO WOULD HAVE THE AMOUNT OF WAGES IN LIEU OF NOTICE, WHICH THIS BILL WOULD PROTECT, INCREASED TO A MONTH'S WAGES OR \$2,000; AND THOSE WHO WOULD SEE OTHER WORKERS' BENEFITS, SUCH AS SEVERANCE PAY AND HOLIDAY PAY, ALSO BROUGHT UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE FUND.

"THESE ARE ALL WORTHY AIMS BUT HONG KONG'S SUCCESS DERIVES FROM A COMBINATION OF INITIATIVE AND PRUDENCE; TO KNOW ONE'S GOAL BUT NOT TO LEAVE ONESELF EXTENDED AND VULNERABLE IN THE PURSUIT OF IT," HE SAID.

"ALTHOUGH THE SIZE OF THE FUND CONTINUES TO GROW, IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT IT HAS ONLY BEEN IN OPERATION FOR TWO YEARS AND THERE ARE NO GUARANTEES THAT THIS TREND WILL CONTINUE."

MR PAGLIARI SAID A DOWNTURN IN THE ECONOMY RESULTING IN A GREATER NUMBER OF INSOLVENCIES OR FEWER THAN FORECAST COMPANY REGISTRATIONS COULD PUT SEVERE PRESSURE ON THE FUND'S RESOURCES.

"IT IS IMPORTANT, THEREFORE, THAT THE FUND BUILDS UP A SOUND RESERVE DURING THE ECONOMY'S GOOD YEARS, SO THAT IT CAN PROTECT WORKERS' INTERESTS WHEN TIMES ARE HARD," HE SAID.

MR PAGLIARI ALSO SAID THE SUMS AVAILABLE IN THE FUND AND THE EFFECT OF THIS MEASURE ON THE FUND WOULD BE KEPT UNDER REVIEW, AND FURTHER EXTENSIONS OF THE COVERAGE OF THE FUND WOULD BE INTRODUCED AS CIRCUMSTANCES PERMITTED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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GOVERNMENT TO TOP UP IMPROVEMENT COST

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THE COST-SHARING ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE NINE AIDED SCHOOLS TO INSTALL NOISE ABATEMENT MEASURES DURING THE SUMMER VACATION IS IN LINE WITH THE LONG ESTABLISHED FUNDING POLICY REGARDING THE CAPITAL COSTS OF BUILDINGS AND IMPROVEMENTS FOR AIDED SCHOOLS, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID NENDICK, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON DANIEL TSE, MR NENDICK SAID THE COMMITMENT OF \$16.4 MILLION BY THE GOVERNMENT WAS INTENDED TO MEET 80 PER CENT OF THE COST OF THE IMPROVEMENT WORKS AND THE SCHOOL SPONSORS WOULD BE ASKED TO CONTRIBUTE THE REMAINING 20 PER CENT.

/ "THIS 80:20

"THIS 80:20 SPLIT IS IN LINE WITH LONG ESTABLISHED FUNDING POLICY," STRESSED MR NENDICK.

"I UNDERSTAND FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION THAT TWO OF THE NINE SCHOOLS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE CAPITAL COSTS OF THE NOISE ADATMENT WORKS WHILE THE REMAINING SEVEN WILL ONLY BE ABLE TO MAKE A SMALL CONTRIBUTION, AMOUNTING TO \$270,000," HE ADDED.

THE SHORTFALL OF SOME \$3.8 MILLION WILL HAVE TO BE MET BY INCREASING THE GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY, SAID MR NENDICK.

"THIS IS BEING EXAMINED URGENTLY WITHIN GOVERNMENT AND A SUBMISSION WILL BE MADE TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THIS COUNCIL AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY," HE SAID.

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LAND DEMARCATION BILLS IN THE PIPELINE
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DRAFTING INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE BOUNDARY RECTIFICATION BILL AND THE LAND SURVEY BILL ARE BEING PREPARED, THIS WAS DISCLOSED BY THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, MR GRAHAM BARNES, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON CHENG HON-KWAN, MR BARNES SAID IT WAS DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE PRECISELY WHEN THESE BILLS WOULD BE INTRODUCED INTO THE COUNCIL.

"BUT I WILL ENSURE THAT WE WORK TOWARDS THIS AIM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, OTHER MORE URGENT LEGISLATION NOTWITHSTANDING.

"MEANWHILE, WHILST IT DOES TAKE SOME MONTHS FOR A BOUNDARY TO BE RECTIFIED, I DO NOT THINK THE SITUATION IS CURRENTLY INTOLERABLE," MR BARNES SAID.

HE ADDED THAT A BOUNDARY RECTIFICATION WORKING GROUP WAS FORMED IN MARCH 1986 UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF MR CHARLES YEUNG, AND WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE HEUNG YEE KUK, THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT AND THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION.

