



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 842 8777

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 1994

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CS TO VISIT U.S.

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, MRS ANSON CHAN, WILL MEET SENIOR U.S. OFFICIALS, INCLUDING ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE MR STROBE TALBOTT, AND CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS DURING HER OFFICIAL VISIT TO WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK FROM SUNDAY (APRIL 24).

IT WILL BE MRS CHAN'S FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES AS CHIEF SECRETARY.

MRS CHAN WILL LEAVE HONG KONG ON FRIDAY NIGHT (APRIL 22) FOR THE WEEK-LONG VISIT AIMED AT STRENGTHENING THE TRADITIONALLY CLOSE ECONOMIC AND TRADE TIES BETWEEN HONG KONG AND THE UNITED STATES, AS WELL AS RAISING HONG KONG'S CONCERNS OVER THE POSSIBLE WITHDRAWAL BY THE U.S. OF CHINA'S MOST FAVOURED NATION (MFN) TRADING STATUS.

IN ADDITION TO MEETING MR TALBOTT, THE CHIEF SECRETARY WILL CALL ON OTHER SENIOR U.S. OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON, INCLUDING THE TREASURY SECRETARY, MR LLOYD BENTSEN; NATIONAL ECONOMIC ADVISER MR ROBERT RUBIN, AND THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS, MR WINSTON LORD.

SHE WILL ALSO HAVE MEETINGS WITH LEADING FIGURES IN THE SENATE, INCLUDING SENATE MAJORITY LEADER SENATOR GEORGE MITCHELL, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE SUB-COMMITTEE, SENATOR MAX BAUCUS, AND SENATOR CHUCK ROBB OF THE EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.

AMONG MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MRS CHAN WILL CALL ON THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, REPRESENTATIVE LEE HAMILTON, AND REPRESENTATIVE NANCY PELOSI.

SEPARATELY, SHE WILL MEET THE ASIA AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE CHAIRED BY REPRESENTATIVE GARY ACKERMAN.

IN HER MEETINGS, MRS CHAN WILL UNDERLINE HONG KONG'S FUTURE AND ITS ROLE AS A GATEWAY TO SOUTHERN CHINA AND THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION. SHE WILL ALSO EMPHASISE THE DAMAGE THAT WOULD OCCUR TO HONG KONG AND U.S. BUSINESS INTERESTS IN HONG KONG IF CHINA'S MFN STATUS IS NOT UNCONDITIONALLY RENEWED.

"THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA ARE HONG KONG'S TWO LARGEST TRADING PARTNERS. GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THEM ARE A VITAL FACTOR IN HONG KONG'S LONG-TERM SUCCESS," MRS CHAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SHE WILL DELIVER A KEYNOTE ADDRESS IN WASHINGTON TO THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB ON MONDAY (APRIL 25) AND WILL HAVE OTHER MEETINGS WITH THE MEDIA, INCLUDING THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF THE WASHINGTON POST.

AS PART OF HER NEW YORK VISIT, MRS CHAN WILL ADDRESS A LUNCHEON HOSTED BY THE ASIA SOCIETY AND THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK, A BREAKFAST MEETING OF THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS AND MEET FINANCIERS, ACADEMICS, BUSINESSMEN AND POLICY ADVISERS, AS WELL AS MEETING THE EDITORIAL BOARDS OF THE NEW YORK TIMES AND THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

MRS CHAN WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF TRADE, MR TONY MILLER; THE DEPUTY INFORMATION CO-ORDINATOR, MR KERRY MCGLYNN; AND HER ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, MR ANDREW WONG.

EXTENSION OF ORDINANCE PROLONGS UNCERTAINTY
AND WORRY OF CIVIL SERVANTS

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THE ADMINISTRATION IS VERY DISAPPOINTED THAT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS HAVE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DECIDED TO EXTEND THE LIFE OF THE PUBLIC OFFICERS (VARIATION OF CONDITIONS OF SERVICE)(TEMPORARY PROVISIONS) ORDINANCE.

THE EXTENSION WOULD NOT HELP SOLVE THE PROBLEM BUT WOULD ONLY PROLONG THE UNCERTAINTY FOR BOTH LOCAL AND OVERSEAS STAFF, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

"IT MAY ALSO AFFECT THE OPERATION OF SOME DEPARTMENTS," HE ADDED.

THE SPOKESMAN NOTED THAT AFTER INTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LOCAL AND OVERSEAS STAFF ASSOCIATIONS, IT WAS APPARENT THAT DIFFERENCES HAD BEEN NARROWED AS FAR AS WAS POSSIBLE.

BOTH STAFF ASSOCIATIONS WOULD NOW WISH TO RESERVE THEIR RESPECTIVE POSITIONS AND IT IS UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT THAT ALL PARTIES COULD REACH A CONSENSUS AND OPENLY SUPPORT ANY PROPOSAL THAT DIFFERS FROM THEIR OWN.

"WHILE OUR DOOR IS ALWAYS OPEN IT IS DIFFICULT IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES TO SEE HOW FURTHER DISCUSSIONS CAN LEAD TO A UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

HE STRESSED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO MAKE A DECISION AND GET ON WITH THE JOB OF MANAGING THE CIVIL SERVICE.

A MUCH MORE IMPORTANT TASK IS TO WORK OUT THE COMMON TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE IN FUTURE.

"THE INTERIM MEASURE OF ALLOWING OVERSEAS OFFICERS WHO ARE PERMANENT RESIDENTS TO TRANSFER TO LOCAL TERMS SUBJECT TO CERTAIN CONDITIONS IS NO MORE THAN A SHORT-TERM ARRANGEMENT PENDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON TERMS.

"HOWEVER SINCE THE ORDINANCE HAS NOW BEEN EXTENDED, NO TRANSFER TO LOCAL CONDITIONS IS ALLOWED TO TAKE PLACE UNTIL JULY 6.

"ON THE OTHER HAND, OVERSEAS OFFICERS WHO ARE PERMANENT RESIDENTS CANNOT BE REFUSED FURTHER EMPLOYMENT SOLELY ON GROUNDS OF LOCALISATION BECAUSE OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS, WHICH PROVIDES THAT ALL PERMANENT RESIDENTS SHALL HAVE EQUAL RIGHT OF ACCESS TO PUBLIC SERVICE."

THE SPOKESMAN NOTED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD HAVE TO CONTINUE TO PROCESS APPLICATIONS AND GRANT APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE TO OFFICERS WHO MEET THE CRITERIA FOR TRANSFER.

FOR THOSE ELIGIBLE OFFICERS WHOSE CONTRACTS WILL BE EXPIRING SOON, THE ADMINISTRATION WILL HAVE NO OPTION BUT TO EXTEND THEIR CONTRACTS ON OVERSEAS CONDITIONS OF SERVICE UNTIL THE ORDINANCE EXPIRES.

REGARDING THE PACKAGE OFFERED BY THE ADMINISTRATION, THE SPOKESMAN SAID THERE WOULD BE DIFFICULTIES IN PROCEEDING WITH IT WHILE THE ORDINANCE WAS IN EFFECT.

"THE ORDINANCE PREVENTS ANYONE TRANSFERRING TO LOCAL CONDITIONS.

"FURTHERMORE IT WAS A CONDITION OF OUR PUTTING OUR PACKAGE FORWARD THAT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SHOULD NO LONGER ATTEMPT TO MANAGE THE CIVIL SERVICE THROUGH LEGISLATION."

THE PACKAGE INCLUDED MEASURES SUCH AS OFFERING CERTAIN APPLICANTS FOR TRANSFER TO LOCAL TERMS EMPLOYMENT AT A LOWER RANK, CONSIDERING SPECIAL MEASURES TO HELP INDIVIDUAL DESERVING LOCAL OFFICERS WHOSE PROMOTION PROSPECT WOULD BE AFFECTED BY THE INTERIM MEASURE, AND OPENING UP THE POSITIONS HELD BY CONTRACT OFFERS FOR COMPETITION BY OFFICERS AT A LOWER RANK.

"WE SHALL REFLECT ON THE SITUATION AS A WHOLE BEFORE DECIDING WHETHER THERE IS ANYTHING MORE WE CAN DO TO MOVE TOWARDS A SETTLEMENT," THE SPOKESMAN CONCLUDED.

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LAND REGISTRATION FIGURES FOR MARCH

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THE TOTAL NUMBER OF SALE AND PURCHASE AGREEMENTS OF BUILDING UNITS, MAINLY FLATS, RECEIVED BY THE LAND REGISTRY LAST MONTH FOR REGISTRATION INCREASED BY 1.7 PER CENT COMPARED WITH THE PREVIOUS MONTH, AND INCREASED BY 13.4 PER CENT COMPARED WITH MARCH LAST YEAR.

THE AGREEMENTS TOTALLED 13,241 INVOLVING \$53.62 BILLION.

THESE ARE SHOWN IN THE MONTHLY STATISTICS RELEASED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE LAND REGISTRAR ON PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS RECEIVED FOR REGISTRATION AT THE URBAN AND NEW TERRITORIES LAND REGISTRIES.

A TABLE SHOWING THE RELEVANT STATISTICS FOR FEBRUARY 1994 AND FOR MARCH 1993 WAS ALSO RELEASED.

THREE BUILDING MORTGAGES AND 13,402 OTHER MORTGAGES WERE RECEIVED FOR REGISTRATION LAST MONTH, COMPARED WITH SIX AND 9,272 RESPECTIVELY IN MARCH LAST YEAR.

THE TOTAL AMOUNT SECURED UNDER NEW BUILDING MORTGAGES LAST MONTH WAS \$2.85 BILLION, COMPARED WITH \$1.18 BILLION IN MARCH LAST YEAR.

THE TOTAL AMOUNT SECURED UNDER NEW MORTGAGES OTHER THAN BUILDING MORTGAGES INCREASED BY 88.1 PER CENT, FROM \$5.2 BILLION IN MARCH LAST YEAR TO \$9.78 BILLION IN MARCH THIS YEAR.

REPAYMENTS UNDER MORTGAGES OF ALL KINDS, AS EVIDENCED BY DISCHARGES AND MORTGAGEE'S RECEIPTS, INCREASED BY 23.7 PER CENT, FROM \$2.88 BILLION IN MARCH LAST YEAR TO \$3.56 BILLION IN MARCH THIS YEAR.

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JP'S VISIT VIET CENTRES

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THE TWO JUSTICES OF THE PEACE CONDUCTING AN INQUIRY INTO THE WHITEHEAD INCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON APRIL 7, MR ANDREW LI AND PROFESSOR DAVID TODD, VISITED THE WHITEHEAD DETENTION CENTRE, THE HIGH ISLAND DETENTION CENTRE AND THE CHI MA WAN DETENTION CENTRE TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEIR VISIT TO WHITEHEAD WAS TO FAMILIARISE THEMSELVES WITH THE CENTRE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS IN ORDER TO BETTER UNDERSTAND EVENTS ON THAT DAY.

AT HIGH ISLAND AND CHI MA WAN, THEY SAW A NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS WHO HAD SUSTAINED INJURIES IN THE INCIDENT.

MR LI AND PROFESSOR TODD WILL BE VISITING THE THREE CENTRES SHORTLY TO INTERVIEW THOSE WHO WERE INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENT.

THEY SAID THEY WERE CONTENT WITH THE CO-OPERATION ACCORDED TO THEM SO FAR IN CONDUCTING THE ENQUIRY.

RESPONDING TO A NEWSPAPER QUERY TODAY AS TO WHETHER HE HAD HAD ANY PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF THE OPERATION AT WHITEHEAD, MR LI SAID HE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE OPERATION UNTIL IT WAS REPORTED BY THE MEDIA.