ITS REPORT SUBMITTED IN JUNE 1986 HAD BEEN ACCEPTED IN PRINCIPLE AND DRAFTING INSTRUCTIONS WERE ALSO BEING PREPARED.

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FUTURES TRADERS BAN ON COMMISSION TO BE LIFTED

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A BILL SEEKING TO ENABLE THE APPOINTMENT OF COMMODITY FUTURES TRADERS TO THE COMMODITIES TRADING COMMISSION WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE COMMODITIES TRADING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID NENDICK, SAID THE ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERED THE STRINGENT RESTRICTION ON MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION AND COMMITTEES AND ON APPOINTED AUDITORS UNDER SECTION 12(1) OF THE ORDINANCE UNNECESSARY.

MR NENDICK ALSO SAID THE MAIN FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMODITIES TRADING COMMISSION WERE TO ADVISE ON MATTERS RELATING TO TRADING IN COMMODITY FUTURES CONTRACTS, TO ENFORCE THE PROVISIONS OF THE ORDINANCE, AND TO SUPERVISE THE ACTIVITIES OF THE HONG KONG FUTURES EXCHANGE LTD.

"GIVEN THE SPECIALISED NATURE AND INCREASING COMPLEXITY OF COMMODITY FUTURES, THE APPOINTMENT TO THE COMMISSION OF PERSONS ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN FUTURES TRADING WOULD BE OF BENEFIT TO THE COMMISSION AND TO THE PROPER DEVELOPMENT OF THE FUTURES INDUSTRY," HE SAID.

"HOWEVER, UNDER SECTION 12(1) OF THE ORDINANCE, NO PERSON WHO HAS BEEN APPOINTED UNDER OR WHO IS EMPLOYED IN CARRYING OUT THE PROVISIONS OF THE ORDINANCE SHALL DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY EFFECT ANY TRADING IN COMMODITY FUTURES CONTRACTS OR PARTICIPATE IN ANY OPERATION OR TRANSACTION RELATING TO TRADING IN COMMODITY FUTURES CONTRACTS," MR NENDICK ADDED.

"THIS HAS CREATED DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING SUITABLE PERSONS TO SERVE ON THE COMMISSION," HE SAID.

WHILE NOTING THAT THERE WAS NO SUCH RESTRICTION RELATING TO THE SECURITIES COMMISSION IN THE SECURITIES ORDINANCE, HE SAID THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT WOULD ENABLE THE APPOINTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL FUTURES TRADERS TO THE COMMISSION.

"HOWEVER, PUBLIC OFFICERS EMPLOYED IN CARRYING OUT THE PROVISIONS OF THE ORDINANCE WILL CONTINUE TO BE PROHIBITED FROM TRADING IN COMMODITY FUTURES CONTRACTS." HE ADDED.

"GIVEN THE NATURE OF THE COMMODITIES MARKET AND BASED ON THE COMMISSION'S EXPERIENCE, MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION ARE UNLIKELY TO BE PRIVY TO PRICE-SENSITIVE INFORMATION BY VIRTUE OF THEIR OFFICIAL POSITION," HE SAID.

MR NENDICK ALSO SAID THE SAME APPLIED TO MEMBERS OF OTHER COMMITTEES ESTABLISHED UNDER THE ORDINANCE AND AUDITORS APPOINTED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR COMMODITIES TRADING TO AUDIT DEALERS' ACCOUNTS, WHO WERE ALSO COVERED BY SECTION 12(1).

"AS A SAFEGUARD AGAINST ANY IMPROPER USE OF INFORMATION, IT IS ALSO PROPOSED THAT SECTION 11(1) OF THE ORDINANCE BE AMENDED TO PROHIBIT ANY PERSON FROM USING INFORMATION OBTAINED IN THE COURSE OF EXERCISING ANY DUTIES OR FUNCTIONS UNDER THE ORDINANCE FOR GAIN OR AVOIDANCE OF LOSS, EITHER ON HIS OWN BEHALF OR ON BEHALF OF ANOTHER," HE ADDED.

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COUNCILLORS URGED TO REPORT INTIMIDATION TO POLICE

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ANY COUNCILLORS SUBJECT TO INTIMIDATION OR ASSAULT IN THE COURSE OF THEIR DUTIES SHOULD REPORT THE FACT IMMEDIATELY TO THE POLICE, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON POON CHI-FAI, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE POLICE WOULD CONDUCT A VIGOROUS INVESTIGATION WITH A VIEW TO PROSECUTING THE OFFENDERS IN COURT.

"AS REGARDS PREVENTING SUCH INCIDENTS OF INTIMIDATION OR ASSAULT, THANKFULLY THE NUMBER OF INCIDENTS INVOLVING MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE AND REGIONAL COUNCILS AND THE DISTRICT BOARDS IS VERY SMALL," MR JEAFFRESON SAID.

HE SAID THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE THAT THE THREE INCIDENTS WHICH HAD CAUGHT PUBLIC ATTENTION IN THE LAST TWO YEARS IN FACT RESULTED FROM COUNCILLORS FULFILLING THEIR PUBLIC DUTIES.