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CONDUCT COUNCIL ELECTION COMPLETED

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THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR DOMINIC S W WONG, VISITED THE TRUE LIGHT MIDDLE SCHOOL OF HONG KONG IN CAUSEWAY BAY TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TO SEE FOR HIMSELF HOW THE VOTING SESSIONS FOR THE TEACHER-NOMINATED CANDIDATES OF THE COUNCIL ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT IN EDUCATION WERE HELD.

MR WONG WAS PLEASED TO SEE THAT ALL 33 PRIMARY TEACHERS FROM THE PRIMARY SESSION AND 59 SECONDARY TEACHERS CAME FORWARD TO CAST THEIR VOTES.

A DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID: "OTHER SCHOOLS HAD ALSO ARRANGED THEIR OWN VOTING SESSIONS FOR ALL FULL-TIME REGISTERED AND PERMITTED TEACHERS, INCLUDING PRINCIPALS AND HEAD TEACHERS, TO CAST THEIR VOTES.

"TO ENSURE THAT THE SCHOOLS COMPLIED WITH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT GUIDANCE WHEN HOLDING THE ELECTION, THE DEPARTMENT HAD CONDUCTED MORE THAN 300 VISITS TO SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY.

"ONLY A FEW CASES OF IRREGULARITIES WERE DETECTED. THESE INCLUDED FAILURE ON THE PART OF VOTERS TO SIGN UP WHEN COLLECTING THEIR BALLOT PAPERS, AND ONE CASE OF THE BALLOT PAPERS BEING DISTRIBUTED PRIOR TO VOTING DAY," HE SAID.

ACCORDING TO A TEACHER SURVEY CONDUCTED IN OCTOBER LAST YEAR, THERE IS A TOTAL OF 44,469 ELIGIBLE VOTERS.

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SECONDARY STUDENTS ANSWER VOTER REGISTRATION CALL

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ABOUT 60 SECONDARY STUDENTS IN WONG TAI SIN TODAY (WEDNESDAY) REGISTERED AS VOTERS IN RESPONSE TO A CALL BY DISTRICT OFFICER, MR ALDAN KWOK.

THESE STUDENTS, AGED BETWEEN 18 AND 20, WILL BE ABLE TO CAST THEIR BALLOTS IN THE COMING DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS ON SEPTEMBER 18 AS WELL AS THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR.

SPEAKING AT A VOTER REGISTRATION FUNCTION, MR KWOK SAID A DISTRICT-WIDE PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN HAD ALREADY BEEN LAUNCHED TO ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS TO BECOME ELECTORS.

"WITH THE LOWERING OF VOTING AGE TO 18, STAFF OF THE DISTRICT OFFICE WILL PAY SPECIAL VISITS TO SCHOOLS AND YOUTH CENTRES IN THE AREA, URGING ELIGIBLE YOUNGSTERS TO REGISTER," HE ADDED.

WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT OFFICE'S VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE, WHICH ALSO INCLUDES INTENSIVE HOUSEHOLD VISITS, BEGAN ON APRIL 1.

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721 STUDENTS EARN IMPROVEMENT AWARDS

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A RECORD NUMBER OF 721 JUNIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS FROM 369 SCHOOLS WILL BE PRESENTED WITH THE MOST IMPROVED STUDENT AWARDS TOMORROW (THURSDAY) FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS IN BOTH STUDY AND CONDUCT OVER THE PAST SCHOOL YEAR.

THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR DOMINIC S W WONG AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SING TAO FOUNDATION, MISS SALLY AW SIAN, WILL PRESENT AWARDS TO THE STUDENTS AT THE CEREMONY WHICH WILL INCLUDE ORCHESTRA, CHINESE DANCE, CHOIR AND MARCHING BAND PERFORMANCES.

THE AWARD SCHEME IS AIMED AT JUNIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS WHO HAVE ATTAINED THE BEST ALL-ROUND IMPROVEMENT IN PERFORMANCE OVER THE PAST SCHOOL YEAR.

THE NUMBER OF AWARDS IS LIMITED TO TWO FOR EACH PARTICIPATING SCHOOL - ONE FOR A STUDENT WHO HAS COMPLETED SECONDARY TWO AND THE OTHER FOR A STUDENT WHO HAS COMPLETED SECONDARY THREE.

THE EVENT IS ORGANISED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND SPONSORED BY THE SING TAO FOUNDATION.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO COVER THE PRESENTATION CEREMONY WHICH WILL COMMENCE AT 3 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT THE QUEEN ELIZABETH STADIUM, OI KWAN ROAD, WAN CHAI.

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 1994

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HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS
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	<u>\$ MILLION</u>	<u>TIME (HOURS)</u>	<u>CUMULATIVE CHANGE (\$ MILLION)</u>
OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	2,879	0930	-32
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	2,201	1000	-58
CHANGE ATTRIBUTABLE TO :		1100	+7
MONEY MARKET ACTIVITY	+7	1200	+7
LAF TODAY	-685	1500	+7
		1600	+7
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER		TWI 125.2 *+0.0*	20.4.94

HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY

EF BILLS

EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS

TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	3.20	16 MONTHS	2508	4.625	99.44	5.13
1 MONTH	3.44	19 MONTHS	2511	4.15	98.29	5.35
3 MONTHS	3.87	22 MONTHS	2602	4.40	98.04	5.62
6 MONTHS	4.26	30 MONTHS	3610	4.20	95.72	6.15
12 MONTHS	4.85	33 MONTHS	3701	4.60	95.92	6.32

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 24,794 MN

CLOSED 20 APRIL 1994

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FS OUTLINES PROGRESS ON AIRPORT PROJECTS

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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR HAMISH MACLEOD, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO THE FUNDING OF PROJECTS ON THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME HAD "MAINTAINED THE MOMENTUM OF PHYSICAL WORKS", AND ENABLED A "GREAT DEAL OF PROGRESS" TO BE MADE.

ADDRESSING THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONTINUING TO SEEK AGREEMENT WITH THE CHINESE SIDE ON FINANCING FOR THE AIRPORT AND AIRPORT RAILWAY.

SIR HAMISH SAID: "WE ARE ENERGETICALLY PURSUING TWO PARALLEL COURSES OF ACTION. FIRST, WE CONTINUE TO TAKE POSITIVE STEPS TO SEEK TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH THE CHINESE SIDE ON THE FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE AIRPORT AND THE AIRPORT RAILWAY.

"SECONDLY, WE CONTINUE TO SEEK FUNDS FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE ON A STEP-BY-STEP BASIS TO ENSURE THAT WE MAINTAIN MOMENTUM IN CARRYING FORWARD AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME PROJECTS AS FAR AS WE CAN, TO MINIMISE DELAY AND THE ADDITIONAL COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH IT."

SIR HAMISH EXPLAINED THAT, SINCE EARLY 1992, FOUR SETS OF FINANCING PROPOSALS HAD BEEN SUBMITTED TO THE CHINESE SIDE. THE FOURTH PROPOSAL INCREASED THE PROPOSED EQUITY INJECTION DRAMATICALLY.

IN ADDITION TO THE ORIGINAL \$20.3 BILLION, THERE WERE TWO FURTHER SUMS. FIRST THERE WAS A FURTHER INJECTION OF \$20 BILLION FROM RESERVES. SECONDLY THERE WAS ABOUT HALF OF THE APPROXIMATELY \$40 BILLION ADDITIONAL REVENUE TO BE OBTAINED FROM AIRPORT RAILWAY RELATED LAND IN THE PERIOD TO JUNE 1997.

"ALL THIS SHOWS THAT WE HAVE DONE OUR BEST TO BE AS FLEXIBLE AND AS POSITIVE AS WE CAN IN RESPONSE TO THE VIEWS OF THE CHINESE SIDE. WE ARE ALREADY HAVING DISCUSSIONS AT THE EXPERT LEVEL WITH THE CHINESE SIDE ON THE FOURTH SET OF FINANCING PROPOSALS," SAID SIR HAMISH.

"ALTHOUGH OUR TALKS WITH THE CHINESE SIDE HAVE NOT YET PRODUCED A FULL AGREEMENT ON THE AIRPORT AND AIRPORT RAILWAY FINANCING, WE HAVE MAINTAINED THE MOMENTUM OF PHYSICAL WORKS WITH OUR STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO THE FUNDING OF PROJECTS."

OVERALL ON THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME, CONTRACTS TOTTALLING SOME \$48 BILLION HAD BEEN AWARDED, ALL WITHIN BUDGET AND PROGRESSING WELL.

"YOU ONLY HAVE TO LOOK OUT INTO THE HARBOUR TO REALISE THE TREMENDOUS ACHIEVEMENTS WE ARE MAKING: THE WEST KOWLOON RECLAMATION, WHICH IS MORE THAN 70 PER CENT COMPLETE; AND THE TWIN TOWERS OF THE TSING MA BRIDGE, WHICH HAVE REACHED THEIR FULL HEIGHT AND ARE NOW BEING LINKED UP WITH WIRES THAT WILL FORM A CATWALK FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS," SAID SIR HAMISH.

WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE, THE PROVISIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY HAS ALREADY COMPLETED 92 PER CENT OF THE DESIGN FOR THE PASSENGER TERMINAL BUILDING AND ABOUT 35 PER CENT OF THE DESIGN FOR OTHER ESSENTIAL SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT.

THE SITE PLATFORM IS ABOUT HALF COMPLETE, WITH OVER 600 HECTARES OF LAND FORMED - ABOUT THE SIZE OF TWO KAI TAK AIRPORTS.

SIMILARLY, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE, SOME ESSENTIAL ROUTE PROTECTION AND ADVANCE WORKS HAVE BEEN STARTED FOR THE AIRPORT RAILWAY.

IF THESE ADVANCE WORKS WERE NOT ALLOWED TO PROCEED UNTIL AN AGREEMENT ON THE RAILWAY FINANCING WAS IN PLACE, THE WORKS WOULD BE DEFERRED, TECHNICAL INTERFACE ISSUES COMPLICATED, DISRUPTION TO THE PUBLIC PROLONGED, AND THE COST OF WORKS EVENTUALLY INCREASED.

SIR HAMISH SAID: "THUS, OUR STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH HAS ENABLED US TO MAKE A GREAT DEAL OF PROGRESS IN THE PHYSICAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME, INCLUDING THE AIRPORT AND THE AIRPORT RAILWAY.

"HAD WE WAITED FOR THE TALKS TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE PROCEEDING ALONG THIS LINE, WE COULD HAVE LOST OVER TWO YEARS OF VALUABLE CONSTRUCTION TIME; WITH EXTRA COSTS FOR THE DEFERRED WORKS."

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SPEECH BY FS IN AIRPORT MOTION DEBATE

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THE FOLLOWING IS A SPEECH BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR HAMISH MACLEOD, ON THE MOTION ON THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL:

MR PRESIDENT,

I AM GRATEFUL TO THE MANY MEMBERS WHO REAFFIRMED THEIR CONVICTION THAT IT IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF HONG KONG FOR THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME TO BE COMPLETED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. I BELIEVE THIS CONVICTION REFLECTS A WIDELY ACCEPTED RECOGNITION THAT THE PROGRAMME WILL PROVIDE THE INFRASTRUCTURE WE MUST HAVE IF HONG KONG IS TO CONTINUE TO GROW AND MAINTAIN ITS LEAD AS A LEADING CENTRE FOR TRADE, FINANCE, MANUFACTURE AND TOURISM. NOR IS IT ONLY THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG AND ITS GOVERNMENT WHO RECOGNISE THE NEED FOR THE EARLY COMPLETION OF THESE PROJECTS. THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING RECORDS THE VIEW OF BOTH THE BRITISH AND CHINESE GOVERNMENTS THAT WE SHOULD ALL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO COMPLETE THESE PROJECTS TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE BY 30 JUNE 1997.