"BUT IF WE DO FIND EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY IN FUTURE, WE WILL HAVE TO SEE WHAT OTHER STEPS CAN BE TAKEN TO PROTECT COUNCILLORS," MR JEAFFRESON ADDED.

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TRIADS RESPONSIBLE FOR 20 PER CENT OF DETECTED BLACKMAIL CASES
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ABOUT 20 PER CENT OF ALL DETECTED BLACKMAIL CASES REPORTED FROM 1984 TO MAY 1987 WERE TRIAD RELATED, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON MRS RITA FAN, MR JEAFFRESON SAID IT COULD BE REASONABLY SURE OF A TRIAD BACKGROUND ONLY IN DETECTED CASES OF BLACKMAIL.

HE POINTED OUT THAT WHERE THE CASE WAS REPORTED BUT NOT DETECTED, IT COULD NOT TELL WHETHER OR NOT TRIADS HAD BEEN INVOLVED.

WITH REGARD TO THE NUMBER OF PROSECUTIONS INSTITUTED BY THE POLICE, MR JEAFFRESON SAID VIRTUALLY ALL DETECTED CASES WERE PROSECUTED. IN ADDITION, THERE WOULD BE OTHER CASES WHERE BLACKMAIL WAS SUBORDINATE TO ANOTHER CHARGE SUCH AS WOUNDING OR ASSAULT.

"IN SUCH CASES ONLY THE MORE SERIOUS CHARGE WILL BE REFLECTED STATISTICALLY," HE ADDED.

MR JEAFFRESON SAID DETAILED STATISTICS OF THE NUMBER OF CONVICTIONS AND THE SENTENCES IMPOSED WERE NOT AVAILABLE PRIOR TO JULY 1986 WHEN THE NEW STANDARD LAW AND ORDER STATISTICAL SYSTEM WAS INTRODUCED.

ACCORDING TO THE JUDICIARY'S STATISTICS, HE SAID THAT THERE WERE 215 OFFENDERS CONVICTED FROM A TOTAL OF 383 WHO WERE ON PRINCIPAL CHARGES OF BLACKMAIL FROM JULY 1986 TO MARCH 1987, REPRESENTING A CONVICTION RATE OF 56.1 PER CENT.

HE NOTED THAT THE NUMBER OF OFFENDERS CONVICTED AND THOSE WHO WERE SENTENCED DURING THE PERIOD WAS DIFFERENT BECAUSE SOME OF THOSE CONVICTED OF BLACKMAIL AS THE PRINCIPAL CHARGE IN FACT RECEIVED A LONGER SENTENCE FOR A SUBORDINATE CHARGE OF, SAY WOUNDING. THUS THE BLACKMAIL SENTENCE WOULD NOT BE REFLECTED IN THE STATISTICS, HE ADDED.

STEPS TO IMPROVE SAFETY OF HEAVY VEHICLES OUTLINED

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TRAFFIC ACCIDENT STATISTICS INDICATE THAT THE ACCIDENT RATE OF LORRIES AND CONTAINER TRUCKS IS THE LOWEST AMONG THE VARIOUS TYPES OF MOTOR VEHICLES BOTH IN TERMS OF DISTANCE TRAVELLED AND THE NUMBER OF ACCIDENTS PER VEHICLE, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI, MR LEUNG SAID DESPITE THE RELATIVELY GOOD SAFETY RECORD, THE GOVERNMENT WAS BY NO MEANS COMPLACENT AND HAD TAKEN VARIOUS STEPS TO FURTHER IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF THESE VEHICLES.

"THESE FALL INTO TWO MAIN ASPECTS, CONTROL AND EDUCATION," HE SAID.

ON CONTROL AND ENFORCEMENT, HE SAID WHILE POLICE ENFORCEMENT MEASURES WERE REGULARLY TAKEN AGAINST UNSAFE LOADING AND OVERLOADING, INSTALLATION OF ROADSIDE WEIGHBRIDGES AT KEY POINTS OF THE ROAD NETWORK WAS BEING CONSIDERED TO TIGHTEN UP CONTROL AGAINST OVERLOADING.

NOTING THAT GOODS VEHICLES MANUFACTURED BEFORE 1978 WERE AT PRESENT REQUIRED TO UNDERGO ANNUAL ROAD-WORTHINESS INSPECTION, MR LEUNG SAID COMPULSORY ANNUAL INSPECTION WOULD BE EXTENDED TO ALL GOODS VEHICLES BY 1990 AFTER THE OPENING OF KOWLOON BAY VEHICLE EXAMINATION CENTRE.

"TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF CONTAINER TRUCKS, LEGISLATION WAS ENACTED IN 1984 REQUIRING THE DRIVERS OF ALL ARTICULATED VEHICLES TO HAVE A LICENCE APPROPRIATE FOR THAT CLASS OF VEHICLE," HE SAID.

"TO MINIMISE THE RISK OF INJURY IN ACCIDENTS, CONSIDERATION IS NOW BEING GIVEN TO REQUIRE MORE HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES TO BE FITTED WITH GUARDS AT THE SIDES AND REAR OF THE VEHICLE TO PREVENT PEDESTRAINS AND SMALLER VEHICLES GOING UNDERNEATH THESE VEHICLES IN ACCIDENTS."

ON EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY, MR LEUNG SAID THE ROAD USERS' CODE TO BE PUBLISHED LATER THIS MONTH WOULD CONTAIN A SECTION ADVISING GOODS VEHICLE DRIVERS SAFE PRACTICES IN DRIVING, LOADING AND OPERATING GOODS VEHICLES.

HE ALSO SAID A PROVISIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE LOADING OF GOODS VEHICLES HAD BEEN COMPILED IN CONSULTATION WITH GOODS VEHICLE OPERATORS AND ISSUED LAST MONTH FOR WIDER COMMENT AND CONSULTATION.

MR LEUNG SAID THE CODE, WHICH EXPLAINED AND ILLUSTRATED SAFE PRACTICES FOR THE LOADING AND UNLOADING OF GOODS VEHICLES AND THE SAFE CARRIAGE OF PERSONS ON THESE VEHICLES, WAS INTENDED TO BE PUBLISHED AT THE BEGINNING OF NEXT YEAR AFTER CONSULTATION HAD BEEN COMPLETED.

EMERGENCY WARDS ADEQUATELY COVERED

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ALL ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS OF HOSPITALS AND CLINICS HAVE ALREADY BEEN UNDER THE CONSTANT SUPERVISION OF A SENIOR DOCTOR OF AT LEAST FIVE YEARS' EXPERIENCE IN HOSPITAL PRACTICE, PREFERABLY IN AN ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT, IN THE DAY SHIFTS, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP, MR CHAMBERS SAID THIS FOLLOWED A RECOMMENDATION MADE BY THE MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND OMELCO STANDING PANEL ON HEALTH SERVICES IN JANUARY THIS YEAR.

FULL COVERAGE IN THE NIGHT SHIFTS WAS NOT YET POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF MANPOWER SHORTAGES, HE SAID.

"HOWEVER, THIS SHOULD NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE STANDARD OF EMERGENCY CARE AS SENIOR STAFF ARE READILY AVAILABLE FOR CONSULTATION WHEN REQUIRED.

"WE ARE WORKING TOWARDS FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATION AND AS SOON AS MORE SENIOR DOCTORS ARE AVAILABLE, THE NIGHT SHIFTS WILL ALSO BE COVERED," MR CHAMBERS ADDED.

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ACCIDENTS ON PRIVATE ROADS NOT WIDESPREAD

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THERE IS AT PRESENT NO INDICATION THAT TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS INVOLVING PERSONAL INJURY ON PRIVATE ROADS AND CAR PARKS ARE OCCURRING ON A LARGE SCALE, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG, MR LEUNG SAID THE GOVERNMENT ONLY MAINTAINED COMPLETE AND SEPARATE RECORDS ON TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS WHICH OCCURRED ON PUBLIC ROADS.

"IT WILL TAKE A LONG TIME AND WILL INVOLVE CONSIDERABLE MANPOWER TO IDENTIFY FROM THE POLICE RECORDS TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS WHICH OCCURRED ON PRIVATE ROADS AND CAR PARKS DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

"IT IS PROBABLY NOT COST-EFFECTIVE TO CONDUCT SUCH A RESEARCH," HE SAID.

MR LEUNG ALSO POINTED OUT THAT IF A PERSON WAS INJURED AS A RESULT OF A DRIVER'S NEGLIGENCE HE MIGHT SUE THAT DRIVER FOR DAMAGES. "THIS RIGHT EXISTS REGARDLESS OF WHERE THE ACCIDENT OCCURS," HE SAID.

"IF HOWEVER, THE ACCIDENT OCCURS ON A PRIVATE ROAD OR IN A PRIVATE CAR PARK AND THE DRIVER'S POLICY OF INSURANCE DOES NOT COVER HIM, HIS ONLY AVENUE FOR COMPENSATION IS TO RECOVER THE DAMAGES AWARDED BY THE COURT FROM THE DRIVER," HE ADDED.

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LORD GLENARTHUR REPLACES RENTON
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LORD GLENARTHUR HAS TAKEN OVER FROM MR TIMOTHY RENTON AS THE MINISTER OF STATE AT THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR HONG KONG.

COMMENTING ON HIS APPOINTMENT, LORD GLENARTHUR SAID HE WAS DELIGHTED TO BE TAKING UP THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HONG KONG.