SINCE ALL PARTIES SO CLEARLY AGREE THAT WE SHOULD GET ON WITH IT, I SHARE MEMBERS' FRUSTRATION THAT WE ARE HAVING DIFFICULTY IN MOVING FROM STATEMENTS OF INTENT TO THE RESOLUTION OF THE FEW ISSUES WHICH CONTINUE TO STAND IN THE WAY OF REACHING THE GOAL WE ALL WISH TO ACHIEVE.

/NEVERTHELESS, WE

NEVERTHELESS, WE ARE ENERGETICALLY PURSUING TWO PARALLEL COURSES OF ACTION -

- * FIRST, WE CONTINUE TO TAKE POSITIVE STEPS TO SEEK TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH THE CHINESE SIDE ON THE FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE AIRPORT AND THE AIRPORT RAILWAY.
- * SECONDLY, WE CONTINUE TO SEEK FUNDS FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE ON A STEP-BY-STEP BASIS TO ENSURE THAT WE MAINTAIN MOMENTUM IN CARRYING FORWARD AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME PROJECTS AS FAR AS WE CAN, TO MINIMISE DELAY AND THE ADDITIONAL COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH IT.

ALTHOUGH OUR TALKS WITH THE CHINESE SIDE HAVE NOT YET PRODUCED A FULL AGREEMENT ON THE AIRPORT AND AIRPORT RAILWAY FINANCING, WE HAVE MAINTAINED THE MOMENTUM OF PHYSICAL WORKS WITH OUR STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO THE FUNDING OF PROJECTS.

YOU ONLY HAVE TO LOOK OUT INTO THE HARBOUR TO REALISE THE TREMENDOUS ACHIEVEMENTS WE ARE MAKING : THE WEST KOWLOON RECLAMATION, WHICH IS NOW MORE THAN 70% COMPLETE; AND THE TWIN TOWERS OF THE TSING MA BRIDGE, WHICH HAVE REACHED THEIR FULL HEIGHT AND ARE NOW BEING LINKED UP WITH WIRES THAT WILL FORM A CATWALK FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS. OVERALL ON THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME, CONTRACTS TOTTALLING SOME \$48 BILLION HAVE BEEN AWARDED, ALL WITHIN BUDGET AND PROGRESSING WELL.

SINCE EARLY 1992, WE HAVE SUBMITTED FOUR SETS OF FINANCING PROPOSALS TO THE CHINESE SIDE. IN EACH OF THESE, WE HAVE TRIED TO MEET THEIR KNOWN CONCERNS TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE WHILE STILL PROVIDING FOR COST EFFECTIVE ARRANGEMENTS TO ALLOW WORK CONNECTED WITH THE NEW AIRPORT AND AIRPORT RAILWAY TO BE CARRIED OUT SPEEDILY AND EFFICIENTLY. TO RECAPITULATE, OUR FIRST SET OF FINANCING PROPOSALS IN EARLY 1992 INVOLVED A TOTAL EQUITY INJECTION OF \$20.3 BILLION, AND UP TO \$21 BILLION AS CALLABLE EQUITY TO MEET DOWNSIDE RISKS, THESE WERE FOR THE PROVISIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY (PAA) AND THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION (MTRC).

IN SEPTEMBER 1992, THE CHINESE SIDE SUGGESTED THE IDEA OF PLOUGHING BACK PREMIUM INCOME FROM THE AIRPORT RAILWAY LAND GRANT TO FUND THE AIRPORT AND THE AIRPORT RAILWAY. BUILDING ON THAT IDEA, WE MADE FURTHER PROPOSALS, THE MOST RECENT OF WHICH WAS THE FOURTH FINANCING PROPOSAL MADE ON THE 2ND OF FEBRUARY. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS PROPOSAL FULLY MEETS THE CHINESE SIDE'S CONCERNS. I OUTLINED ITS KEY POINTS IN MY BUDGET SPEECH.

IN BRIEF, THE FOURTH PROPOSAL INCREASED THE PROPOSED EQUITY INJECTION DRAMATICALLY. IN ADDITION TO THE ORIGINAL \$20.3 BILLION, TWO FURTHER SUMS WERE PROPOSED. FIRST, A FURTHER INJECTION OF \$20 BILLION FROM THE RESERVES. AND SECONDLY, HALF OF THE APPROXIMATELY \$40 BILLION ADDITIONAL REVENUE TO BE OBTAINED FROM AIRPORT RAILWAY RELATED LAND IN THE PERIOD TO JUNE 1997.

/ALL THIS

ALL THIS SHOWS, I WOULD SUGGEST, THAT WE HAVE DONE OUR BEST TO BE AS FLEXIBLE AND AS POSITIVE AS WE CAN IN RESPONSE TO THE VIEWS OF THE CHINESE SIDE. WE ARE ALREADY HAVING DISCUSSIONS AT THE EXPERT LEVEL WITH THE CHINESE SIDE ON THE FOURTH SET OF FINANCING PROPOSALS. TO TALK (AS DO MR POON, MR LI AND MR YOUNG) AT THIS SENSITIVE STAGE PESSIMISTICALLY ABOUT ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING ADDITIONAL EQUITY INJECTION, WILL CERTAINLY NOT HELP BOTH SIDES REACH AN EARLY AGREEMENT. ON THE CONTRARY, LET ME SPEAK CLEARLY, THIS DEBATE, GIVEN THE WORDING OF THE MOTIONS, IS UNFORTUNATELY TIMED. IS IT REALLY LIKELY TO BE HELPFUL, WHILE TALKS ARE STILL PROCEEDING FOR LEGCO TO SAY PUBLICLY THAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER PUTTING IN EVEN MORE EQUITY? WILL THE TAXPAYER THINK THIS IS IN HIS BEST INTEREST?

NOR AM I CONVINCED BY MR LI AND MR YOUNG THAT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL OR PRACTICAL TO SUBMIT CONCRETE FINANCING PROPOSALS FOR THE WHOLE OF THESE TWO PROJECTS TO THIS COUNCIL NOW WHILST TALKS WITH THE CHINESE SIDE ARE STILL CONTINUING. WOULD THAT REALLY HELP US REACH AN EARLY AGREEMENT? WHAT PROPOSALS AM I SUPPOSE TO PUT? ABANDON THE FOURTH FINANCING PROPOSAL EVEN THOUGH IT IS STILL BEING DISCUSSED AND PUT TO MEMBERS PROPOSALS WHICH INVOLVE EVEN LARGER SUMS FROM THE TAXPAYER. THAT IS THE IMPLICATION OF THE MOTION, OR I SHOULD SAY, OF SOME OF THE AMENDMENTS. BUT LET ME ALSO SAY THAT I BELIEVE MEMBERS' MOTIVES ARE INTENDED TO BE HELPFUL. WE HAVE THE SAME AIMS, BUT I DO NOT THINK THE MOTIONS ACTUALLY ACHIEVE THOSE AIMS.

LET ME NOW TURN TO THE SECOND PRONG OF OUR POLICY ON THE AIRPORT AND AIRPORT RAILWAY FINANCING, WHICH IS TO CONTINUE TO FUND ESSENTIAL WORKS ON A STEP-BY-STEP BASIS. WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE, THE PAA HAS ALREADY COMPLETED 92% OF THE DESIGN FOR THE PASSENGER TERMINAL BUILDING AND ABOUT 35% OF THE DESIGN FOR OTHER ESSENTIAL SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT. THE SITE PLATFORM IS ABOUT HALF COMPLETE, WITH OVER 600 HECTARES OF LAND FORMED. THIS IS ABOUT THE SIZE OF TWO KAI TAK AIRPORTS. CONTRACTS FOR THE AUTOMATED PEOPLE MOVER AND BAGGAGE HANDLING SYSTEMS HAVE NOW BEEN LET AND FOUNDATION WORKS FOR THE PASSENGER TERMINAL BUILDING ARE ABOUT TO START.

LIKEWISE, WITH THE SUPPORT OF FINANCE COMMITTEE, WE HAVE STARTED SOME ESSENTIAL ROUTE PROTECTION AND ADVANCE WORKS FOR THE AIRPORT RAILWAY. IF THESE ADVANCE WORKS WERE NOT ALLOWED TO PROCEED UNTIL AN AGREEMENT ON THE RAILWAY FINANCING WAS IN PLACE, THE WORKS WOULD BE DEFERRED, TECHNICAL INTERFACE ISSUES COMPLICATED, DISRUPTION TO THE PUBLIC PROLONGED AND COST OF WORKS EVENTUALLY INCREASED.

THUS, OUR STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH HAS ENABLED US TO MAKE A GREAT DEAL OF PROGRESS IN THE PHYSICAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME, INCLUDING THE AIRPORT AND THE AIRPORT RAILWAY. HAD WE WAITED FOR THE TALKS TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE PROCEEDING ALONG THIS LINE, WE COULD HAVE LOST OVER TWO YEARS OF VALUABLE CONSTRUCTION TIME; WITH EXTRA COSTS FOR THE DEFERRED WORKS.

IN CONCLUSION, I CAN ASSURE MEMBERS THAT WE WILL CONSULT YOU ON THE FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS AS SOON AS WE ARE IN A POSITION TO DO SO. THIS COUNCIL AND THIS COUNCIL ALONE, OR I SHOULD SAY, THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THIS COUNCIL, CAN APPROVE THE EQUITY WHICH WILL BE REQUIRED FOR THE FINANCING OF THESE PROJECTS. IN SEEKING APPROVAL FOR THAT EQUITY, THE ADMINISTRATION WILL IN DUE COURSE NEED EXPLAIN THE FULL DETAILS OF THE FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS PROPOSED. BUT THE AIM MUST BE TO FIRST REACH AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THE CHINESE SIDE.

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WITH THE RESPECT, WE MUST NOT GET INTO THE FRAME OF MIND THAT BECAUSE AT PRESENT WE HAVE HEALTHY FINANCES WE SHOULD ABANDON A SENSIBLE PROJECT FINANCING AND PRIVATISATION WHICH SERVE US SO WELL AND SIMPLY PAY WHATEVER IT TAKES. IF WE HAVE TAKEN THAT ATTITUDE IN THE PAST WE WOULD NOT NOW HAVE HEALTHY RESERVES AND IF WE SPEND MORE AND MORE, WE SHALL FIRST HAVE LESS OF A CUSHION TO MEET DOWNSIDE RISKS AND SECONDLY, LESS AVAILABLE FOR ALL THE OTHER DESIRABLE PROJECTS THAT WOULD BE NEEDED IN THE COMING YEARS. AND I THINK FOR EXAMPLE OF THE RAILWAY PROPOSALS AND THE RAILWAY STRATEGIC STUDY, THE FURTHER STAGES OF THE SEWAGE PROGRAMME AND THERE I MENTION IT AT NO DOUBT THE SECOND RUNWAY ON THE NEW AIRPORT. SO WE NEED TO STRIKE A SENSIBLE BALANCE, THE NEED RIGHT NOW IS TO GET ON WITH THE TALKS ABOUT THE FOURTH FINANCING PROPOSAL.