LORD GLENARTHUR NOTED THAT HE WAS VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS RESPONSIBILITY AT THE PRESENT VERY SENSITIVE TIME IN HONG KONG'S HISTORY, AND LOOKED FORWARD TO VISITING HONG KONG AND MAKING DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE PEOPLE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

THE FOLLOWING ARE BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON LORD GLENARTHUR:

LORD GLENARTHUR WAS APPOINTED MINISTER OF STATE AT THE SCOTTISH OFFICE ON SEPTEMBER 9, 1986. HE HAD SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK, THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS AND TOURISM. HE ALSO ACTED AS DEPUTY TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND AND IS SCOTTISH OFFICE SPOKESMAN IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

PREVIOUSLY, LORD GLENARTHUR WAS PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE AT THE HOME OFFICE WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRISONS AND THE FIRE SERVICES IN ENGLAND AND WALES, AND FOR UK RELATIONS WITH THE CHANNEL ISLANDS AND THE ISLE OF MAN. BESIDES BEING THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL HOME OFFICE MATTERS IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS HE WAS ALSO A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN ON DEFENCE IN THE LORDS.

SIMON MARK ARTHUR, 4TH BARON GLENARTHUR, WAS BORN IN 1944 AND SUCCEEDED TO THE TITLE IN 1976. HE WAS EDUCATED AT ETON AND SERVED IN THE 10TH ROYAL HUSSARS (PRINCE OF WALES'S OWN) FROM 1963 TO 1975 WHEN HE RETIRED AS A MAJOR. FROM 1976 TO 1982 HE WAS A PROFESSIONAL HELICOPTER PILOT WITH BRITISH AIRWAYS HELICOPTERS, AND IS A MEMBER OF THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF TRANSPORT.

HE JOINED THE GOVERNMENT WHIPS OFFICE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS IN JUNE 1982 AND WAS A SPOKESMAN ON EMPLOYMENT, DEFENCE, INDUSTRY, HOME AFFAIRS AND THE TREASURY. HE WAS PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY FROM 1983 UNTIL HE MOVED TO THE HOME OFFICE IN MARCH 1985.

LORD GLENARTHUR AND HIS WIFE SUSAN HAVE A SON AND A DAUGHTER AND LIVE NEAR BANCHORY.

HIS RECREATIONS INCLUDE FIELD SPORTS, FLYING AND GARDENING.

UNEMPLOYMENT, UNDEREMPLOYMENT STATISTICS RELEASED

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THE UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION REMAINED STABLE AT A LOW LEVEL WHILE THE UNDEREMPLOYMENT SITUATION CONTINUED TO IMPROVE DURING FEBRUARY TO APRIL THIS YEAR WHEN COMPARED WITH THE THREE MONTH PERIOD ENDING JANUARY 1987, ACCORDING TO THE LATEST LABOUR FORCE STATISTICS RELEASED TODAY (TUESDAY) BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

THE SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR FEBRUARY - APRIL 1987 WAS 2 PER CENT, WHICH WAS THE SAME AS THAT FOR THE THREE MONTH PERIOD ENDING JANUARY 1987. THE RATE FOR FEBRUARY - APRIL 1986 WAS 3.2 PER CENT.

THE DECREASE OF 1.2 PERCENTAGE POINTS BELOW THE SAME PERIOD A YEAR EARLIER IS STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT.

THE NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED PERSONS IN FEBRUARY - APRIL 1987 WAS ESTIMATED AT 54,100, LESS THAN THE FIGURES OF 54,600 FOR THE THREE MONTH PERIOD ENDING JANUARY 1987 AND OF 85,400 FOR THE THREE MONTH PERIOD ENDING APRIL 1986.

THE UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATE FOR FEBRUARY - APRIL 1987 WAS 0.9 PER CENT, WHICH COMPARES WITH 1.2 PER CENT FOR THE THREE MONTH PERIOD ENDING JANUARY 1987. THE RATE FOR FEBRUARY - APRIL 1986 WAS 2.2 PER CENT.

THE DECREASES OF 0.3 PERCENTAGE POINT BELOW THE PREVIOUS THREE MONTH PERIOD AND OF 1.3 PERCENTAGE POINTS BELOW THE SAME PERIOD A YEAR EARLIER ARE BOTH STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT.

THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF UNDEREMPLOYED PERSONS FOR FEBRUARY - APRIL 1987 WAS 24,800, LESS THAN THE FIGURES OF 31,700 FOR THE THREE MONTH PERIOD ENDING JANUARY 1987 AND OF 57,700 FOR THE THREE MONTH PERIOD ENDING APRIL 1986.

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

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

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

THE PROVISIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED) FOR MARCH - MAY 1987 WAS 1.6 PER CENT AND THE PROVISIONAL UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATE WAS 1.1 PER CENT. (THE UNADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR FEBRUARY -APRIL 1987 WAS 1.8 PER CENT.)