MR PRESIDENT, THE ADMINISTRATION ATTACHES THE SAME IMPORTANCE AS DO MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL TO THE NEED TO REACH AN EARLY AGREEMENT ON THE AIRPORT AND AIRPORT RAILWAY FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS. FOR THAT REASON I SHALL NOT GO INTO MORE DETAILS AS SOME MEMBERS HAVE URGED ME TO DO. WE BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE, IN OUR FOURTH FINANCING PROPOSAL, MET THE CHINESE SIDE'S CONCERNS ABOUT THE LEVEL OF EQUITY, AND HENCE OF BORROWING, IN THE TWO CORPORATIONS. THE ADMINISTRATION HAS ALSO BEEN TRYING ITS BEST TO TAKE FORWARD THE PHYSICAL WORKS FOR THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME PROJECTS ON A STEP-BY-STEP BASIS. MEMBERS WILL BY NOW HAVE GATHERED THAT WHILST WE SUPPORT SOME OF THE SENTIMENTS IN THE VARIOUS MOTIONS, THE ONLY ONE WHICH DOES NOT CONTAIN PHRASES WHICH WE FIND EXTREMELY UNHELPFUL, THE ONLY MOTION THAT WOULD NOT MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO BRING THE TALKS TO AN EARLY AND SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION, IS THAT BY MR ALBERT CHAN. THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS WILL VOTE ACCORDINGLY.

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SHW DISTINGUISHES TERMINOLOGY ON HEALTHCARE FINANCING

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THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DISTINGUISHED WITH CLARITY THE TERMINOLOGY OF VARIOUS FUNDING METHODS FOR HOSPITAL SERVICES PROPOSED IN THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT "TOWARDS BETTER HEALTH".

SPEAKING DURING THE MOTION DEBATE ON HEALTHCARE FINANCING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MRS WONG SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR ALL TO UNDERSTAND FROM THE OUTSET THE MEANING OF "COST RECOVERY", "PERCENTAGE SUBSIDY APPROACH" AND "PEGGING FEES TO COSTS".

"COST RECOVERY" IS NOT A NEW PRINCIPLE, SHE SAID, POINTING OUT THAT ANY SERVICE WHICH IS NOT FREE CONTAINS AN ELEMENT OF COST RECOVERY.

CITING FIGURES, SHE SAID THE EXISTING FEES FOR GENERAL WARD BEDS RECOVERED TWO PER CENT OF THE AVERAGE OPERATING COSTS IN ACUTE GENERAL HOSPITALS, FIVE PER CENT IN CONVALESCENT HOSPITALS AND 10 PER CENT IN PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS.

THE FEES FOR SECOND CLASS BEDS RECOVER 100 PER CENT OF COSTS AND FOR FIRST CLASS BEDS RECOVER 150 PER CENT OF COSTS.

/"ALL THIS

"ALL THIS IS BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF COST RECOVERY. NEVER IN THE PAST HAS THIS PRINCIPLE BEEN CHALLENGED BY THE COMMUNITY," SHE SAID.

"IT IS THE LEVEL OF COST RECOVERY WHICH IS CONTENTIOUS AND IS OFTEN DEBATED."

AS REGARDS "PERCENTAGE SUBSIDY APPROACH", THE SECRETARY SAID IT PROPOSED A RATIONALISATION OF THE EXISTING COST RECOVERY PRINCIPLE FOR PUBLIC HOSPITALS.

AT PRESENT, ALL PATIENTS PAY THE SAME FEE ALTHOUGH THE NATURE OF TREATMENT AS WELL AS THE COST OF PROVIDING EACH TYPE OF SERVICE ARE DIFFERENT.

FROM THE TAXPAYERS' POINT OF VIEW, THIS CANNOT BE RATIONAL; AND FROM THE PATIENTS' POINT OF VIEW, THIS IS DECIDEDLY UNFAIR.

"THUS, IN THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT, WE PROPOSE THAT ALL GENERAL WARD PATIENTS SHOULD HAVE THE SAME PERCENTAGE OF THEIR FEES SUBSIDISED, BASED ON THE AVERAGE OPERATING COST FOR EACH TYPE OF HOSPITAL.

"THAT IS TO SAY, IT IS A FAIRER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COST RECOVERY PRINCIPLE FOR EVERY PATIENT TO CONTRIBUTE THE SAME PERCENTAGE ACCORDING TO THE TYPE OF HOSPITAL USED.

"FOR EXAMPLE, IN A CONVALESCENT HOSPITAL, THE PATIENT WILL PAY LESS THAN A PATIENT IN AN ACUTE GENERAL HOSPITAL BECAUSE THE AVERAGE OPERATING COST IS LESS."

THE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE IS NOW STUDYING THE FEE STRUCTURE AND A FINAL DECISION HAS YET TO BE TAKEN.

TURNING TO "PEGGING FEES TO COSTS", MRS WONG SAID THIS NOTION HAD NOT BEEN ADVOCATED ANYWHERE IN THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT.

TO PUT IT SIMPLY, SHE CONTINUED, "PEGGING FEES TO COSTS" IMPLIED THAT EACH GENERAL WARD PATIENT WOULD PAY A FEE CALCULATED ON THE BASIS OF THE COST OF TREATMENT.

"IF SOMEONE RECEIVES EXTENSIVE TREATMENT, SUCH COSTS COULD BE PROHIBITIVE," SHE SAID.

"INDEED THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN THE FLAT FEE PROPOSAL UNDER THE PERCENTAGE SUBSIDY APPROACH AND VARIABLE FEES WHICH COULD ARISE FROM SUCH CONCEPTS AS 'PEGGING FEES TO COSTS'."

THE SECRETARY STRESSED THAT IN DETERMINING THE WAY FORWARD, THE GOVERNMENT'S PARAMOUNT POLICY REMAINED THAT NOBODY SHOULD BE DENIED ADEQUATE MEDICAL TREATMENT THROUGH LACK OF MEANS.

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF COST RECOVERY, RATIONALITY AND FAIRNESS TO PATIENTS REMAIN VALID.

WITHIN THESE PRINCIPLES, SHE ADDED, THE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE WOULD WORK TO DEVELOP IDEAS AND TO STRUCTURE APPROPRIATE LEVELS OF FEE SUBSIDY FOR FUTURE ADOPTION.

MRS WONG ALSO TOLD THE COUNCILLORS THAT PUBLIC SUPPORT HAD BEEN INDICATED FOR THE PREFERRED OPTIONS IN THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT.

EXPERTS IN HEALTHCARE REFORM HAVE ALSO STUDIED THE HONG KONG MODEL AND CONCLUDED THAT IT IS HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

WHILE WELCOMING ANY VIEWS ON THE ISSUE, MRS WONG APPEALED TO MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND THE COMMUNITY FOR THEIR SUPPORT FOR HEALTHCARE REFORM.

SHE SAID: "FEEDBACK ON THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT 'TOWARDS BETTER HEALTH' HAS SHOWN THE WAY AHEAD.

"LET US SUPPORT REFORM. LET US SUPPORT CHANGE FOR THE BETTER. NOT JUST FOR OUR OWN SAKE, BUT ALSO FOR THE SAKE OF OUR CHILDREN."

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CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES BILL INTRODUCED

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THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994 HELPING TO BRING ABOUT OPEN AND FAIR ELECTIONS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR NICHOLAS NG, SAID THE VARIOUS AMENDMENTS SHOULD BE BROUGHT INTO EFFECT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE TO TIE IN WITH THE DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS THIS SEPTEMBER.

"THE BILL NEEDS TO BE ENACTED BY EARLY JUNE AT THE LATEST," HE SAID.

MR NG EXPLAINED THAT THE BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION WOULD NEED TIME TO MAKE ANY CONSEQUENTIAL SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION.

"ASPIRING DISTRICT BOARD CANDIDATES WILL WANT TO KNOW IN GOOD TIME THE NEW PROVISIONS WHICH WILL APPLY TO THEM," HE ADDED.

ONE OF THE AMENDMENTS IS AIMED TO ACHIEVE GREATER DETERRENCE THROUGH HEAVIER PENALTIES IMPOSED FOR VARIOUS OFFENCES UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

IN PROPOSING THE NEW PENALTY LEVELS, THE GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE SERIOUS NATURE OF ELECTORAL OFFENCES, AS WELL AS THE NEED TO BRING THE PENALTIES FOR ELECTORAL OFFENCES INTO PARITY WITH THOSE IN FORCE FOR OTHER CORRUPT OFFENCES UNDER OTHER PIECES OF LEGISLATION, MR NG SAID.

THE BILL ALSO SETS OUT MORE CLEARLY WHAT CONSTITUTES ELECTORAL BRIBERY.

IN ESSENCE, ANY CORRUPT OFFERING, SOLICITING OR ACCEPTING OF ADVANTAGES IN RELATION TO A VOTER VOTING OR REFRAINING FROM VOTING, OR PROCURING THE RETURN OF ANY PERSON TO SERVE ON A PUBLIC BODY WILL BE PROHIBITED.

IN ADDITION, THE AMENDMENTS PROVIDE THAT IT SHALL BE A "CORRUPT PRACTICE" FOR A CANDIDATE TO ACCEPT A BRIBE TO WITHDRAW FROM AN ELECTION.

ALSO, THE BILL SETS OUT MORE CLEARLY THE RESPECTIVE LIABILITIES OF A CANDIDATE AND OTHER PERSONS WHO INCUR ELECTION EXPENSES ON HIS BEHALF.

"THIS WILL FACILITATE ENFORCEMENT AND PROSECUTION IN THE EVENT THAT THE PRESCRIBED ELECTION EXPENSES LIMIT IS EXCEEDED," MR NG SAID.

AMENDMENTS ARE ALSO PROPOSED REGARDING THE PUBLICATION OF ELECTION MATERIAL AND PERFORMANCE REPORTS, AS WELL AS DISQUALIFICATION PROVISIONS.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL ON CLOSING WELLS AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

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A BILL SEEKING TO UPDATE THE BUILDING ORDINANCE AND TO INTRODUCE NEW PROVISIONS FOR CLOSING WELLS AND TO PROMOTE ENERGY CONSERVATION IN BUILDINGS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, SAID THE BILL PROVIDED FOUR SIGNIFICANT AMENDMENTS.

FIRSTLY, THE BILL PROPOSED TO INTRODUCE A NEW SYSTEM IN WHICH THE GOVERNOR WOULD APPOINT A PANEL OF PERSONS FROM WHICH TRIBUNALS COULD BE SELECTED TO HEAR APPEALS AGAINST THE BUILDING AUTHORITY'S DECISION.

SUCH TRIBUNALS WOULD BE INDEPENDENT AND IMPARTIAL AND THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL WOULD NOT BE EMPOWERED TO REVIEW THEIR DETERMINATIONS.

SECONDLY, THE BILL ALSO PROPOSED TO AUTHORISE THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS TO MAKE REGULATIONS TO CONTROL THE OVERALL THERMAL TRANSFER VALUE OF ALL NEW COMMERCIAL AND HOTEL BUILDINGS TO PROMOTE ENERGY CONSERVATION.

MR EASON SAID THE BUILDING (ENERGY EFFICIENCY) REGULATIONS WOULD SET OUT PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR AFFECTED BUILDINGS AND REQUIRE DEVELOPERS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON SUCH MATTERS AS MATERIALS USED IN EXTERNAL WALLS AND THE SIZE AND DISPOSITION OF WINDOWS.

THIRDLY, IT PROPOSED TO EMPOWER THE BUILDING AUTHORITY TO CLOSE WELLS IN NORTHWEST NEW TERRITORIES IN ORDER TO STOP THE ABSTRACTION OF GROUNDWATER, WHICH MAY CAUSE BUILDINGS TO BECOME UNSAFE.