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

THIS SURVEY COVERS A QUARTERLY SAMPLE OF SOME 14,000 HOUSEHOLDS OR 51,000 PERSONS, SELECTED SCIENTIFICALLY TO REPRESENT THE LAND-BASED CIVILIAN NON-INSTITUTIONAL POPULATION IN HONG KONG. PERSONAL AND LABOUR FORCE DATA WERE OBTAINED IN THE SURVEY BY INTERVIEWING EACH INDIVIDUAL MEMBER AGED 15 AND ABOVE IN THE HOUSEHOLDS SAMPLED. IN THE SURVEY, THE DEFINITIONS USED IN MEASURING UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT FOLLOW CLOSELY THOSE RECOMMENDED BY THE ILO.

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

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HK-SWEDEN TEXTILES PACT SIGNED

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A SPOKESMAN FOR THE TRADE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT A NEW FIVE-YEAR BILATERAL TEXTILES AGREEMENT HAS BEEN INITIALLED BETWEEN HONG KONG AND SWEDEN. THE CURRENT AGREEMENT EXPIRES ON AUGUST 31, 1987.

UNDER THE NEW AGREEMENT THREE CATEGORIES OF CLOTHING PRODUCTS (TRACKSUITS, SHORTS AND CORSETS) WHICH ARE CURRENTLY UNDER RESTRAINT WILL BE LIBERALISED AS FROM SEPTEMBER 1, 1987. A FOURTH CATEGORY (BATHING SUITS) WILL BE LIBERALISED IN 1990.

/IN ADDITION,

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IN ADDITION, SOME SPECIFIC ITEMS, FOR EXAMPLE OVERCOATS AND MEN'S SUITS, IN OTHER CATEGORIES WILL BE REMOVED FROM RESTRAINT.

THERE ARE IMPROVEMENTS IN GROWTH RATES AND FLEXIBILITY FOR THE 14 CATEGORIES WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO QUANTITATIVE RESTRICTIONS. THE GROWTH RATES BECOME PROGRESSIVELY HIGHER DURING THE TERM OF THE AGREEMENT.

NEGOTIATIONS ON THE NEW AGREEMENT BEGAN IN HONG KONG ON JUNE 11 AND CONTINUED OVER THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY WEEKEND. THE HONG KONG DELEGATION WAS LED BY THE DIRECTOR OF TRADE, MR MICHAEL SZE. THE SWEDISH DELEGATION WAS LED BY THE ASSISTANT UNDER-SECRETARY, MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MR STANISLAW PATEK.

"THIS IS A BETTER AGREEMENT THAN ITS PREDECESSOR. WHILE I CANNOT WELCOME ANY RESTRICTIONS ON HONG KONG'S EXPORTS, I CERTAINLY DO WELCOME THIS EVIDENCE OF SWEDEN'S MORE LIBERAL POLICY ON TEXTILE TRADE", MR SZE SAID.

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FOCUSING ON DISTRICT BUILDING MANAGEMENT

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BUILDING OWNERS AND TENANTS SHOULD ACTIVELY TAKE PART IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THEIR PROPERTY TO SAFEGUARD THEIR OWN INTERESTS, YAU MA TEI DISTRICT OFFICER, MR AUGUSTINE CHENG SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT A LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF KOWLOON WEST, MR CHENG SAID THE PROBLEM OF MANAGEMENT OF MULTI-STOREY BUILDINGS HAD ALWAYS BEEN A CONCERN FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

"THE CAUSES OF BUILDING DETERIORATION ARE MANY," HE SAID, "BUT A PRIME REASON SEEMS TO LIE IN THE FACT THAT PROPERTY OWNERS DO NOT ALWAYS OBSERVE THE DEEDS OF MUTUAL COVENANT (DMC) WHICH STIPULATE THE OBLIGATIONS IN PROPERTY MANAGEMENT.

"MOREOVER, THEY OFTEN CANNOT AGREE ON A CONSENSUS ABOUT THE COURSE OF ACTION TO TAKE IN MANAGEMENT AND ON THE POOLING OF RESOURCES FOR RENOVATION," HE SAID.

/MR CHENG

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MR CHENG SAID THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT WOULD DETERIORATE WHEN THE BUILDINGS WERE OCCUPIED MOSTLY BY TENANTS WHO WERE NOT INTERESTED IN PROTECTING THE VALUE OF THE PROPERTY.

THERE ARE ABOUT 1,300 PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN THE DISTRICT AND SOME 900 WERE BUILT BEFORE 1965 IN DENSELY POPULATED AREAS.

THESE BUILDINGS HAVE GIVEN RISE TO A HOST OF ENVIRONMENTAL NUISANCES, SUCH AS HEALTH HAZARDS, OBSTRUCTION TO FIRE ESCAPES, ILLEGAL STRUCTURES AND DILAPIDATION OF THE BUILDING STRUCTURE.

A BUILDING MANAGEMENT CO-ORDINATING TEAM WAS SET UP IN THE DISTRICT IN 1985 TO ENHANCE OWNERS' KNOWLEDGE OF BUILDING MANAGEMENT, CO-ORDINATE GOVERNMENT EFFORTS AND CARRY OUT LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION TO EFFECT IMPROVEMENT.