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FOURTHLY, MR EASON SAID, THE BILL WOULD INTRODUCE A NEW REGISTRATION SYSTEM WHEREBY RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION WOULD BE INITIATED BY AUTHORISED PERSONS, REGISTERED STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS, REGISTERED CONTRACTORS AND REGISTERED VENTILATION CONTRACTORS THEMSELVES BY SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS TO THE BUILDING AUTHORITY.

THE BILL WOULD ALSO SEEK TO PROVIDE NEW PROVISIONS FOR REMOVAL AND RESTORING OF NAMES IN THE REGISTERS.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL TO GIVE CEMETERY BODY FULL LEGAL POWERS

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A BILL THAT SEEKS TO GIVE ALL NECESSARY LEGAL POWERS TO ENABLE THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT OF THE CHINESE PERMANENT CEMETERIES TO OPERATE EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE CHINESE PERMANENT CEMETERIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, SAID THE CHINESE PERMANENT CEMETERIES ORDINANCE WAS ENACTED IN 1964 TO GIVE STATUTORY RECOGNITION TO, AND REGULATE THE PROVISION OF, PERMANENT CEMETERIES FOR PERSONS OF CHINESE RACE PERMANENTLY RESIDENT IN HONG KONG.

UP TO THAT TIME THE CEMETERIES CONCERNED HAD BEEN ADMINISTERED BY A BOARD OF MANAGEMENT UNDER VARIOUS DEEDS OF APPROPRIATION, HE SAID.

THE ORDINANCE ESTABLISHED THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT AS A BODY CORPORATE WITH VARIOUS POWERS OF ADMINISTRATION AND REGULATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CEMETERIES GOVERNED BY IT.

TODAY, THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT ADMINISTERS FOUR CEMETERIES WHICH IN TOTAL COMPRISE ABOUT 65,000 BURIAL PLOTS AND MORE THAN 110,000 NICHES.

"A FURTHER 15,000 OR SO BURIAL PLOTS AND 91,000 NICHES ARE DUE TO BE AVAILABLE WHEN LATER PHASES OF THE CEMETERY AT JUNK BAY ARE BROUGHT INTO USE IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS," MR SUEN SAID.

GIVEN SUCH A LARGE OPERATION PROVIDING AN ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICE, MR SUEN STRESSED THAT IT WAS CLEARLY DESIRABLE THAT THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT SHOULD HAVE ALL NECESSARY LEGAL POWERS TO OPERATE EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY.

THESE NEW POWERS, HE SAID, WERE ALREADY SUCCESSFULLY ENJOYED BY SIMILAR BODIES SUPERVISED BY THE HOME AFFAIRS BRANCH, SUCH AS THE SIR EDWARD YOUDE MEMORIAL FUND COMMITTEE AND THE BREWIN TRUST FUND COMMITTEE.

THE BILL PROVIDES FOR THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT TO TRANSACT BUSINESS BY CIRCULATION OF PAPERS, TO APPOINT A PROFESSIONAL FUND MANAGER TO MANAGE THE INVESTMENT OF ITS MONEYS AND TO INVEST IN SUCH INVESTMENTS AS IT THINKS FIT.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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PUBLIC ORDER BILL INTRODUCED

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THE PUBLIC ORDER (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994 RELATING TO THE REGULATION OF PUBLIC MEETINGS AND PROCESSIONS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID THE BILL SOUGHT TO STRIKE THE RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN AN INDIVIDUAL'S RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND THE COMMUNITY'S NEED TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC ORDER AND TO ENSURE SAFETY.

HE SAID TO ENSURE THAT THE REQUIREMENTS FOR MAINTAINING PUBLIC ORDER AND PUBLIC SAFETY WERE EASY TO UNDERSTAND, THE BILL SET OUT MORE CLEARLY THE PROCEDURES FOR ORGANISERS OF PUBLIC GATHERINGS TO FOLLOW.

HE SAID THE GENERAL CONDITIONS AND OBLIGATIONS COVERING THE HOLDING OF PUBLIC MEETINGS WERE NOW INCORPORATED IN THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE.

"WE HAVE STANDARDISED THE PROCEDURES AND CONDITIONS RELATING TO THE ORGANISATIONS OF PUBLIC MEETINGS AND PUBLIC PROCESSIONS.

"IN PARTICULAR, WE PROPOSE TO REPLACE THE PREVIOUS REQUIREMENT FOR THE LICENSING OF PUBLIC PROCESSIONS WITH A REQUIREMENT FOR ADVANCE NOTIFICATION, WHICH ALREADY EXISTS FOR PUBLIC MEETING.

MR ASPREY SAID A REQUIREMENT FOR ADVANCE NOTIFICATION WAS RETAINED TO FACILITATE THE POLICE FORCE TO EXERCISE ITS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ENSURING PUBLIC ORDER AND PUBLIC SAFETY.

MR ASPREY SAID THE BILL SPECIFIED MORE CLEARLY THE GROUNDS ON WHICH THE POLICE COULD PROHIBIT OR IMPOSE CONDITIONS ON PUBLIC MEETINGS AND PROCESSIONS.

"WE PROPOSE THAT THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE SHOULD HAVE THE POWER TO IMPOSE CONDITIONS OR PROHIBIT THE HOLDING OF SUCH GATHERINGS IN THE INTERESTS OF PUBLIC ORDER AND OF PUBLIC SAFETY ONLY."

HE ADDED THAT ONE OF THE PROPOSALS OF THE BILL WAS TO INCREASE THE THRESHOLD NUMBER FOR REQUIRING NOTIFICATION OF PUBLIC MEETINGS AND PUBLIC PROCESSIONS.

HE SAID: "WE HAVE TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO MODIFY A NUMBER OF OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO POLICE POWERS ON STOP AND SEARCH, THE DESIGNATION OF CLOSED AREAS, AND THE REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE IDENTIFICATION.

"WE ARE ALSO PROPOSING THE REPEAL OF SECTION 4(29) OF THE SUMMARY OFFENCES ORDINANCE, WHICH REQUIRES THE ISSUE OF A POLICE PERMIT FOR THE USE OF LOUDHAILERS IN PUBLIC PLACES.

"WE BELIEVE THAT PROVISIONS OF THE NOISE CONTROL ORDINANCE ADEQUATELY COVER THE PREVENTION OF NUISANCE, WHILE THE PROVISIONS OF THE NOISE CONTROL ORDINANCE WILL COVER SUFFICIENTLY THE REQUIREMENTS OF PUBLIC ORDER."

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

EMPLOYMENT OF UNDERAGE YOUTH ON CONSTRUCTION SITES BANNED
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THE EMPLOYMENT OF ANY YOUNG PERSON UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE ON ANY CONSTRUCTION SITES WILL BE PROHIBITED UNLESS HE IS UNDERTAKING OR UNDERGOING AN APPRENTICESHIP OR AN APPROVED TRAINING COURSE.

ANY ONE CONTRAVENING THE NEW PROVISIONS IS LIABLE TO A MAXIMUM FINE OF \$50,000.

MOVING THE RESOLUTION OF THE CONSTRUCTION SITES (SAFETY) (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) REGULATION 1994 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID THAT IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS, TWO OF THE FIVE YOUNG PERSONS BELOW THE AGE OF 18 KILLED AT WORK WORKED IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY.

IN 1992 AND 1993, 152 AND 122 YOUNG PERSONS RESPECTIVELY WERE INJURED WHILE WORKING ON CONSTRUCTION SITES.

"WE THEREFORE CONSIDER IT HIGHLY NECESSARY TO RESTRICT THE EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PERSONS IN THESE SITES," HE SAID.

MR LEUNG STRESSED THE INTENTION OF THE PROPOSAL WAS TO PROTECT RATHER THAN DISCRIMINATE AGAINST YOUNG PEOPLE.

"WE SHALL LIAISE WITH RELEVANT AUTHORITIES CONCERNED TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE SPACES ARE AVAILABLE IN THESE SITES TO UNDERAGE YOUTH WHO ARE INTERESTED IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY," HE ADDED.

TO ALLOW TIME FOR PROPRIETORS AND CONTRACTORS TO MAKE SUITABLE ARRANGEMENTS, THE AMENDMENT REGULATION WILL BE BROUGHT INTO EFFECT TWO MONTHS AFTER ENACTMENT.

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MAGISTRATES' COURT FEES TO BE INCREASED
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FEES PAYABLE AT THE MAGISTRATES' COURT WILL BE INCREASED BY ABOUT 10 PER CENT TO KEEP IN LINE WITH THE INCREASES IN COSTS.

MOVING A RESOLUTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR KWONG KI-CHI, SOUGHT THE COUNCIL'S APPROVAL TO AMEND REGULATIONS UNDER SECTION 134(1) OF THE MAGISTRATES ORDINANCE SO AS TO BRING ABOUT THE INCREASES.

MR KWONG SAID THE APPROVED INCREASES WOULD TAKE EFFECT ON APRIL 22 AND IT WAS ESTIMATED TO BRING IN ADDITIONAL REVENUE OF ABOUT \$29,000 A YEAR.

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MATRIMONIAL CAUSES FEES TO BE INCREASED

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THE INCREASE OF FEES PAYABLE UNDER THE MATRIMONIAL CAUSES ORDINANCE WILL BRING AN ADDITIONAL REVENUE OF ABOUT \$671,000 A YEAR TO THE GOVERNMENT, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR KWONG KI-CHI, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE RESOLUTION ON THE MATRIMONIAL CAUSES (FEES) (AMENDMENT) RULES 1994 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR KWONG SAID THE FEES WOULD BE INCREASED BY ABOUT 10 PER CENT TO BE IN LINE WITH THE INCREASES IN COSTS.

THESE INCREASES WILL TAKE EFFECT ON APRIL 22, HE ADDED.

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MTRC ANNUAL REPORT TABLED

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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, SIR HAMISH MACLEOD, TABLED THE ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION (MTRC) FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31 LAST YEAR IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE MTRC EARNED A TOTAL NET PROFIT OF \$735 MILLION, COMPARED WITH \$403 MILLION IN 1992.

"CUMULATIVE LOSSES WERE REDUCED TO \$2,333 MILLION AND THE CORPORATION EXPECTS THESE TO BE REDUCED TO ZERO BY 1996," SIR HAMISH SAID.

LAST YEAR, THE MTRC CARRIED 779 MILLION PASSENGERS, 3.7 PER CENT HIGHER THAN 1992.

OVER THE NEXT SEVEN YEARS, THE MTRC WILL SPEND \$8 BILLION ON CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMES.

IT IS PLANNING TO IMPROVE THE MORNING PEAK TRAIN SERVICE ON THE TSUEN WAN LINE FROM THE EXISTING 31 TRAIN TRIPS PER HOUR TO 32 IN MAY THIS YEAR.

"SERVICE WILL BE FURTHER IMPROVED TO 34 PER HOUR IN 1996 WHEN A COMPLETELY NEW SIGNALLING SYSTEM IS INSTALLED," SIR HAMISH SAID.

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDE NEW AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS, NOISE REDUCTION MEASURES AND NEW PASSENGER INFORMATION SYSTEMS.

SIR HAMISH SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S CONTRACTS TO PREPARE THE SITES FOR THE RAILWAY TRACKS WERE PROGRESSING WELL.

"WE AND THE CORPORATION LOOK FORWARD TO A SPEEDY CONCLUSION OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND CHINESE GOVERNMENTS ON THE FINANCING OF THE AIRPORT RAILWAY," HE SAID.

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ADVICE GIVEN TO MOTORISTS INVOLVED IN MINOR ACCIDENTS

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THE FAILURE OF SOME MOTORISTS TO MOVE THEIR VEHICLES TO THE SIDE OF THE ROAD AFTER INVOLVEMENT IN TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS CAN CAUSE ROAD CONGESTION AND IS A SOURCE OF IRRITATION TO OTHER ROAD USERS, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR JOHN TELFORD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON SIMON IP IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR TELFORD SAID ALTHOUGH THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE PROVIDED THAT DRIVERS SHOULD STOP IF THEIR VEHICLES WERE INVOLVED IN ACCIDENTS WHICH CAUSED INJURY OR DAMAGE, THERE WAS NO NEED TO WAIT FOR POLICE ATTENDANCE IF THE ACCIDENT WAS MINOR.

THOSE INVOLVED SHOULD MOVE THEIR VEHICLES TO A SAFER LOCATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SO AS TO MINIMISE OBSTRUCTION TO OTHER ROAD USERS AND THEN EXCHANGE PERSONAL PARTICULARS.

MR TELFORD NOTED THAT MEASURES HAD BEEN TAKEN TO CONVEY THIS MESSAGE TO MOTORISTS THROUGH THE ROAD USERS CODE, COPIES OF WHICH WERE GIVEN TO ALL LEARNER DRIVERS.

THE ACCIDENT INSURANCE ASSOCIATION OF HONG KONG DISTRIBUTES LEAFLETS TO APPLICANTS FOR VEHICLE INSURANCE SPECIFICALLY ADVISING DRIVERS TO MOVE VEHICLES TO THE SIDE OF THE ROAD IF THEY ARE INVOLVED IN MINOR TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS AND THERE ARE NO INJURIES.

MR TELFORD SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO PUBLICISE THIS MESSAGE WERE CONTINUING.

"THE MESSAGE WAS EMPHASISED MOST RECENTLY AT A PRESS BRIEFING TO MARK THE OPENING OF SIX EMERGENCY LAY-BYS ON TUEN MUN ROAD AND IN THE LATEST ROAD SAFETY QUARTERLY PUBLICATION.

"WE WILL RESTATE THIS ADVICE TO MOTORISTS IN FUTURE AT EVERY APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY, FOR EXAMPLE THROUGH ROAD SAFETY AND ROAD COURTESY CAMPAIGNS AND THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF POLICE OFFICERS ATTENDING THE SCENE OF TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS," HE SAID.

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GOVT AIMS TO MODERATE PROPERTY PRICES

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THE ADMINISTRATION IS WORKING TOWARDS ACHIEVING MORE MODERATE PROPERTY PRICES THROUGH GRADUAL AND ORDERLY MEASURES, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ZACHARY WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR EASON SAID THE EFFORTS WOULD BE DIRECTED AT ACHIEVING SHORT AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS.

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NOTING THAT THERE WAS AN EXTREMELY WIDE RANGE OF PROPERTIES ON THE MARKET BY TYPE AND QUALITY TO DIFFERENT DEMANDS AND THE SITUATION WAS CHANGING ALL THE TIME, MR EASON SAID THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO EXAMINE THE POSITION IN ALL SECTORS.

"IT IS NOT THEREFORE POSSIBLE TO STATE A SINGLE, SPECIFIC AFFORDABILITY TARGET," HE SAID.

BUT HE POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT COMFORTABLE EITHER WITH THE PRESENT HIGH LEVEL OF FLAT PRICES, OR WITH THE PROSPECT FOR FURTHER MOVEMENTS UPWARD IN THE MARKET.

"CLEARLY, PRICE LEVELS ARE NOW SUCH AS TO BE CAUSING CONCERN IN THE GENERAL COMMUNITY AS REGARDS BOTH AFFORDABILITY TO WOULD-BE HOME BUYERS, AND THE EFFECTS ON HONG KONG'S COMPETITIVENESS - CONCERN WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION SHARES," HE SAID.

MR EASON NOTED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD ALREADY ANNOUNCED THE SETTING UP OF A TASK FORCE TO TACKLE THE ISSUE OF LAND SUPPLY AND PROPERTY PRICES.

"A PACKAGE OF MEASURES TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES WILL BE DRAWN UP WITHIN TWO TO THREE MONTHS," HE SAID.

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INFORMATION OF BNS APPLICANTS PROTECTED

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ALL INFORMATION ON APPLICANTS FOR THE BRITISH NATIONALITY SCHEME (BNS) IS PROTECTED BY LAW AND BY STRICT INTERNAL PROCEDURES, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID TODAY WEDNESDAY).

UNDER THE BRITISH NATIONALITY (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE, IT IS AN OFFENCE TO DISCLOSE THE IDENTITY OF, OR ANY INFORMATION ON, APPLICANTS OF THE SCHEME, HE SAID.

IN A REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON JAMES TIEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR ASPREY SAID: "AFTER COMPLETION OF THE BRITISH NATIONALITY SCHEME, INFORMATION ON SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS WILL BE TRANSFERRED TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT FOR RECORD PURPOSES.

"INFORMATION ON OTHER APPLICANTS WILL BE DESTROYED," HE SAID.

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CREATION OF APPLIED RESEARCH CENTRE
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THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO PUT FORWARD A DETAILED PROPOSAL ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE APPLIED RESEARCH CENTRE TO THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES LATER THIS YEAR.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR T H CHAU, IN REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON NGAI SHIU-KIT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN PREPARING THE PROPOSAL, MR CHAU SAID, THE INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL WOULD BE CONSULTED NEXT MONTH ON MATTERS CONCERNING THE RESEARCH CENTRE, INCLUDING THE LOCATION.

VIEWS EXPRESSED BY OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES WILL ALSO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, HE ADDED.

"IN DUE COURSE, WE ENVISAGE THE NEED TO SEEK THE APPROVAL OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THIS COUNCIL ON FUNDING PROPOSALS," MR CHAU SAID.

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PUBLIC HOUSING RESOURCES USED EFFICIENTLY
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THE WAITING LIST FOR PUBLIC HOUSING IS ADMINISTERED TO ENSURE THAT ELIGIBILITY AND THE LIKELY DEMAND ARE REFLECTED AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, AND RESOURCES ARE USED AS EFFICIENTLY AS POSSIBLE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN A REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MRS ELSIE TU.

MR EASON SAID APPLICANTS FOR PUBLIC HOUSING WHOSE HOUSEHOLD INCOME WAS ABOVE THE ELIGIBILITY LIMIT AT THE TIME OF APPLICATION WERE NOT NOW ENTERED ON THE WAITING LIST TO AVOID MISLEADING THE APPLICANTS AND INFLATING THE LIST.

THOSE WHO HAVE RESIDED IN HONG KONG FOR LESS THAN SEVEN YEARS CAN SUBMIT APPLICATIONS, BUT THEY WILL NOT BE PROCESSED UNTIL THE APPLICANTS FULFIL THE RESIDENCE CRITERION, HE SAID.

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PROCESSING OF VISA APPLICATIONS FROM CHINESE VISITORS
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THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) EXPLAINED TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THE POLICY TOWARDS THE PROCESSING OF VISA APPLICATIONS FROM MAINLAND RESIDENTS VISITING HONG KONG.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MARTIN BARROW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR ASPREY SAID ONLY VISITORS HOLDING OFFICIAL OR SEMI-OFFICIAL PASSPORTS ISSUED BY THE CHINESE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAD TO APPLY FOR VISAS.

THEIR APPLICATIONS ARE NORMALLY SUBMITTED THROUGH THE CHINESE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN BEIJING, WHICH ARE THEN REFERRED TO HONG KONG.

HOWEVER, VISITORS FROM GUANGDONG, GUANGXI, FUJIAN, HAINAN AND SHANGHAI HAVE TO SUBMIT THEIR APPLICATIONS TO THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT IN HONG KONG, INSTEAD OF THROUGH THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN BEIJING.

MR ASPREY ADDED THAT ORDINARY RESIDENTS OF CHINA WISHING TO VISIT HONG KONG DID NOT REQUIRE A VISA.

THESE VISITORS ONLY HAVE TO APPLY TO THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES FOR TWO-PAY PERMITS.

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IMPROVED SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY

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MEETING THE NEEDS OF ELDERLY PEOPLE IS A PRIORITY UNDER THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OBJECTIVE TO SAFEGUARD AND PROMOTE GENERAL HEALTH OF THE COMMUNITY.

IN THIS RESPECT, THE WORKING GROUP ON CARE FOR THE ELDERLY, APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR, IS TASKED WITH IDENTIFYING AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE OVERALL PROVISION OF SERVICES ACROSS THE BOARD FOR THE ELDERLY.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, IN HER WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON FREDERICK FUNG KIN-KEE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE, MRS WONG SAID THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH WOULD CONSIDER EXTENDING THE PRIORITY CONSULTATION SCHEME FOR ELDERLY PATIENTS, THE ADVANCED APPOINTMENT SYSTEM FOR ELDERLY CHRONIC PATIENTS, AND THE SPECIAL CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR RESIDENTS OF ELDERLY HOMES TO GENERAL OUT-PATIENT CLINICS IN THE PIPELINE.

SEVEN NEW ELDERLY HEALTH CENTRES WILL BE ESTABLISHED BY 1997 TO STRENGTHEN PREVENTIVE AND PROMOTIVE CARE, SHE ADDED.

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AS FOR HOSPITAL SERVICES, THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY IS PLANNING TO PROVIDE 260 NEW ACUTE GERIATRIC BEDS AND 200 NEW GERIATRIC DAY PLACES BY 1997 TO MEET PROJECTED DEMAND IN FULL.

A TOTAL OF 1,200 INFIRMARY PLACES AND SEVEN NURSING HOMES WITH 1,400 BEDS WILL ALSO BE PROVIDED BY 1997 FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE REQUIRING RESIDENTIAL NURSING CARE.

MRS WONG NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ALSO DEVELOP OUTREACH SERVICES THROUGH THE SETTING UP OF FIVE MORE SPECIALIST TEAMS IN 1994/95 TO FACILITATE THE INTERFACE BETWEEN MEDICAL AND WELFARE SERVICES AS WELL AS TO ACHIEVE A BETTER CONTINUUM OF CARE FOR ELDERLY PATIENTS.

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MEASURES FOR WASTE MINIMISATION AND RECYCLING

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REGULATIONS TO PROHIBIT THE OPEN BURNING OF RUBBER TYRES, CABLES WITH PLASTIC INSULATION AND CONSTRUCTION WASTE ARE BEING DRAFTED AND ARE EXPECTED TO TAKE EFFECT BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MICHAEL HO MUN-KA, MR EASON SAID THE GOVERNMENT POLICY WAS TO EXAMINE AND PROMOTE MEASURES TO LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF WASTE PRODUCED AND TO ENCOURAGE WASTE RECOVERY AND RECYCLING.

SOME OF THE MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT BODIES TO PROMOTE AND ASSIST LOCAL INDUSTRIES IN RECYCLING INDUSTRIAL WASTES INCLUDE:-

- * THE POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERMEDIATE SORTING PLANT AT TSEUNG KWAN O TO ASSIST THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TO SEPARATE OUT THE PUTRESCIBLE WASTE TO PROVIDE USEFUL FILL MATERIAL;
- * ACTIVE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN INTERESTED PARTIES TO PROMOTE THE RECYCLING OF USED TYRE;
- * ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE CHEMICAL WASTE TREATMENT CENTRE OPERATOR TO RECYCLE INDUSTRIAL SOLVENTS; AND
- * INTRODUCTION BY THE CENTRE OF ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY OF A WASTE EXCHANGE OR RECYCLING INFORMATION SERVICE TO THE BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY.