"IN THE TWO YEARS, THE TEAM HAS EFFECTED VARIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL AND SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS TO 65 BUILDINGS WHICH HAD BEEN TARGETTED FOR ATTENTION.

"IT IS GRATIFYING TO NOTE THAT MORE THAN HALF OF THE TEAM'S PROPOSALS WERE IMPLEMENTED. AND ONE OUTSTANDING SUCCESS WAS THAT THE TEAM MANAGED TO RECTIFY SOME 70 ILLEGAL STRUCTURAL DEFECTS TO A BUILDING," MR CHENG SAID.

BESIDES PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO MANAGEMENT BODIES, THE GOVERNMENT ALSO SOUGHT TO AMEND LEGISLATION REGARDING BUILDING MANAGEMENT, HE SAID.

"THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING AMENDING THE MULTI-STOREY BUILDING (OWNERS INCORPORATION) ORDINANCE TO SIMPLIFY THE FORMATION OF AN OWNERS' CORPORATION. THUS 20 PER CENT OF THE OWNERS MAY APPLY TO THE SECRETARY OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION TO FORM AN OWNERS' CORPORATION.

"THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO LAYING DOWN A SET OF GUIDELINES FOR THE DMC TO BE APPLIED TO NON-INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS APPROVED SINCE EARLY 1986.

"THE GUIDELINES SEEK TO PROTECT THE INTEREST OF PROPERTY OWNERS AND STIPULATE VARIOUS MANAGEMENT MATTERS, INCLUDING THE TENURE OF OFFICE OF A MANAGEMENT AGENT APPOINTED BY THE DEVELOPER; THE RESTRICTIONS IN CHARGING FEES; THE LIABILITY IN COLLECTION OF MANAGEMENT FEES; COMPULSORY INSURANCE FOR BUILDINGS AND THE LISTING OF COMMON AREAS," HE SAID.

DISTRICT BOARDS WILL BE CONSULTED ON THE GUIDELINES AND THE AMENDMENTS, HE ADDED.

/TO ENCOURAGE

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TO ENCOURAGE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT WORK, THE DISTRICT OFFICE WAS ORGANISING A LARGE SCALE EDUCATION CAMPAIGN TO DRIVE HOME THE MESSAGE, MR CHENG SAID.

"THE CAMPAIGN, TO BE LAUNCHED FROM JULY 11 TO AUGUST 8, WILL OFFER A SERIES OF ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE PEOPLE'S AWARENESS OF BUILDING MANAGEMENT.

"THERE WILL BE A TWO-WEEK EXHIBITION, A SYMPOSIUM AND SEMINARS TO BE HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH AREA COMMITTEES AND OWNERS' CORPORATION," HE ADDED.

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FISHERMEN COMPLETE NAVIGATION TRAINING

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SEVEN FISHERMEN WERE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AWARDED CERTIFICATES AFTER COMPLETING AN INTENSIVE 3-MONTH FULL-TIME COURSE ON NAVIGATION TRAINING.

THE INTENSIVE COURSE, THE 35TH ORGANISED BY THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT SINCE 1960, PROVIDES FISHERMEN WITH TRAINING ON INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS FOR PREVENTING COLLISIONS AT SEA, KNOWLEDGE ON ADMIRALTY CHARTS, DEAD RECKONING, ACCIDENT PREVENTION, FIRST AID AND USE OF NAVIGATIONAL EQUIPMENT.

SPEAKING AT THE GRADUATION CEREMONY, THE DEPARTMENT'S ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (FISHERIES), DR CHRISTOPHER LEE, SAID THE FISHING INDUSTRY IN HONG KONG WAS NOW UNDERGOING RAPID DEVELOPMENT AND MANY FISHING VESSELS WERE BEING INSTALLED WITH MORE POWERFUL ENGINES AND EQUIPPED WITH MODERN HULL DESIGN, FISHING GEAR AND NAVIGATIONAL EQUIPMENT.

HE SAID: "TO COPE WITH THE OFFSHORE FISHING REQUIREMENTS, THE NAVIGATION TRAINING COURSE IS SPECIALLY DESIGNED TO HELP FISHERMEN NAVIGATE THEIR VESSELS CORRECTLY AND SAFELY TO GOOD FISHING GROUND."

SO FAR, 319 FISHERMEN FROM 35 CLASSES HAVE COMPLETED THE COURSE.

APART FROM NAVIGATION COURSE, THE DEPARTMENT ALSO ORGANISES COURSES ON COXSWAIN TRAINING, ENGINEER TRAINING, RADIO-TELEPHONY AND FISHERIES BUSINESS MANAGEMENT TRAINING FOR FISHERMEN.