IN ADDITION, MR EASON SAID, THE GOVERNMENT HAS STARTED A FULL CONSULTANCY STUDY ON WASTE REDUCTION TO EXAMINE WAYS FOR FURTHER RECYCLING AND RECOVERY.

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CROSS BORDER CHANNELS SUCCESSFUL IN RESOLVING DISPUTES
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THE HONG KONG AND SHENZHEN AUTHORITIES HAVE ESTABLISHED BORDER LIAISON CHANNELS WHICH CAN BE ACTIVATED VERY QUICKLY TO DEAL WITH CROSS BORDER INCIDENTS, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR JOHN TELFORD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MRS SELINA CHOW, MR TELFORD SAID THESE CHANNELS WERE USED SUCCESSFULLY IN HELPING TO RESOLVE A DISPUTE THAT OCCURRED EARLIER THIS YEAR.

MR TELFORD SAID: "WE ARE AWARE OF TWO SUCH INCIDENTS INVOLVING HONG KONG DRIVERS AND CHINESE OFFICIALS SO FAR THIS YEAR."

HE SAID THE DISPUTE ON MARCH 26 THIS YEAR WAS UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE BEEN RESOLVED ON THE SPOT.

MR TELFORD SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO USE THE ESTABLISHED BORDER LIAISON CHANNELS TO TRY TO ENSURE THAT SIMILAR PROBLEMS WOULD NOT ARISE IN FUTURE.

HE SAID REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TRUCKING INDUSTRY COULD ALSO EXPRESS THEIR CONCERNS ON CROSS BORDER TRANSPORT ISSUES AT THEIR REGULAR MEETINGS WITH THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT.

WHERE APPROPRIATE, THESE CONCERNS WILL BE ADDRESSED THROUGH THE BORDER LIAISON MACHINERY TO REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD OF FUTURE MISUNDERSTANDINGS, HE SAID.

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PSYCHOGERIATRIC TEAMS PROVIDE OUTREACH SERVICES
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DURING THE LAST SIX MONTHS, 2,340 PATIENTS WERE SERVED BY THE PSYCHOGERIATRIC OUTREACHING TEAMS SET UP BY THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY IN THREE OF ITS HOSPITALS, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF PATIENTS SERVED EACH WEEK WAS ABOUT 730.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON CONRAD LAM KUI-SHING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MRS WONG SAID EACH PSYCHOGERIATRIC TEAM WAS LED BY A CONSULTANT PSYCHIATRIST AND COMPRISED UP TO THREE DOCTORS, THREE NURSES, ONE PHYSIOTHERAPIST, ONE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST, ONE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST AND ONE MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKER.

TO FACILITATE THE INTERFACE BETWEEN HOSPITAL AND OUTREACH SERVICES, SHE ADDED, SOME TEAM MEMBERS WERE ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TREATMENT OF IN-PATIENTS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE HOSPITALS.

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TWO MORE OUTREACHING SOCIAL WORK TEAMS DUE TO SET UP

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TWO ADDITIONAL OUTREACHING SOCIAL WORK TEAMS WILL BE ESTABLISHED BY JUNE THIS YEAR - ONE IN TIN SHUI WAI, YUEN LONG, AND THE OTHER IN MA ON SHAN, SHA TIN.

THESE WILL BRING THE TOTAL TO 30 - THE TARGET NUMBER LAID DOWN IN THE SOCIAL WELFARE WHITE PAPER.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON TANG SHIU-TONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID THE STEERING COMMITTEE ON OUTREACHING SOCIAL WORK SERVICE WAS CURRENTLY CONDUCTING A REVIEW TO EXAMINE THE DEMAND FOR AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS SERVICE, AND WHETHER IT SHOULD BE EXPANDED.

"THIS WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE NEEDS OF AREAS WITH A GROWING POPULATION," SHE ADDED.

THE OUTREACHING SOCIAL WORK TEAMS ARE ESTABLISHED IN AREAS WHICH HAVE A HIGHER POPULATION DENSITY, A RELATIVELY LARGER YOUTH POPULATION AND HIGHER JUVENILE CRIME RATES.

THE GENERAL SERVICE BOUNDARY USED FOR EACH TEAM IS A POPULATION OF 100,000.

AT PRESENT, THERE ARE FOUR TEAMS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WEST - THREE IN TUEN MUN AND ONE IN YUEN LONG.

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GOVT SPENT \$3,491 MILLION ON PROPERTY IN 1993/94

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THE GOVERNMENT SPENT A TOTAL OF \$3,491 MILLION - \$1,989 MILLION TO PURCHASE RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION AND \$1,502 MILLION TO BUY OFFICE ACCOMMODATION - IN 1993/94 ON THE OPEN MARKET.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON SAMUEL WONG PING-WAI IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR K C KWONG, SAID THE RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION COMPRISED 856 UNITS HAVING A TOTAL GROSS FLOOR AREA OF 618,508 SQUARE FEET, WHILST THE OFFICE ACCOMMODATION TOTALLED 390,657 SQUARE FEET GROSS.

MR KWONG SAID AS A RESULT OF THE OFFICE PURCHASES, 165,000 SQUARE FEET GROSS OF LEASED OFFICE ACCOMMODATION HAD BEEN GIVEN UP AND PUT BACK ONTO THE MARKET.

"WE ESTIMATE THAT THESE PURCHASES HAVE HAD NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE PRESENT SUPPLY AND DEMAND FOR RESIDENTIAL OR OFFICE ACCOMMODATION, GIVEN THE TOTAL VOLUME OF MARKET TRANSACTIONS IN 1993/94," HE SAID.

HE SAID IT WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY TO AUGMENT LAND SUPPLY IN 1994/95 TO CATER FOR THE PURCHASES BY THE GOVERNMENT IN 1993/94.

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MORE PRIVATELY-RUN ICE SKATING RINKS IN THE PIPELINE

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THERE IS NO SITE EARMARKED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF ANY PUBLIC ICE-SKATING RINK AT PRESENT IN VIEW OF THE PRIORITIES SET BY THE HONG KONG PLANNING STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES AND THE EXISTENCE OF PRIVATELY-RUN RINKS, THE SECRETARY FOR RECREATION AND CULTURE, MR JAMES SO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TIMOTHY HA WING-HO, MR SO SAID THERE WERE FOUR PRIVATELY-RUN SKATING RINKS IN HONG KONG, CATERING FOR SOME 6,500 ACTIVE SKATERS AND OTHER CASUAL USERS.

TWO MORE PRIVATELY-RUN RINKS ARE EXPECTED TO COME ON STREAM IN TWO MONTHS' TIME WHILE ANOTHER RINK OF INTERNATIONAL SIZE IS EXPECTED TO BE READY BY DECEMBER 1996.

"THE PRIVATELY-RUN ICE-SKATING RINKS ARE CONSIDERED ADEQUATE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THOSE PERSONS INTERESTED IN TAKING UP SKATING," MR SO SAID.

"THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS SPORT HAS BEEN IMPEDED BY THE LACK OF A PUBLIC SKATING RINKS," HE SAID.

MR SO ALSO NOTED THAT THE ARENA OF THE HONG KONG COLISEUM WAS CAPABLE OF BEING TRANSFORMED INTO A SUITABLE SURFACE FOR ICE-SKATING.

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ACQUITTED DEFENDANT OFFERED EX GRATIA PAYMENT

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS OFFERED AN EX GRATIA PAYMENT TO A DEFENDANT WHO WAS TRIED FOR AN OFFENCE OF WHICH HE HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY ACQUITTED, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION RAISED BY THE HON EMILY LAU, MR MATHEWS SAID THE MAN HAD BEEN INVITED TO PROVIDE DETAILS AS TO HIS PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND TO MAKE SUCH REPRESENTATIONS AS HE WISHED THE GOVERNMENT TO CONSIDER BEFORE THE AMOUNT OF THE EX GRATIA PAYMENT WAS DETERMINED.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID THERE WERE SEVERAL FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ERROR AND AN INTERNAL BOARD OF INQUIRY APPOINTED BY HIM TO INVESTIGATE THE CASE HAD MADE SEVERAL RECOMMENDATIONS DESIGNED TO PREVENT ANY RECURRENCE OF THE PROBLEM.

HE SAID THAT HE HAD ACCEPTED THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BOARD, AND THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT WAS WORKING IN LIAISON WITH THE JUDICIARY TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS.

AS FAR AS CONDUCT IN THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT WAS CONCERNED, MR MATHEWS SAID THE BOARD CONCLUDED THAT FAULT COULD ONLY BE PROPERLY ATTRIBUTED TO ONE PERSON, NAMELY THE OFFICER WHO SHOULD HAVE ADVISED THE COURT PROSECUTOR HANDLING THE RETRIAL.

/"DISCIPLINARY ACTION

"DISCIPLINARY ACTION HAS BEEN INSTITUTED AGAINST THE OFFICER CONSIDERED BY THE BOARD OF INQUIRY TO HAVE BEEN AT FAULT," HE SAID.

MR MATHEWS RECOUNTED THAT THE DEFENDANT IN THE CASE REFERRED TO WAS ORIGINALLY CHARGED WITH INDECENT ASSAULT. THE MAGISTRATE HEARING THE CASE FOUND THAT THERE WAS NO CASE FOR THE DEFENDANT TO ANSWER ON THAT CHARGE, BUT CONVICTED HIM OF COMMON ASSAULT.

HE SAID: "THE DEFENDANT APPEALED TO THE HIGH COURT AGAINST HIS CONVICTION. THE APPEAL WAS ALLOWED AND THE JUDGE ORDERED THAT THERE SHOULD BE A NEW TRIAL BEFORE ANOTHER MAGISTRATE.

"THE LEGAL EFFECT OF THAT ORDER WAS THAT THE DEFENDANT WAS TO BE RETRIED ON THE CHARGE OF WHICH HE WAS CONVICTED, THAT IS, THE CHARGE OF COMMON ASSAULT," HE SAID.

MR MATHEWS ADDED THAT THE JUDGE WHO HEARD THE FIRST APPEAL, THE JUDGE'S CLERK, THE COUNSEL WHO CONDUCTED THE FIRST APPEAL, THE POLICE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE CASE, THE APPEAL CLERK AND THE FIRST CLERK OF THE MAGISTRACY CONCERNED, ALL RECORDED EITHER THAT THERE WAS TO BE A 'NEW TRIAL' OR 'ANOTHER TRIAL' OR 'A RETRIAL'.

"IT WAS APPARENTLY ASSUMED THAT IT WOULD BE UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS MEANT A NEW TRIAL ON THE CHARGE OF WHICH THE DEFENDANT HAD BEEN CONVICTED, AND THAT THE PRECISE CHARGE TO BE FACED DID NOT HAVE TO BE SPECIFIED," HE SAID.

BUT THE COURT PROSECUTOR WHO HANDLED THE RETRIAL DID NOT APPRECIATE WHAT WAS INVOLVED IN A RETRIAL AND DID NOT RECEIVE ADVICE ON THIS POINT, MR MATHEWS SAID.

HE SAID: "IT WAS NOT THE PRACTICE TO ISSUE A FRESH CHARGE SHEET IN RESPECT OF A RETRIAL IN THE MAGISTRACY AND THE COURT CLERK, AT THE RETRIAL, PLACED BEFORE THE MAGISTRATE THE ORIGINAL CHARGE SHEET."

"THE MAGISTRATE WAS NOT INFORMED THAT THE CASE WAS A RETRIAL. AS A RESULT, THE DEFENDANT WAS ASKED TO PLEAD TO THE ORIGINAL CHARGE OF INDECENT ASSAULT," MR MATHEWS SAID.

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166 BONA VACANTIA CASES

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THERE ARE CURRENTLY 166 CASES OF BONA VACANTIA, PROPERTIES WHICH APPEARED TO HAVE NO LEGAL OWNERS, VESTED IN THE CROWN BY OPERATION OF THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE.

AMONG THEM, 18 HAVE BEEN OR ARE SUBJECT TO ADVICE OR ORDERS FROM THE BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT REQUIRING REPAIR WORK ON SAFETY GROUNDS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON HUANG CHEN-YA IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR EASON SAID A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$22,627.34 HAD BEEN CONTRIBUTED BY THE CROWN TOWARDS THE REPAIR WORK ON THREE PROPERTIES.

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AS REGARDS THE OTHER PROPERTIES, NO CLAIMS HAD YET BEEN RECEIVED, HE SAID, ADDING THAT EVEN IF CLAIMS WERE MADE, THEY WERE UNLIKELY TO BE FOR SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNTS.

"WHERE THE CROWN IS CO-OWNER OF A PROPERTY, IT IS LIABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE COST OF REPAIRS TO THE COMMON PARTS.

"WHERE THE CROWN OWNS PART OF A PROPERTY EXCLUSIVELY, FOR EXAMPLE, EXTERNAL WALLS AND ROOFS, IT SHOULD BEAR THE FULL COST OF REPAIRS TO THESE PARTS," MR EASON SAID.

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POLICE DEPLOYMENT FOR LEGCO MEMBERS' NT VISIT
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A TOTAL OF 100 POLICE OFFICERS WERE DEPLOYED FOR SPECIFIC TASKS DURING THE VISIT BY LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS TO THE NEW TERRITORIES ON MARCH 26, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"THIS INVOLVED IN TOTAL 380 MAN-HOURS. THE ESTIMATED TOTAL STAFF COST WAS ABOUT \$63,000," MR ASPREY SAID IN HIS WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HENRY TANG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE SAID POLICE OFFICERS WERE COMMITTED TO THESE DUTIES FOR LESS THAN FOUR HOURS IN EACH POLICE REGION.

DURING THE TWO-PART VISIT, 187 POLICE OFFICERS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES NORTH REGION WERE AVAILABLE FOR THE FIRST PART OF THE VISIT TO FANLING, BUT ONLY 65 WERE DEPLOYED.

DURING THE SUBSEQUENT VISIT TO SHA TIN, 234 WERE AVAILABLE, 35 OF WHOM WERE DEPLOYED.

MR ASPREY SAID THOSE WHO WERE AVAILABLE BUT NOT DEPLOYED WERE ALSO AVAILABLE FOR OTHER TASKS IN THE TWO REGIONS.

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NEW FORMULA FOR CALCULATING DEMAND FOR
REHABILITATION SERVICES
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THE REHABILITATION DEVELOPMENT CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE HAS ENDORSED A NEW FORMULA TO IMPROVE THE ACCURACY AND RELIABILITY OF PROJECTIONS FOR DEMAND FOR SERVICES IN THE COMING REVIEW OF THE REHABILITATION PROGRAMME PLAN.

THE NEW FORMULA, WHICH ADOPTS A MORE STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT APPROACH OF ACCOUNTING, WAS WORKED OUT BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT IN CONSULTATION WITH THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR.

/"IT TAKES

"IT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT ALL KNOWN FACTORS AFFECTING THE DEMAND AND SUPPLY OF SERVICES, SUCH AS ANNUAL DISCHARGES, WITH ANNUAL UPDATING OF KNOWN AND PROJECTED DATA, WHICH HAS NOW BEEN MADE POSSIBLE FOR THE ACCUMULATION OF MORE DATA IN THE CENTRAL REFERRAL SYSTEM.

"ADDITIONALLY, THE REVISED PROJECTIONS HAVE REGARD TO THE UPDATED POPULATION PROJECTIONS," THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID IN HER WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON YEUNG SUM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SHE ADDED THAT THE NEW FORMULA WOULD PROVIDE A RELIABLE BASIS FOR THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT TO BID FOR THE NECESSARY RESOURCES TO MEET THE PROJECTED DEMAND FOR REHABILITATION SERVICES.

APART FROM THE ADOPTION OF THE NEW FORMULA, THE SECRETARY NOTED THAT THE VARIATIONS COULD ALSO BE ACCOUNTED FOR BY AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF NEW APPLICATIONS IN RECENT YEARS.

"THIS IS PROBABLY DUE TO AN ENHANCED AWARENESS OF THE NEED FOR EARLY TRAINING," SHE SAID.

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MARINE POLICE FLEET SIZE UNDER ONGOING REVIEW

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REVIEWING THE FLEET SIZE AND EQUIPMENT OF THE MARINE POLICE IS AN ONGOING TASK, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

OVERALL FLEET NUMBERS HAVE GONE UP FROM 76 IN 1980 TO 166 AT PRESENT.

AND, THERE HAVE BEEN IMPROVEMENTS IN NAVIGATIONAL AIDS, COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT, MR ASPREY SAID.

"THERE ARE NO SPECIFIC PLANS AT PRESENT TO INCREASE THE SIZE OF THE MARINE POLICE FLEET," HE SAID.

THE FLEET IS MADE UP OF 66 POLICE LAUNCHES, RANGING FROM 6.9-METRE MOTOR BOATS TO 40-METRE COMMAND LAUNCHES; AND 100 POLICE OPEN BOATS RANGING FROM SMALL RUBBER DINGHIES TO FAST 9.5-METRE RIGID HULL INFLATABLES.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ALBERT CHAN WAI-YIP, MR ASPREY SAID THE MARINE POLICE MADE 5,350 ARRESTS AT SEA LAST YEAR, OF WHICH ABOUT 60 PER CENT WERE RELATED TO ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

THE NUMBER OF PROSECUTIONS WAS 1,350, HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 1994

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SMALL HOUSE POLICY EXPLAINED

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UNDER THE SMALL HOUSE POLICY, TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR A GRANT, AN APPLICANT MUST BE MALE, AT LEAST 18 YEARS OLD AND DESCENDED THROUGH THE MALE LINE FROM A RESIDENT IN 1898 OF A RECOGNISED VILLAGE IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON ANNA WU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR EASON SAID IF AN INDIGENOUS VILLAGER WHO WAS ELIGIBLE FOR BUT HAD NOT RECEIVED A SMALL HOUSE GRANT HAD DISAPPEARED, OR DIED, OR WAS CONSIDERED UNSUITABLE TO HOLD PROPERTY FOR ANY REASON, THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICER MIGHT REGARD HIS WIFE OR WIDOW AS ELIGIBLE FOR A SMALL HOUSE GRANT.

"SO FAR, THERE IS NO RECORD OF ANY APPLICATIONS HAVING BEEN SUBMITTED BY WIVES OR WIDOWS OF INDIGENOUS VILLAGERS OR INDEED OTHER WOMEN," MR EASON SAID.

DURING THE PERIOD BETWEEN JULY 1, 1991 AND DECEMBER 31, 1993, 13,033 SMALL HOUSE APPLICATIONS WERE RECEIVED AND 1,672 SMALL HOUSE GRANTS WERE EXECUTED, ALL IN RESPECT OF MALE INDIGENOUS VILLAGERS.

SINCE JUNE 8, 1991, 848 REGISTRATIONS OF SUCCESSION HAD BEEN MADE WITH DISTRICT OFFICES UNDER THE NEW TERRITORIES ORDINANCE. ALL BUT ONE OF THE REGISTERED SUCCESSORS ARE MALE.

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ADEQUATE POLICE RESOURCES TO ENSURE PUBLIC SAFETY

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ADEQUATE POLICE RESOURCES WILL BE DEPLOYED TO PREVENT BREACHES OF THE PEACE AND TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF ALL THOSE PARTICIPATING IN THE THREE-TIER ELECTIONS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID.

THE POLICE WILL LIAISE CLOSELY WITH THE BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION AND DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED IN THE PLANNING AND ORGANISATION OF THE ELECTIONS TO ASSESS THE LEVEL OF GENERAL POLICE DEPLOYMENT REQUIRED, HE SAID.

AT DISTRICT LEVEL, MR ASPREY SAID POLICE COMMANDERS WOULD MAINTAIN CLOSE CONTACT WITH DISTRICT OFFICERS WHO ACT AS RETURNING OFFICERS ON ANY PARTICULAR LOCAL PROBLEMS AND THE POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ERIC LI KA-CHEUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR ASPREY STRESSED THAT THE POLICE WOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ANY PARTICULAR DIFFICULTIES AT INDIVIDUAL POLLING STATIONS AND WOULD ARRANGE SUFFICIENT MANPOWER TO BE DEPLOYED.

/THE POLICE

THE POLICE CAREFULLY ASSESS THE POTENTIAL CROWD CONTROL PROBLEMS FOR ALL MAJOR PUBLIC EVENTS AND PLAN THE MOST APPROPRIATE DEPLOYMENT OF RESOURCES TO MEET POTENTIAL PROBLEMS.

THE ASSESSMENT INVOLVES FACTORS SUCH AS THE LIKELY NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS, THE PURPOSE OF THE EVENT, EMOTIONS ON THE ISSUE, AND THE LIKELY DISRUPTION TO TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN FLOW WHERE THE EVENT IS TO BE HELD.

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MOTION ON AIRPORT FINANCING VETOED

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THE MOTION ON FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CHEK LAP KOK AIRPORT AND THE AIRPORT RAILWAY WAS VETOED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN A TWO-HOUR DEBATE DURING THE COUNCIL SITTING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE ORIGINAL MOTION WAS MOVED BY THE HON STEVEN POON, WITH AMENDMENTS RAISED BY THE HON ALBERT CHAN, THE HON FRED LI AND THE HON HOWARD YOUNG.

AFTER COUNCILLORS HAD SPOKEN ON THE MOTION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR HAMISH MACLEOD, REPLIED FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

ANOTHER MOTION ON HEALTH CARE FINANCING, WHICH WAS PROPOSED BY DR THE HON LEONG CHI-HUNG, WAS PASSED WITHOUT AMENDMENT.

MEMBERS DEBATED THE MOTION FOR ABOUT TWO HOURS. THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, GAVE A CONCLUDING SPEECH.

AT THE SITTING, A MOTION MOVED BY THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG TO EXTEND THE EXPIRY DATE OF THE PUBLIC OFFICERS (VARIATION OF CONDITIONS OF SERVICE) (TEMPORARY PROVISIONS) ORDINANCE TO JULY 6, 1994 WAS PASSED.

IN ADDITION, MOTIONS MOVED BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS UNDER THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE, THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE, THE MATRIMONIAL CAUSES ORDINANCE AND THE MAGISTRATES ORDINANCE WERE ALL PASSED.

THERE WERE ALSO THREE BILLS PASSED WITHOUT AMENDMENTS. THEY WERE BREWIN TRUST FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993, TOWN PLANNING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994 AND A PRIVATE BILL - THE HONG KONG CHRISTIAN COUNCIL INCORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993.

FOUR BILLS WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS. THEY WERE CHINESE PERMANENT CEMETERIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994, PUBLIC ORDER (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994, BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994 AND CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994. DEBATES ON THESE BILLS WERE ADJOURNED.

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