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SINO-BRITISH LAND COMMISSION TO MEET

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THE TWO SIDES OF THE SINO-BRITISH LAND COMMISSION HAVE AGREED THAT THE 13TH MEETING OF THE COMMISSION WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY (JUNE 19)

THE MEETING WILL DISCUSS THE AVERAGE COST OF LAND PRODUCTION FOR THE 1987-88 FINANCIAL YEAR.

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DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES DEREGISTERED

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THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING ANNOUNCED THAT THE REGISTRATION OF TWO DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES HAS BEEN REVOKED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AT THEIR OWN REQUESTS UNDER SECTION 31 (2) OF THE BANKING ORDINANCE 1986.

THEY ARE YICK YUEN FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT LIMITED AND SAI SHING INVESTMENT & FINANCE LIMITED.

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KC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETS TOMORROW

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MEMBERS OF THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT BOARD'S ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE WILL MEET TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO DISCUSS THE 1987/88 PROGRAMME AND ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.

THE COMMITTEE HAS BEEN ALLOCATED \$560,000 TO CARRY OUT ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS WHICH INCLUDE \$320,000 TO CONSTRUCT THREE SITTING-OUT AREAS AT CHUN MAN COURT, VALLEY ROAD AND GILLIES AVENUE.

/IN THE

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IN THE MEETING SEVERAL DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS WILL RAISE QUESTIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS MARINE POLLUTION IN THE HUNG HOM SEAFRONT, MUD SEEPAGE AT SUNG KIT STREET NEAR THE TO KWA WAN RECLAMATION, INTERRUPTION OF FLUSH WATER SUPPLY AT WHAMPOA ESTATE AND ODOUR AT A REFUSE COLLECTION POINT IN DUNBAR ROAD.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING AT 2.15 PM TOMORROW IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT OFFICE, 141 KAU PUI LUNG ROAD, TO KWA WAN.

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HAI TAN STREET BUILDING DECLARED DANGEROUS
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THE BUILDING AUTHORITY TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DECLARED A PRE-WAR BUILDING AT 194, HAI TAN STREET, SHAM SHUI PO, TO BE IN A DANGEROUS CONDITION.

THE PRINCIPAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING SURVEYOR SAID RECENT INSPECTION TO THE THREE-STOREY BUILDING SHOWED THAT THE KITCHEN BLOCK AND THE REAR PART OF THE MAIN BUILDING, WHICH WAS CONSTRUCTED WITH REINFORCED CONCRETE FLOORS AND ROOF ON LOAD BEARING WALLS, WERE VERY DILAPIDATED.

THE REINFORCED CONCRETE BEAMS AND LINTELS AT THE KITCHEN BLOCK AND THE REAR PART OF THE MAIN BUILDING ARE BADLY CRACKED. THE STEEL STRUCTS, USED TO SUPPORT THE KITCHEN FLOORS, ARE ALSO HEAVILY CORRODED.

IT IS THEREFORE NECESSARY TO CLOSE AND DEMOLISH THE BUILDING AS THERE IS A RISK OF COLLAPSE OF THE KITCHEN BLOCK AND THE REAR MAIN WALL WHICH ARE BEYOND REASONABLE REPAIR.

A NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A CLOSURE ORDER IN KOWLOON DISTRICT COURT AT 9.30 AM ON JULY 15 WAS POSTED ON THE BUILDING TODAY.

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FISH NURSERY SITE TO LET
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A FISH NURSERY SITE AT SOK KWU WAN, LAMMA ISLAND, IS BEING LET ON SHORT TERM TENANCY BY THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT.

IT HAS AN AREA OF 1,170 SQUARE METRES.

THE TENANCY IS FOR FIVE YEARS, RENEWABLE ANNUALLY AFTERWARDS.

TENDERS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY NOON ON JULY 10.

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TRAFFIC CHANGES IN WESTERN
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TO FACILITATE ROAD WORKS AT THE JUNCTION OF DES VOEUX ROAD WEST AND WHITTY STREET IN WESTERN DISTRICT, TEMPORARY TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (JUNE 20) FOR ABOUT THREE WEEKS.

THE EXISTING TRAM LANE RESTRICTION ON THE EASTBOUND TRAMTRACK OF DES VOEUX ROAD WEST BETWEEN HOUSE NOS. 349 AND 367 WILL BE LIFTED BUT VEHICLES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO TURN LEFT FROM EASTBOUND DES VOEUX ROAD WEST INTO WHITTY STREET.

IN ADDITION, A 30-METRE STRETCH OF WHITTY STREET SOUTH OF ITS JUNCTION WITH CONNAUGHT ROAD WEST WILL BE RE-ROUTED TWO-WAY FOR ACCESS TO THE CARPARK IN WHITTY STREET.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE PARKING METERS AND MOTOR CYCLE PARKING SPACES ON WHITTY STREET BETWEEN CONNAUGHT ROAD WEST AND DES VOEUX ROAD WEST WILL BE TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED.

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